

Coventry Grammar School

Ronda Carrie, Principal

Goals Achievement Report: 2020-2021 School Year

1. Identify, define, and measure the critical skills and attributes that are required for success and align systems to continuously improve student performance and Achievement.

- Implement the reopening schools' plan to provide academic and social emotional instruction informed by formative assessments and utilizing tiered intervention, curriculum compacting and acceleration of material.

It was important, as outlined by the CT State Department of Education in the June 2020 document, *Sensible Assessment Practices for 2020-2021 and Beyond*, that we capitalize on the reopening of schools to instruct. This was facilitated by using brief assessment tools that were embedded in instruction. August professional development provided classroom teachers the knowledge to implement a diagnostic tool available through Zearn and specific to learning recovery. In place of an initial test, we engaged students in two weeks of daily lessons that collected multiple data points on student performance and identified where students would need more support. Our goal was to help students catch up while keeping up with the curriculum pace and sequence. To capture similar information in the area of decoding, spelling and handwriting, we administered a diagnostic spelling assessment. This one time, whole group, short assessment revealed gaps that were addressed whole group, small group and one-to-one, based on prevalence of the deficit. Meanwhile, the grade level Foundations program was instructed on schedule.

Faculty meetings and coaching agendas included a deep dive into formative assessment. We mined articles and professional texts to identify a bank of research-based strategies such as one-minute papers, two roses and a thorn, stop and go and partner quiz.

Prior to the close of the 2019-2020 school year, teachers recorded data on several points, including social emotional, to inform our reopening practices. Data was collected as to the degree of on-line engagement, completion of assignments and impact of the pandemic on the family. During the summer months, administrators attended many ground-breaking forums and workshop series to prepare to meet the social emotional needs of students. In particular, a three part series facilitated by EASTCONN included an introduction to the MTSS Re-Entry Planning Tool: Social-Emotional-Behavioral Systems. We rated our school in four areas; plans to

promote trauma-sensitive social-emotional learning, pre-COVID wellness/engagement levels and adverse COVID-19 impacts, system for monitoring student wellness throughout the year, and, finally, a social emotional leadership team to address school-wide social-emotional wellness during re-entry. This tool provided key guidance to identifying Tier 1 social-emotional lessons, identifying trauma-sensitive practices and capturing students for additional wellness support. Our classroom schedules were adjusted to include increased commitment to social emotional learning via, read-alouds exploring topics such as worrying, age-appropriate lessons addressing why we are wearing masks and are socially distanced and explicit instruction of self-care practices.

- Create schedules of assessment administration and review that limit imposition on instruction and reflect an increased use of informal assessments, exit tickets and anecdotal narratives. This includes pausing the use of typical assessments and engaging with new diagnostic tools.

The Benchmark Assessment System, administered each fall and spring, was replaced with Running Records. Running Records allow teachers to assess reading behavior as students read from developmentally appropriate texts. The monitoring of reading behavior and progress occurs during the guided reading lesson, not in addition to or separate from. The Eureka unit tests were chunked into smaller pieces, resulting in less interruption to the flow of instruction. We maintained the administration of grades one and two reading and math Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). The paused use of the computer lab meant that MAP was administered in classrooms on chromebooks. An unanticipated and preferred outcome of this location shift, was that the assessment period was shortened, less disruptive and the familiarity of the classroom provided an ideal setting. In this case, we added an assessment session, administering MAP midway through the year.

- Extend student goal setting, reflection and self-assessment to include all content areas and social behavioral grade level skills.

Teachers consistently post the goals and objectives of daily lessons and units of study in student accessible language and in clear sight for each content area, including social emotional learning. Students use tools included in practice platforms, such as Reflex math, to shade facts mastered. Increased effectiveness of progress monitoring is achieved as students analyze how the known and yet to be known facts are related. The teacher engages the student in dialogue that leads him/her to select the next set of strategies to be mastered. It could be doubles plus one or pairs to ten. In each case, an explicit relation is made between the addition and subtraction facts. During small group intervention, students use rubrics to score the components of each answer and identify what is needed to increase to the next level of performance.

Kindergarten students are provided color-coded cards with the sight word list of each leveled text, A-D. Students know the progression and initiate when they are ready to be assessed for mastery. Three consecutive correct reads are required to meet mastery.

Students use one dot, a second dot and finally an upward curve creating a smiley face, to show when mastery is achieved. When the student misreads a word, a menu of strategies is reviewed and the student must commit to one and demonstrate how it will improve his/her accuracy. This could be to tap the word, spell the word out loud and say it or use a mesh mat to repeatedly write it and recite.

Second graders working to increase words per minute, use colored pencils to mark the word reached after the allotted time. In small groups, students provide critical feedback to classmates, commenting on a strength and area for improvement in one of the four components of fluency; accuracy, speed, expression and comprehension. In all cases, students are aware of the target to be met.

A Check-in Meeting, the bookend to Morning Meeting, brings students together at the end of the day, to talk about how things are going in their classroom community, to discuss their goals for the coming days, and to reflect on problem-solving efforts inside and outside the classroom. This most often has a social emotional theme, often reinforcing a current Second Step lesson or skill such as, fair ways to play, focussing attention or using a calming strategy independently. The increased use of the selected skill is reinforced, whole group with earned gems in a dazzle jar, or individually with stickers on a chart, and then celebrated with predetermined preferred activities, such as bonus recess or lego time.

- Focus on two areas identified as Approaching on the ISTE Essential Conditions Survey; Skilled Personnel and Student-Centered Learning.

August professional development, led by the K-12 Literacy Specialist, Educational Technology Coach and Director of Educational Technology, addressed collaborative formative assessment, collaborative practices and feedback.

Student centered strategies include teacher prompts requiring students to explain their thinking and in the words of John Hattie, make visible learning. Teachers gained knowledge in how to help students understand what their learning goals are, how far they are from those goals and what they must do to get there. At March Conferences, this strategy was evident as students provided written reports of the three previously outlined steps. Sharing the learning intention ahead of time results in students having a clear understanding of the expectations. Staff knowledge of and proficiency with technology to support assessment has exploded this year. Pear Deck, See Saw, Flipgrid, Padlet, Jamboard and Kahoots are several engaging platforms that place the student in the driver seat of acquiring knowledge, initiating inquiry and having a voice in class discussions. Teachers gained access to resources such as, 60 Formative Assessment Tools, Tools for Teachers:44 Formative Assessment Ideas and Yale Center for Teaching and Learning Summative vs. Formative Assessment Resource. Collaborative practices are defined in the CPS Portrait of the Graduate, evident in the project-based learning of Project Lead the Way and the foundation of Student Led Conferences. Professional development sessions honored and captured the work that

was in place, while stretching our reach to increase student engagement, elevate student understanding and highlight different student's strengths. Guidelines for student collaboration were defined prior to teachers analyzing a current lesson and then reimagining it to incorporate student collaboration. A Padlet of ideas tried, ideas wanting to try and ideas created by staff was maintained as a living document for teachers to add to and refer to throughout the year.

One mission this year was to maximize our time with students to recapture the loss of learning that had occurred in the spring and that impacted the current school year due to ongoing stressors and fall out of the pandemic. Implementing various uses of feedback was one strategy to meet this goal. Teachers reviewed high yield strategies including highlighting student work products, involving students in acknowledging others and periodic check-ins with each student. Videos for peer review and voice recordings to self-assess became typical practice. We were hypervigilant about how every teaching move we made impacted students' social emotional state. Non graded feedback allows students to focus on learning rather than performance. Supporting students is our focus and instruction and assessment can be rigorous and supportive. Timely, specific, encouraging feedback that provides guidance on how to improve motivates students. Revisiting a growth mindset that focussed on how a student was growing compared to him/herself was preferable to holding high the grade level standard or norm. Ten Feedback Techniques That Make Students Think, a resource from the Dylan William Center, offered new ideas like the use of exemplars for students to analyze a current work product and identify an area of improvement.

- Engage in programs, such as LIFT (Learning Informs Focused Teaching), that identify high potential in students, with a focus on development of critical and creative thinking skills addressed in formal lessons.

Beginning at the end of February, we began implementing a math enrichment program for first and second grade students. Identified from a triangulation of fluency, MAP, and End of Module assessment data, paired with teacher input, students who were performing above grade level in each of these areas were identified as candidates for the math enrichment program. Both in school and remote students were considered for the enrichment group. In all, we were able to service 26 first grade students (22% of the first grade student population) and 22 second grade students (23% of the second grade student population). Each group met twice a week. Once a week synchronously with the PK-12 Math Specialist via Google Meet and once a week asynchronously via a Seesaw assignment. Enrichment cycles lasted 3-4 weeks each and were based around 3-Act Tasks authored by Graham Fletcher. This is a multi-step problem solving task based on a real world situation. It gets the students to make observations about the world around them, follow the problem solving process of making a hypothesis (estimate), gathering relevant information, conducting an experiment (using a math strategy to solve the problem), drawing a conclusion, and reflecting on the hypothesis originally made.

Seven teachers from grades one and two, enrolled in Project LIFT, a multi-year project developed by Catherine Little, and drawn from her philosophy that students with high academic potential are more likely to demonstrate high potential behaviors while engaged in instruction that encourages such response. Summer training and curriculum development was coordinated for grade level teams to create differentiated lessons. These lessons were designed to give every student opportunity and access to all components of the lesson. LIFT was a great connection to the way we currently teach our science lessons using the 5 E's (engage, explore, explain, elaborate, evaluate). As students complete each activity, they are encouraged to continue with an extended piece. As the school year started, teachers began teaching the lessons, while Ms. Little's colleagues observed each lesson. The purpose of the study is to provide opportunities for challenging work for students showing high potential behaviors. High potential behaviors include being perceptive, resourceful, communicative, creative, curious, and strategic. Scaffolded math and language arts lessons were developed to implement immediate differentiation for students with all learning styles. These go above and beyond students who are typical high academic achievers. The study's primary focus is to recognize advanced academic potential in underserved populations. While in many districts this may be socioeconomic or race related, in our classrooms underserved students were those who showed a large discrepancy between knowledge and performance. The most valuable piece to the study has been the individual Gifted Rating Scales (GRS) teachers completed on each child, three times per year. The results of these scales helped teachers become more observant, and ultimately identify students' successes in their own unique way. This summer's professional development includes reflecting and revising sessions.

- Evaluate the level of services and supports for students as documented in IEPs, to align the level of service as well as staffing hours in order to meet student needs.

Special education staff collaborated with classroom teachers to review the IEP grid and assess appropriate levels of support in and out of the classroom, effective modifications and accommodations. Observation notes and collected data informed decisions. Special Education teachers participated in professional development to gain knowledge of strategies to promote independence. Indicators of success included doing less, decreased proximity, lower level prompts and increased self-determination. Classroom management, behavior support plans and common behavior management strategies were examined. Visual schedules are commonly used in our practice, but we needed more. We learned about, and subsequently initiated the next level of scaffolding, visual instructional plans. VIPs are designed to remove the social reinforcement for learned helplessness, pre package prompts in a visual form to decrease helping interactions and provide clarification for the student to decrease performance anxiety.

Teachers used the CT Early Learning and Development Standards to steer the modification of Tier tasks and assignments, making grade level curriculum accessible to students with disabilities. The primary question we asked was, "What can the

student do?” The answer to that question identified the entry point for successful independence in the general education classroom. This is a point for ongoing growth and development next school year.

SMART Goals:

Literacy

- Increase the percentage of students making a year or more growth, as measured by Running Record instructional levels, while decreasing the percentage of students making less than a year’s growth.

Grade Level	Percentage at or Above Goal
Kindergarten	67%, 78 out of 116 students
Grade One	83%, 99 out of 120 students
Grade Two	90%, 86 out of 96 students

Mathematics

- Increase percentage of students achieving mastery on addition and subtraction fact fluency assessments.

CORE Fluency Key	
Mastered	40-45 facts
Approaching	34-39 facts
Below	0-33 facts

- The percentage of grade one students who are fluent in **addition facts** within 10, will increase by 60 percentage points from the pre CORE Fluency assessment to the post CORE Fluency assessment.

Year	Pre CORE Fluency Assessment	Post CORE Fluency Assessment	Growth	Goal
20-21	9.7%	80.1%	70.4%	+ 10.4%
18-19	11.7%	82.5%	70.8%	

- The percentage of grade one students who are fluent in **subtraction facts** within 10, will increase by 55 percentage points from the pre CORE Fluency assessment to the post CORE Fluency assessment.

Year	Pre CORE Fluency Assessment	Post CORE Fluency Assessment	Growth	Goal
20-21	1.9%	46.5%	44.6%	- 8.5%
18-19	3.3%	63.2%	59.9%	

- The percentage of grade two students who are fluent in **addition facts** within 20, will increase by 45 percentage points from the pre CORE Fluency assessment to the post CORE Fluency assessment.

Year	Pre CORE Fluency Assessment	Post CORE Fluency Assessment	Growth	Goal
20-21	3.2%	58.5%	55.3%	+10.3%
18-19	20.3%	58.4	38.1%	

- The percentage of grade two students who are fluent in **subtraction facts** within 20, will increase by 50 percentage points from the pre CORE Fluency assessment to the post CORE Fluency assessment.

Year	Pre CORE Fluency Assessment	Post CORE Fluency Assessment	Growth	Goal
20-21	1.1%	42.5%	41.4%	-8.6%
18-19	1.6%	44.8%	43.2%	

Whole School Indicator:

- Implement The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) integrated framework that includes five core competencies; identifying emotions, accurate self-perception, recognizing strengths, self-confidence and self-efficacy.

The five CASEL competencies; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making paired well with our Second Step curriculum. This goal was primarily implemented at the teacher level, classroom based. The CT Department of Education published a document entitled, Flexibilities for Implementing the CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation for the 2020-2021 School Year. The document stated that, “these flexibilities reflect the critical importance of the social and emotional learning and well-being of students and educators.” All student learning indicators at CGS focused on social and emotional learning for students. Teachers identified one goal and two indicators. The work was not a one and done

event, but rather daily strategies, routines and rituals that infused the classroom and school community. Arrival routines included students identifying their emotional state upon entry to the classroom. This was communicated by placing a clip on the corresponding emotion or tagging an emoji on the interactive panel. The physical arrangement of the COVID-19 classroom prompted self-efficacy because our cooperative groupings of tables were now individual desks, socially distanced and separate. Our routines for managing individually assigned and stored materials required teachers to develop procedures and then provide practice opportunities for students to master the routines. In strength lessons students reflect on their individual strengths, think about a time when they used a strength and consider what positive consequences occurred when they used that strength.

Self-confidence was increasingly reported as a concern, more often from parents. This year. Uncertainties and big changes at home and in school raised worries and doubts for students. Helping students understand how successfully solving a problem or meeting a challenge can increase their self-confidence. We implemented lessons designed to help students identify challenges, select helpful strategies to overcome them and describe their feelings when overcoming them. This included social conflicts during play and academic challenges in reading, math or writing. At times, the pace of instruction was slowed to boost confidence and provide more opportunities for success.

2. Maintain and promote a positive and respectful learning community.

- Provide instruction through a lens of diversity to promote tolerance of people with differing ideals and practice.

The first step, an ongoing piece of the work, is staff awareness, dialogue and exploration of our stories and the stories of others. An Open Choice workshop included parents of color sharing their experiences as a student and parent and the experience of their child. We can never truly walk in the shoes of others, but opportunities such as this, are key to expanding our understanding which in turn improves our ability to provide instruction through a lens of diversity. This is reflected in the question on the district's Curriculum Checklist for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, How can reflection on our own personal beliefs and implicit assumptions help us maximize our self-awareness and commitment to teaching that is inclusive? The checklist was introduced at a Faculty Meeting dedicated to the initial review of curriculum, facilitated by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Each grade level and department analyzed curriculum for evidence of unrepresented or underrepresented perspectives and voices, representation of multiple identities and communities, content that reflects a wide range of perspectives, readings, images, and audio content that communicate and welcome diversity and the inclusion of local and global real world events. Staff posted their work in the district Curriculum Revisions form, submitted to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

The library media specialist presented new titles to the library collection at each Faculty Meeting. Each month he provided a book talk that summarized the book and most importantly communicated his genuine passion for the story, illustrations or theme. Initially the books were housed in a section for easy access to staff, but as the collection grew and teacher's gained familiarity with the titles, the books were shelved within the collection. This was evidence that we had moved beyond the initial phase of a set aside section with limited or dated resources, to a robust collection that was seamlessly integrated within our inventory. A bulletin board at the entrance of the library, entitled One School, Many Stories, posted the covers of several books. *Brown: The Many Shades of Love*, tells the story of a boy describing the range of brown colors in his family with beautiful language such as brown like a field of wheat and brown like caramel. *Between Us and Abuela: A Family Story from the Border*, tells the story of two siblings and their mom traveling to the border fences between Mexico and the United States to exchange Christmas gifts. Spotlighting these, and other titles and book jackets, gave space to the prominent culturally responsive practices at CGS.

Coaching sessions were utilized to review and revise the presentation of traditional topics in kindergarten including Columbus Day and Thanksgiving. Social Justice Books: A Teaching for Change Project site provided an inventory of multicultural and social justice books for children. New mentor texts were purchased for each kindergarten classroom and coinciding lessons were crafted. Titles included *We are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom. This book was inspired by Indigenous-led movements to protect the earth's natural resources and it is a 2021 Caldecott Medal winner.

- Increase the development of Tier II and Tier III social emotional supports provided to students as the result of parent interview, personal contact and teacher observation.

One outcome of periods of remote learning and virtual teaching was the direct connection between home and school. This new dynamic was also experienced in a more intimate Meet and Greet, two students at a time with one parent, and small group virtual Open House. This window into the family experience and space improved our ability to address the needs of students and families in the school house and in the community. Logistics, such as securing internet access, were initial tasks to eliminate stressors and barriers.

The school psychologist and district social worker met weekly to review attendance, student engagement and behavior data. Families were provided community contacts for outside counseling and services, to include addressing food insecurity and housing instability. Support was increased when students were quarantined as this often initiated challenges for families including maintaining student engagement and managing remote learning when working from home. Tips and motivation charts were provided to families.

Staff were partnered with students in new ways to promote belonging and joy. We identified areas of student interest and expertise and embedded time in the school day with one adult to further develop this area. The art teacher paired with a second grade student for private art classes. The music teacher paired with a first grade student to provide ukulele lessons. Daily announcements were live-streamed to classrooms and included a daily lesson targeting kindness, social distancing etcetera. Students' birthdays were announced and each day was themed. Wednesday was joke day and students began to submit jokes to the principal. Friday was fun fact day and we learned about the mushers during the Iditarod and ladybugs on grade one's L day.

- Designate a school-based equity committee that participates in Equity Framework Training and establishes school-wide practices that promote acceptance and tolerance.

The school-based equity committee and the Open Choice committee worked in concert throughout the year. In preparation for welcoming students from Hartford as Coventry students we accessed the Welcoming Schools Tool. A self-assessment of four areas; physical environment, school-wide practices and policies, welcoming school staff and written materials, was conducted prior to a scheduled site visit in June by CREC. We purchased bus kits to engage students on the ride to and from CGS and coordinated welcome bundles in a new backpack with school supplies, spirit wear, logo items, a coupon book for snacks from the school cafe and a hard copy of All Are Welcome, a picture book celebrating diversity and inclusivity. We established a protocol for reaching out to families accepting an Open Choice seat. This included an immediate personal phone call from a CGS staff member, on site visits at the local Family Resource Center in Hartford and invitations to all summer events and programs. Materials purchased for the 2021-2022 school year include multicultural crayons, construction paper and materials. The Curriculum Checklist for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, created by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, was used throughout the year when revising curriculum at coaching sessions, selecting slides for lesson presentations and choosing texts for read alouds and more.

A team submitted and received a CT Reading Association grant, Supporting Student and Family Diversity Conversations through a Whole School Book Club. These funds, in conjunction with a donation from the Lions Club and the CGS budget, made possible the purchase of a hardcover copy of *The Night Is Yours* for every CGS family. The book, by author Abdul-Razak Zachariah, tells the story of a nighttime hide-and-seek game and celebrates blackness and self-confidence. The Parent and Teacher's Organization funded an author's virtual visit in April. Abdul-Razak Zachariah is a local author from West Haven who graduated from Yale University and is currently attending graduate school at Harvard University. Following his school-wide presentation he answered student questions. Students received a bookmark, *Different Colors~Different Cultures~One World*, to communicate and reinforce a message of acceptance and belonging.

- Conduct bi-monthly safety and security committee meetings, including the District Security Specialist, to review and revise building procedures, ensure adherence to the CPS Emergency Operation Plan and align with COVID-19 requirements and recommendations.

The addition of a District Security Director has been of great benefit to CGS. COVID-19 ushered in new arrival and dismissal procedures, among countless other changes to our daily routines and procedures. The District Security Director met with the principal to review all adjustments and coinciding safety implications or risks. He has attended monthly Lock Down, Fire and Shelter in Place drills. Following each drill or event, we debrief and maintain formal records of revisions and refinements. Safety improvements included the installation of three bollards to prevent vehicles from driving into student spaces, new signage and approval of fencing to secure play areas. He conducts Physical Management Technique training, the professional approach to managing agitated or aggressive behavior with an emphasis on prevention of physical crises. As new state requirements are established, he facilitates our compliance. Most recently this occurred during firearm safety training for students in grades K-2.

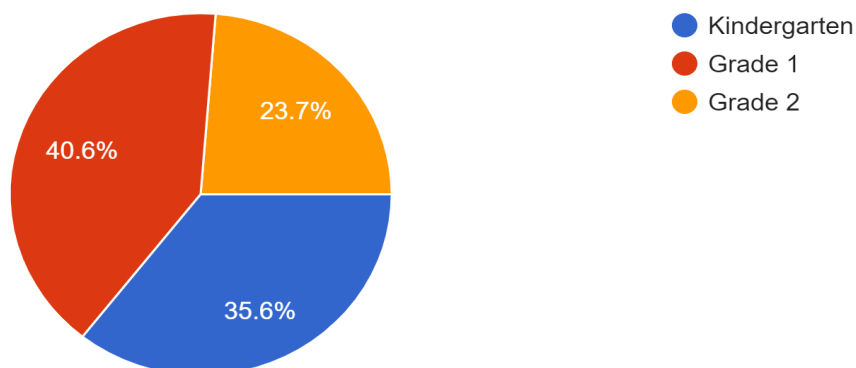
Parent Engagement Goal:

- Set and monitor student achievement goals with families. Three to five goals will be established at October Parent Conferences, monitored second semester and celebrated in May.

Goal setting was initiated at the virtual Open House on September 9. We had 95% parent attendance at Google Meets designed to provide small groups of parents and students an overview of the grade level standards and benchmarks. Teachers provided a menu of suggested academic and social emotional goals prior to October Parent Conferences such as, math fact fluency, reading comprehension and emotion regulation. Parent, student and teacher established a partnership to select goals and identify action steps each party would take to assist with goal achievement. A variety of progress monitoring tools were used to chart growth. At March Parent Conferences the fall to spring growth was reported by the student and a parent survey was distributed to ascertain parent feedback.

Student's Grade

219 responses



Question	Percent Agree
I had the opportunity to discuss year long goals with my child's teacher.	98.6%
I had the opportunity to share suggestions of how to best support my child's success.	96.8%
I had the opportunity to discuss my child's progress towards his/her goals at March Conferences.	99.1%
Through joint collaboration, my child showed progress in achieving year long goals.	96.3%

3. Recruit, retain, and develop high quality staff at every level.

- Include cultural competency agenda items in Faculty and Grade Level/Program Meetings as well as professional development days, to include professional readings accompanied by discussion protocols and courageous conversations.

The district goal and initiative multiplied at CGS with the pursuit of and acceptance as an Open Choice school. In concert with each school, we had a six-person team that participated in Equity Framework training over three half-day sessions. The principal attended the administrator version, a series of four sessions. Additionally, an Open Choice Committee, consisting of the principal, three teachers, Superintendent and Director of Curriculum and Instruction participated in four trainings facilitated by CREC. Open Choice Committee members created racial autobiographies that were presented at a Faculty Meeting. A racial autobiography asks an individual to reflect on the earliest and most recent memories, events and conversations about race, race relations and racism that contribute to and inform your current beliefs and behaviors.

CGS teachers participated in two of four professional development sessions aligned with Open Choice designation, the remaining two scheduled in August. These include Storytelling, Implicit Bias in Education, Productively Addressing Hurtful, Biased Comments/Actions in the Classroom and Article discussion: Avoiding Racial Equity Detours in Education.

A district-wide book talk, *Between the World and Me*, was attended by ten CGS staff members. This nonfiction book is written by a father for his son, explaining his experience of being black in the United States. CGS staff explored their own identity in an activity presented at the November Faculty Meeting. *Circles of My Multicultural Self* engages participants in a process of identifying what they consider to be the most important dimensions of their own identity. Stereotypes are examined as participants share stories about associations they are proud to be a part of and those that they found hurtful to be associated with.

Two Community Conversations, an outgrowth of the district-based Open Choice program, were facilitated by a CREC specialist with a goal of moving the conversations of equity, diversity and culturally responsive behavior beyond the school walls. Several CGS staff and district leaders participated, alongside community members, business owners, Board of Education members and parents.

- Explore and enhance the use of staff-led efforts, such as Spirit Committee and Sunshine Club, to recognize staff successes, growth and accomplishments on a regular and consistent basis.

This year, perhaps more than any other, it was critical to nurture the adult spirit in the school community. The Cheer Squad is a staff committee that invests their time to create events and experiences that provide support, encouragement and joy for CGS staff. The return from Thanksgiving through December 23 was coined 18 Dazzling Days. Each day was assigned as a theme day, a sweet treat or a recognition event. A “Staff Shout Out” bulletin board was coordinated in the staff room and filled with positive messages of appreciation from one staff member to another. A “Take What You Need” interactive bulletin board provided affirmations in the categories of hope, confidence, patience, kindness, etc. Another staff boost was developed for the month of March. We rocked our socks in recognition of World Down Syndrome Day, marked our spring-themed BINGO boards and enjoyed an edible treat every Tuesday and Thursday.

Five staff were celebrated at the school level as Most Valuable Patriots and consequently nominated for district level recognition. A photograph and summary were added to the MVP display in the CGS lobby. A staff member will be honored as the Rookie of the Year at an upcoming Board of Education meeting. The district’s Coventry Leadership Academy included two outstanding educators from CGS in this third cohort. The course, which was cut short last year, was continued with five virtual dates between January and May. For the second time in three years a CGS paraeducator will

be submitted for the Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Award. The CGS librarian was selected to serve on the Nutmeg Elementary Selection Committee. The Nutmeg Book Award encourages children to read quality literature and choose their favorite from a list of ten nominated titles. Staff spotlights occurred at every Faculty Meeting. Teachers presented exemplary practices such as modification of Tier I assignments for students with special needs and virtual PPT presentations that communicated the academic, social and emotional strengths, growth and areas for further development in detailed and heartwarming ways.

- Access well-designed webinars and online training resources to individualize paraeducator professional growth.

The Pupil and Staff Support Services department spearheaded locating and communicating paraeducator professional development opportunities. CGS paraeducators tapped into optional training through the SAFESCHOOLS Online Training, a site that houses our mandatory training. Staff completed Lifts and Transfers, Safety and Injury Prevention and Safety in the Classroom. Social and Behavioral courses, Cultural Competence and Racial Bias and De-Escalation Strategies, were attended by several paraeducators. EASTCONN was another source for online professional development. This included a training, Supporting Special Populations: Building Relationships and Maximizing Instruction. A third resource included the topic of paraeducator roles and skills. Participation in this training resulted in increased skills in classroom management, accommodations, modifications, instructional activities and collaboration.

The district trained an additional staff member to be a PMT Trainer. This allowed more sessions to be held, initially virtually, and finally in person. Eight paraeducators received a full day refresher course or the initial full day course this year. This training provides attendees with the skills and tools to de-escalate conflicts in safe ways, ensuring a positive school climate.

During the February Full Day PD, paraeducators engaged in training with a CPS Board Certified Behaviorist and received self-care strategies from a presentation, Mindful Moment, with Kate Fields.