

Coventry Public Schools
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George Hersey Robertson Intermediate School Goals
2021-2022

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.

- Collaborate with district and building leaders to develop a comprehensive plan related to reopening schools, which addresses scheduling, safety and operations, teaching and learning including refinements to distance learning, assessment strategies to identify gaps in learning as a result of distance learning, social and emotional programming, professional development, school activities and events, and the needs of parents and families.

As we entered another school year that required innovation and flexibility, our district administrative team collaborated to craft our reopening plan for the 2021-2022 school year. We had to consider a plethora of variables and be ready to adjust immediately if needed. Over the summer of 2021, we held numerous sessions with administrators, and I convened my School Improvement team to advise on the practical implications of new procedures at GHR. This began with our revised daily schedule to accommodate lunch spaces and allow for mask breaks. Like last year, lunch schedules, recess and snack were revised to maximize social distancing while eating, provide outdoor options for snack, and cohorted recesses. In the fall, recess was staggered to limit the number of students outside; each classroom was assigned to a specific area of the playground, and each classroom had their own “playbag” containing playground equipment. Each classroom operated on a unique schedule with scheduled mask breaks. Similar to last year, signage from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) was posted throughout the building, encouraging hand washing, social distancing and mask wearing as mitigating strategies. Considering both furniture and staffing, we decided on having two lunch spaces this year, using both the cafeteria for two classes at a time, as well as half of the gym. This freed up ½ gym for indoor PE, if needed, and ensured students were still eating at individual tables, over 6 ft apart for social distancing. While this was changed again in March of 2022, it was a successful plan for lunch given the constraints. Additionally, we revised our dismissal procedure to accommodate parent pick ups which varied between 60-100 pick ups at 3:10 each day.

With another year of adjustments, our facilities were impacted in numerous ways. In addition to the new lunchroom plan, we also moved related arts back to their classrooms. (Last year, art, music and PE pushed into classrooms). With those spaces being used for instruction again, we relocated storage like classroom rugs and small group tables onto the stage. However, we were still able to carve out space on the stage for Grade 5 band which met in small groups of 3-6 students at 6 feet apart. With a new math interventionist position and a UCONN intern, we relocated math intervention to a full-size classroom divided into three discrete work stations. Our ABA program was also expanding into a new annex classroom. Over the summer, our Library was completely redesigned. From new carpets to the relocation of the circulation desk, our library now feels open and expansive and is truly one of the most inviting spaces at GHR. Given 1:1 Chromebooks, the countertops for desktop computers were dismantled, repurposed for hands-on, makerspace activities such as design challenges using everything from tangrams to legos. With makerspace and STEM activities back in the library, we redesigned the portable lab to now be our Professional Learning Space and leveled library. Hundreds of books for teachers to use in the classroom were sorted by level; there are multiple copies of texts so that teachers can implement them with reading groups, book clubs, or guided reading. Additionally, it serves as a professional workspace for teachers to

hold grade level meetings and instructional coaching. Based on the most recent Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance in August, we determined it was feasible to use cubbies and lockers again this year, rather than keeping personal belongings in milk crates next to desks.

In close collaboration with our nursing team, our administrative team adjusted throughout the year based on the most recent CDC and Department of Public Health (DPH). This included adapting protocols around such considerations as: visitors, vaccinations, attendance codes, after school programming, social distancing, remote learning, cohorting and masking as the year progressed. It was a fluid year that required flexibility for all.

Beyond the physical space at GHR itself, we had to consider priorities regarding teaching and learning. With consultation from the Director of Teaching and Learning and our K-12 instructional specialist, we drafted our Assessment Calendar which provides a year-long scope of assessments by month. We determined that it was important to assess students in reading using our Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) again. This provides us information related to reading level, reading rate, accuracy and comprehension. Since we had not administered the BAS since fall of 2019, we provided teachers with a refresher course in which the reading room team provided important guidance to determine a student's instructional reading level. BAS was conducted beginning the third week of September; in conjunction with SBAC scores from the Spring and the Literary Pre-IAB, it helped us identify students in need of reading intervention. Through September and October, we administered several Interim Assessment blocks (IABs) to determine the strengths and needs of individual students as well as skills that needed to be targeted in each grade level.

With assessments in mind, our intervention and special education team recognized it was imperative to start Tier II and Tier III instruction as soon as possible, thus maximizing the instructional time we have with students to accelerate their learning. Our reading and math intervention both started on the 6th day of school, which was the earliest we have ever started. Until we had more data points, we used SBAC for Grade 4 and 5 students, as well as current intervention data, to identify students to start in reading or math intervention immediately. Then, every 6 weeks, we adjusted the students receiving intervention, the program used, and the number of days each student receives intervention to ensure we are being responsive to their needs. For example, the BAS conducted in late September identified a handful of other students who could benefit from reading intervention; as a result, they were added to the first cycle of intervention in October. Based on our ongoing assessment cycle, here were our numbers as of January 2022: 54 students receiving math intervention, 74 students in reading intervention, and 11 students in a Book Club program for supplemental support.

Finally, this year evolved through various COVID restrictions which allowed some programs to return, albeit often reimagined. For example, we hosted three author visits; 3 were over the Fall and winter which were virtual, and an in person visit in the spring. We also had a very successful Veterans Day Assembly with the entire Air National Guard Flying Yankees as guest speakers, feasible only because it was virtual. While parent teacher conferences were virtual in the fall, our Student Led Conferences were held in person in the Spring- the first time since 2019! Our Scholastic Book Fair returned in person for both the fall and the spring, and school spirit days were once again implemented on the last Friday of every month with Spike making an appearance. Thanks to our PTO, new playground paint was donated and new activities were painted onto the blacktop for students to enjoy at recess. We also installed a new sensory path in the Grade 3 hallway to allow for gross motor movement breaks.

- Work with grade level teams and district curriculum leaders to analyze and disaggregate Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment data; plan for instructional focus and assessment revisions based on data and student work analysis.

Over the summer of 2021, Smarter Balanced Assessment results were released. With the support of our K-12 Specialists and under the leadership of the Director of Teaching and Learning, we carefully analyzed this SBAC data for its implications related to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and individual academic programming. This analysis helped inform our curricular alignment, instructional areas of focus, and other assessment needs. Teachers looked at cohort data, individual student achievement, and grade level performance to determine areas of focus for the 2021-2022 school year.

In August of 2021, our school improvement team reviewed the data and completed a thoughtful analysis which they shared with staff during our first faculty meeting. Teacher leaders developed a presentation to share the data as well as provide guiding questions for collaborative analysis. On the SBAC in ELA, an average of 70% of students scored in the at/above range. In math, an average of 63% of students were scored in the at/above range. During this faculty meeting in August, grade level teams reviewed patterns and trends, as well as individual student data.

Through this analysis, we determined which Interim Assessment Blocks would be most critical to serve as formative assessments to measure student's progress during the year. An assessment calendar and pacing guide was developed for ELA and Math with frequent formative checkpoints during the year. The Literary, Informational, Research and Listening Interim Assessment Blocks (IAB) would be administered following specific units of study in the ELA curriculum, to monitor if students were acquiring the necessary understanding of grade level standards. In math, each grade level determined two IABs that would address their areas of need, such as the Operations and Algebraic Thinking and the Numbers Base Ten. Through the SBAC analysis, Claims 2 and 4, which both relate to problem solving and communicating reasoning, appeared as an area of need. In addition to each grade level administering two IABs in math, they also each conducted practice with Performance Tasks, which are complex, multi-step math problems. During designated coaching days with our K-12 ELA and Math Specialists, grade level teams used the Student Work Protocol to analyze IAB scores and adjust instruction moving forward.

In ELA, our focus became reading comprehension, based on a detailed analysis of the 3 SBAC claims that comprise the ELA score. The ELA score includes the claims of reading, listening comprehension and writing and research/inquiry. Across the three grades, the general trend was that the fewest number of students achieved a 3 or higher in reading, compared with listening and writing/research. As such, reading comprehension was our area of emphasis. More detailed information can be found in the SMART goals section related to reading achievement.

In math, students were administered two IABs and Performance Tasks. On the pre-assessment of Operations and Algebraic Thinking, an average of 7% of students scored at/above goal. For their second IAB in March, grade levels either focused on Numbers Base Ten or Fractions based on the priority standards and areas of emphasis in their grade level curriculum. On this, an average of 66% across three grade levels scored in the at/above range. In comparison, in the 2020-2021 school year, an average of 60% of students scored at/above proficiency on their Numbers Base 10 IAB. These IABs were administered in January-March, and so there would still be an anticipated 3-4 months of instruction prior to the SBAC summative assessment in May, so 66% serves as a very positive predictor of success on SBAC summative.

Another indicator of math achievement is a Performance Task. Performance Tasks are multi-step problems that integrate numerous math skills into a real-world scenario. For example, students may be tasked with finding the cost of items at a skate park rental given certain parameters, and then expand that to the cost for a whole class. They must use information from a table of prices and a diagram of dimensions of the skate park to answer questions. There are numerous questions that students must answer, and explain their reasoning for each response, communicating with math vocabulary. The performance task also integrates numerous math skills, rather than skills in isolation. This gives us a comprehensive understanding of a student's problem solving and reasoning skills.

In the Fall of 2021, the percentage of students at/above goal for the performance task was 30%, 28%, and 4% respectively. For comparison, last school year's pre performance task data was 8%, 37%, and 3% in grades 3-5 respectively. The post-performance task was administered in April 2022. On this, an average of 63% of students achieved at/above goal. This is tremendous growth, with 60% of Grade 3, 63% of Grade 4 and 66% of Grade 5 students achieving this target. Again, comparatively, in 2020-2021 on the post-performance task in April, students achieved 56% , 65%, and 47% at/above goal in grades 3-5 respectively.

To support the continuous cycle focused on individual student achievement, the Superintendent and Director of Teaching and Learning met with K-5 teams for math and reading intervention. These district-wide K-5 Intervention meetings focused on a comprehensive data review of student progress, examining both individual students and also the efficacy of intervention programming as a whole. These meetings helped us evaluate program needs and plan for refinements.

Through instructional coaching, professional development, and faculty meetings, time was allocated for classroom teachers to analyze all IAB data and make adjustments to their instruction based on the results. This analysis helped inform our curricular alignment, instructional areas of focus, and other assessment needs. Teachers looked at cohort data, individual student achievement, and grade level performance. Using our district-wide "Looking at Student Work Protocol", teachers identified general trends, specified individual student needs, reviewed all of the question stems and question types, and determined areas for curricular refinement. These assessments were also useful in providing timely information to identify students for Tier 2 and 3 reading or math intervention. This analysis also resulted in new instructional materials that were developed or revised, such as a spiral review math choice board, or a grammar daily review warm up.

- Collaboratively analyze the BAS assessment, pre- and post literary interim assessment blocks, Research and Listening interim assessment block, and the Informational interim assessment block using the Student Work Protocol to inform instructional needs and student support areas in ELA.

In collaboration with the Reading Consultant and Reading Teacher, teachers reviewed how to administer BAS assessments for the first time in two years! The BAS is administered 1:1 as the teacher hears the student read aloud and assess their comprehension, reading rate, fluency, and accuracy. Teachers used the Fountas and Pinnell Continuum of Learning to determine the reading level of their students, compared it to grade level expectations, and then identified what skills they needed to learn in order to improve their reading. Given the challenges of the past year, we developed a 2 week "boost" instructional unit for all teachers to implement in their classrooms, refreshing students on reading skills such as summarizing and explaining theme. While the BAS was underway, the reading room began a 6 week reading cycle with students who were already in intervention in Spring of 2021 to provide continuity of instruction.

With updated BAS reading levels, in conjunction with SBAC as a data point, teachers collaborated with the reading consultant to identify which students may need reading intervention. Teachers utilized our system of Intervention Referral Team (IRT) meetings to discuss student's needs; the number of Intervention Referral Team meetings was increased this year by 3 meetings to support continuous discussion of individual students and adjust programming accordingly. The BAS assessments also helped teachers determine small groups for Tier 2 classroom reading support, such as guided reading groups or pulling groups to work on specific skills, such as inferring theme or character traits. Teachers used the Literacy Continuum of Learning by Fountas and Pinnell, to determine what skills students need and what the characteristics of text are in each level. All grade 3 classrooms implemented guided reading groups, and grades 4-5 began book clubs as the year progressed. Lastly, classroom teachers used the BAS leveling system to help students find appropriate independent reading books that provided the right challenge. For students receiving intervention, the BAS assessment was conducted again in January 2022 as another method of progress monitoring. In May, all students were administered the BAS to demonstrate the growth they had accomplished throughout the year.

As we continue to make data based decisions regarding curriculum and programming for our students, instructional coaching was back, in person, 5-6 times over the course of the year. At each ELA coaching session, grade level teams worked with special education and the K-12 ELA Consultant to review IAB data and BAS assessment data to determine students needing reading intervention. Over the year, groups were fluidly adjusted to include a change in reading program, reading level, days of week, or service provider to ensure student growth. Based on need, we utilize the following research based programs for reading intervention: Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI), Orton-Gillingham, Visualizing and Verbalizing, Just Words, and Foundations. To ensure consistency, communication and collaboration, a weekly time is built into the duty schedule for certified and non-certified interventionists to discuss each student's individual progress and review lessons. Interventionists track students accuracy, fluency, and comprehension on a biweekly basis to ensure students are developing reading skills. Additionally, district-wide K-5 Intervention meetings with the Superintendent and Director of Teaching and Learning were held in reading and math to review student progress and look at both individual students and the efficacy of interventions as a whole. These meetings helped us evaluate program needs and plan for refinements. For our Boost Cycle in September, 71 students were in reading intervention; cycle one had 74 students, and currently cycle two has 60 students, as several students no longer require reading intervention.

To help us monitor reading comprehension as identified from the Smarter Balanced Assessment as an area of need throughout the school year, we also administered IABs. In reading comprehension, students were administered a test to assess their comprehension of informational text in February 2022. Based on this assessment, an average of 73% of students scored at/above goal; this is a positive indicator of strong achievement on the anticipated May 2022 SBAC Summative. With literary text, students took a pre-assessment in October with an average of 13% of students at/above goal. This IAB was administered again in March, with an average of 70% scoring at/above goal across three grade levels.

To support the acquisition of listening comprehension skills, classroom teachers and the Library Media Specialist collaborated to design and implement lessons that addressed active listening. Monthly, students practiced listening comprehension using released items, and used programs such as RazKids and Scholastic to listen to reading and demonstrate understanding. Throughout the year, teachers embedded listening comprehension practice in authentic ways, such as during a Daily 5 center or using audio clips aligned with science or social studies instruction. Specifically, audio clips from Epic and Brainpop were integrated to ensure on-going practice of listening and note-taking skills. The Library Media Specialist

explicitly taught the strategy of visual note-taking, called sketchnotes, to support student's listening comprehension, and also provided practice using SBAC question stems. The Listening Interim Assessment Block (IAB) was administered in early March; an average of 44% of students scored in the at/above range. This clearly demonstrates that more instruction is needed around active listening and note-taking. During March coaching, the K-12 ELA specialist worked with grade levels to analyze these results and create lessons to address these skills.

To support students with the Research skills addressed on the SBAC, the Library Media specialist created a pre-assessment for Research skills, and designed several lessons using language and vocabulary used on the Research IAB, such as "credible sources". The Research IAB pre-assessment was administered in October 2021 and the post test in February 2022. The average percentage of students achieving at/above proficiency on the post-test IAB was 61%, a huge increase from the average research pre-test percentage of 16%. This increase was within 3 months, and is predictive that with further instruction through March and April, students will have done well on the ELA SBAC in the area of research. When reviewing growth, as a point of comparison, in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, the average growth for the research IAB was +43 points, which is commensurate with our research growth this year.

- For implementation in the 2022-2023 school year, develop multi-disciplinary projects in each grade that integrate the newly adopted Coventry Portrait of the Graduate competencies, including utilization of the collaboration and communication rubrics and development of the critical thinking rubric.

Throughout this year, we engaged in numerous sessions regarding our Portrait of the Graduate initiative. It began in the fall with a review of the collaboration and communication rubrics that we adopted last year. With the challenges of social distancing, we brainstormed ways in which to use aspects of the collaboration and communication rubrics with students on smaller projects throughout the year. We ensured the rubrics used student-friendly language so students would understand what's expected of them. Teachers also used self-reflection forms, sentence starters, and journal reflections to assist students in learning how to effectively collaborate and communicate. For example, Grade 3 students developed a biography presentation to share with classmates and collaborated on maps in social studies. In Grade 4, students wrote a non-fiction book based on endangered animals to present to their class, and collaborated across several weeks during book clubs with peers. In Grade 5, students conducted science experiments in lab groups and practiced communication skills with their disability awareness presentations. Certainly, throughout the year, these skills are embedded and practiced across subject areas and grade levels. Our goal for this year was to develop a critical thinking rubric. Using the exemplar rubric from EdLeader21, we spent two professional development sessions developing our GHR rubric with student friendly language. Each group prepared their proposal and our staff came to consensus on the wording of the rubric. By January, we had created the rubric and began explicitly teaching those skills. Our K-12 Instructional Specialists continued to enhance our knowledge base around critical thinking with two presentations at faculty meetings in January and March, as we identified critical thinking skills, where they are or could be taught in our curriculum, and any gaps that need to be addressed. These presentations were well received by staff and it affirmed much of the work that we are already doing to support students who solve problems, reason effectively, make evidence-based decisions, analyze outcomes, and serve as an inquisitive learner. We spent the majority of the time on embedding these skills into our curriculum in ELA, Science, Math, and the related arts. The district Curriculum Cabinet supported this work by aligning critical thinking skills with our content area standards to identify the standards that align with our critical thinking skills. Grade level teams and departments then discussed

the integration of collaboration, communication, and critical thinking skills in their instruction and assessment. Looking ahead to next year, we hope to finish developing our multi-disciplinary projects so that they can be implemented as designed.

- Strengthen student goal setting in literacy and mathematics, and continue to expand the use of digital portfolios in all grade levels.

Throughout the year, students set instructional goals for themselves and measured their growth. This culminated in March 2022 Student Led Conferences (SLC) in which students developed digital portfolios showcasing their progress in reading, writing and math. This was the first time SLC had been conducted since 2019! To further explain Student Led Conferences, for example, Grade 3 students set a goal in reading, writing and math in the fall, and then revised this goal leading up to the March Student Led Conferences. At those conferences, students shared examples of their growth in each area based on the student's self-identified goals, then shared work samples with their parents. For example, a student reflected that in math an area of strength is solving complex problems, whereas an area that they will work on is two-digit multiplication. Students developed these portfolios throughout the year, capturing their work using Google Slides, and presenting them from their Chromebooks or interactive white board to the live audience of their parents and/or family. For any families unable to attend, students could present their SLC to myself and other staff members in the subsequent days so they could still experience the sense of an authentic audience and personal pride in their growth.

Students also included other areas of their learning into Student Led Conferences this year, including the related arts. In art, for example, students set goals around their use of the Elements and Principles of Design. Students conveyed that goal by showcasing a piece of art that illustrated their growth in their skill level and knowledge of the Elements & Principles on Design. For students involved in Challenge and Enrichment Programming (CEP), students set project-based goals using rubrics. Then, during their project presentations, students provided peer critique and offered ideas to improve the project based on the rubric. For students who receive reading intervention, students set goals on their reading accuracy, fluency, or comprehension. Students receiving math intervention had graphs on their fact fluency growth in all four operations. For Grade 5 students participating in Band, students set personal music goals for home practice and track this in their weekly practice journal. Parent feedback was overwhelmingly positive and they appreciated the authentic and genuine approach to setting realistic and specific goals and working towards their achievement.

- Disaggregate NGSS 2021 assessment data (Grade 5) to identify instructional and curricular needs in science.

This year, we were fortunate to collaborate with our new K-12 Science Specialist. This position allowed a renewed focus on Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and its vertical alignment of concepts and skills across the grades. To begin the year, the science specialist conducted a thorough analysis of Grade 5 NGSS data from May 2021. This analysis detailed that 65% of Grade 5 students were at/above goal, which is commensurate with previous years. Digging further into the data, she collaborated with the Grade 5 science team to identify that the areas of life sciences and earth/space sciences were an area of need. Through instructional coaching in science (new this year!), the Grade 5 science team determined that students need further instruction with modeling, pattern finding, and mathematical thinking, such as measuring and graphing.

Throughout the course of the year, our science specialist met with each grade level five times to review and revise curriculum, conducting an audit of phenomena and student-created products in unit bundles for relevance and engagement. She provided our teachers with professional development on student's mathematical sense-making and grade levels revised unit projects with an increased focus on modeling. She also worked to determine formative assessments, aligned with NGSS. Just as SBAC has Interim Assessment Blocks to serve as data points throughout the year, we began to implement science formative assessment using Inner Orbit for the first time this year. Each grade level conducted two assessments aligned with their units of study during the year. Information gathered from these assessments were used to adjust lessons and instruction moving forward.

- Provide additional opportunities to grow achievement in high performing students through enrichment and programming such as Project Lead the Way.

Just as we support individual needs with reading and math intervention, we also have a particular focus on enriching our high achieving students. These opportunities span grade levels and content areas to maximize the impact of challenging programming for all students.

As a guaranteed opportunity, we continue to implement Project Lead the Way module "Input/Output: Computer Systems" for all students in Grade 4 to address the Computer Science Framework. All Grade 4 classes engaged in Project Lead the Way lessons weekly during library class in November and December. Each student created their own Clicker Game, which is a Scratch project. Students used video tutorials as models, and this project proved to be much more challenging than last year's Tynker project. Students participated in two introductory lessons focused on digital citizenship and Scratch accounts, followed by lessons on input and output computer systems. Then, they learned about the information highway and binary code, as well as plotting points on a coordinate grid. Finally, students applied this knowledge to creating their own Scratch Clicker Game using such technical terms as: constraint, criteria, variable, debug, and navigator. Students were encouraged to keep designing or building after their Project Lead the Way unit ended.

GHR prides itself on addressing the needs of our highly achieving learners. The teacher of our Challenge and Enrichment Program (CEP) provides instruction to develop the potential of students identified as gifted and/or talented and other students performing above grade level. In Grade 3 we begin the screening process for identifying gifted and/or talented students. This year, we adjusted the timeframe of this initial identification and moved it to earlier in the year so that the CEP teacher could begin her work with students in CEP sooner. In October, we begin with an initial screener: the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT). Based on testing information and teacher recommendation, selected students meet weekly in small groups to work on independent self-selected research projects. Additional components of the 3rd grade screening process include collecting data from classroom teachers, parents/guardians and the challenge and enrichment teacher including the Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS) Home Rating Scale and a Mid-Screening Reflection sheet focused on creativity, task commitment, and academic achievement. Classroom observations, and test scores were also used to determine a child's eligibility for identification, this year conducted in January.

In Grades 4 and 5, students identified as gifted and/or talented participate weekly in the Challenge and Enrichment Program, learning problem solving skills and strategies using components of the Future Problem Solvers Programs. They engage in personalized projects as well as many projects which include the engineering and design process and incorporate 3D printing. Newly implemented this year, our Challenge and Enrichment teacher collaborated with the Future Problem Solvers (FPS) coordinator at

Captain Nathan Hale (CNH) Middle School to begin preparing students for the demands of FPS. Starting in late winter, the two teachers met with Grade 5 CEP students weekly on FPS lessons, which they have the option of continuing at CNH in Grade 6.

The Challenge and Enrichment teacher also networks with several local experts. In December, for example, Grade 5 CEP students engaged in a virtual presentation with a geologist from UCONN to support their understanding of mining, one of their FPS topics! In May, students are releasing Salmon Eggs at a river site in Hebron. Over the course of the year, Grade 5 CEP students researched and created a group project on the Atlantic Salmon. They raised salmon eggs in the classroom and then plan to transport the hatched eggs (fry) to the Salmon River in East Hampton, CT, in collaboration with students and teachers at Hebron Elementary School.

For students not identified but with specialized areas of interest, the CEP teacher promotes a whole school enrichment model and develops interest and project based groups each trimester. Topics have included Creative Writing, Math Maniacs, Engineering, and Art and Technology. Students engaged in Math Maniacs use the Noetic math program to guide their work, and must collaborate on multi-step math problems that have an authentic connection to real-world problems. Of note, we have made a concerted effort to ensure that females have composed of at least 50% of the participants in these groups this year.

Specifically in math, the adaptive enrichment program: Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces (ALEKS), supports Grade 5 students with advanced math. This program covers the Grade 6 math topics of: Operations with Decimals, Order of Operations, Representing and Plotting Integers and Rational Numbers, Operations with Fractions, Ratios and Rates, Percent, Algebraic Expressions and Equations, Inequalities, Geometry and Statistics. This year, 20 students were identified to begin the ALEKS program due to their mastery of Grade 5 skills. These students use ALEKS math daily to begin instruction on Grade 6 math content and pre-algebra, with the potential of moving ahead to Grade 7 math in Grade 6. Monthly updates are sent to parents to keep them apprised of their students progress, and students can work on this program at home as well as during Math Intervention time at school.

To encourage females on the STEM track, our Library Media Specialist and Challenge and Enrichment teacher implemented Girls Who Code, open to all girls in grades 3-5. This was a weekly experience in the fall which incorporated a book and coding lessons and applications. Students met weekly to discuss each chapter and learn the basics of computer coding using Scratch. Students were inspired by a Scratch website dedicated to projects from around the world, which students used as exemplars. As an example, for one challenge, students used an algorithm to create a simple picture, and uploaded their work in a Jamboard. They also learned the binary alphabet and designed binary code bracelets! In the Spring, Mrs. Fortin ran a second session for students who had already participated in the initial Girls Who Code to provide further extension, including their continued development of computer science concepts.

- Implement after school programming to accelerate student achievement, including several enrichment opportunities, customized tutoring, and approximately 40 small group reading and literacy support sessions.

As we continued to accelerate student achievement during a pandemic, we offered several opportunities for students after school, including After School Academy which ran two sessions in the Fall and Spring, personalized tutoring, and enrichment.

In September, we used data points from SBAC, intervention data, and classroom performance to identify students who may need further acceleration. After School Academy hosted 1 classroom per grade level, with 10-15 students each to provide academic support in reading, writing and math. Students rotated through stations for the hour long program, which operated on Tuesday and Thursday. In the Fall session, 32 students participated; in the spring session, 34 students. Over the course of the year, 7 students participated in weekly individualized tutoring, 1:1 student-teacher ratio with instruction focused on foundational skill gaps. Both tutoring and After School Academy were differentiated so that students were working independently on the skills they needed to attain for success at their grade level. That included practice with basic math facts, guided reading at their level, crafting open-ended written responses to reading, and math problem solving with multi-step word problems.

While the data from the Spring session is still finishing up, the data of student achievement from the Fall session demonstrates student's academic acceleration. In math, for example, we used MobyMax Grade level equivalent data, based on a pre-score in the end of September to the most recent results in December. For each month in the program, students are expected to grow one-tenth of a percentage point. So, in the fall semester, students were expected to grow .4. Students in the afterschool program far outperformed, with an average of .7 years of growth (nearly double the growth) in the same amount of time. This can perhaps be attributed to their use of MobyMax in the after school program, the opportunity to use it at home, and its use during math intervention during the school day. For reading, we measured growth using the BAS; at Grades 3-5, the expected level of growth is approximately 3 levels per year. In the fall semester, students in the after school program already exceeded the expectation for one trimester of growth, which would be 1 level with an average of 1.4 BAS levels of growth. To put it another way, students in the after school program have nearly demonstrated half a year's growth in only one third of the year, demonstrating acceleration.

In addition to academic support, we also recognized the need for students to participate in enrichment and after-school clubs again! As the year progressed, we were able to host increasing amounts of enrichment activities. This included Mindfulness, which was geared towards Grade 3 students for "before school" sessions, Outing Club for Grade 5 students which held a fall and spring session, and Multi-sport club in the spring. In Outing Club, for example, students conducted a nature hike on the trail behind the school, visited a local farm, and voyaged to Patriot's Park. Spots for these opportunities filled quickly, and it's evident that these are popular programs that we will continue to hold next year with the goal of increasing our after-school programming.

During the school day, students in Grade 5 also had the opportunity to participate in Principal's Book Club. Over the course of the year, we read Wink, The New Kid and Cog, all award winning books. Different students were selected for each session, and we met in the library -or outside- during lunch to discuss these books together, continuing to build our literacy community. This also led to a Student-Led book club, in which two grade 4 students organized an after-school, virtual book club on A Boy Called Bat. This pioneering group met every Monday on Google Meets, supervised by a reading interventionist or myself, as they truly led their own discussion of each chapter. It was inspiring to see the leadership of these students and we also hope to continue that next year!

In addition to the Grade 5 Student Council, another opportunity for student leadership and enrichment was our newly formed Kindness Squad. 8 students were nominated by their classroom teachers for this role as a kindness representative at GHR with the mission of promoting kind acts. I met with these students bi-weekly, beginning in February. During our time together, they made an official Kindness

Squad logo with badges, led morning announcements, designed an inspirational Kindness Wall, distributed Kindness cards, supported Autism Awareness month with a banner and kindness posters, and served as Hallway monitors for safety during dismissal. This leadership group will continue next year.

SMART Goals

Reading

Increase the percentage of Grades 3-5 students who demonstrate at or above goal scores on the ELA/Literacy Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment (IAB) by 10 percentage points as measured by fall 2021 SBAC literary interim assessment data to the spring 2022 SBAC literary interim assessment data.

In ELA, the SBAC ELA score includes the claims of reading, listening comprehension and writing and research/inquiry. Across the three grades, the general trend from previous SBAC data was that the fewest number of students achieved a 3 or higher in reading, compared with listening and writing/research. As such, reading comprehension in the area of literary text was our area of emphasis. We administered a pre-assessment in October 2021 to get a baseline score of students' comprehension of literary text. The average percentage of students scoring at/above goal in literary tests as measured by the pre-assessment was 13%. As a point of comparison, last year's average on the literary pre-assessment was 10.5% at/above goal.

After analyzing this data, we spent significant time collaborating on lessons targeting areas of need, and revising pacing guides to accelerate instruction. For example, grade level teams implemented SBAC question stems in all of their unit tests and in daily practice. We began reading intervention immediately with a "boost" session that lasted approximately 5-6 weeks. Teachers also integrated other opportunities to support wide reading of literary texts. This includes all students having choice over their independent reading book and options to read on EPIC, which provides tools such as read to text and visuals which serve as supportive features for striving readers.

As a school, reading was also promoted in many ways. This includes the annual Nutmeg book celebration, as students' names were featured on the announcements once they completed the Nutmeg reading challenge. The principal hosted three Principal's Book Club sessions, including a student-led book club! Additionally, three virtual author's visits honored great books and celebrated authors Greg van Eekhout, Derrick Barnes, Jarrett Lerner, followed by a live author visit of Nutmeg nominee author Jeanne Ferruolo. To continue to build a community of readers, we began the year with a whole school mentor text of Just Ask by Sonia Sotomayor and updated our Little Free Library regularly for free and open access to books.

In April of 2022, students were administered the literary post IAB. Across the grade levels, an average of 70% of students scored in the at/above goal range. In comparison, last year 63% of students achieved in the at/above goal range. The growth from pre- to post- IAB is notable. The average percentage points of growth was +7 percentage points. Especially notable is the number of students in the Advanced range. Over 43% of each grade level scored a Level 4, which is above grade level expectation.

Literary Text Interim Assessment Block (IAB) Data

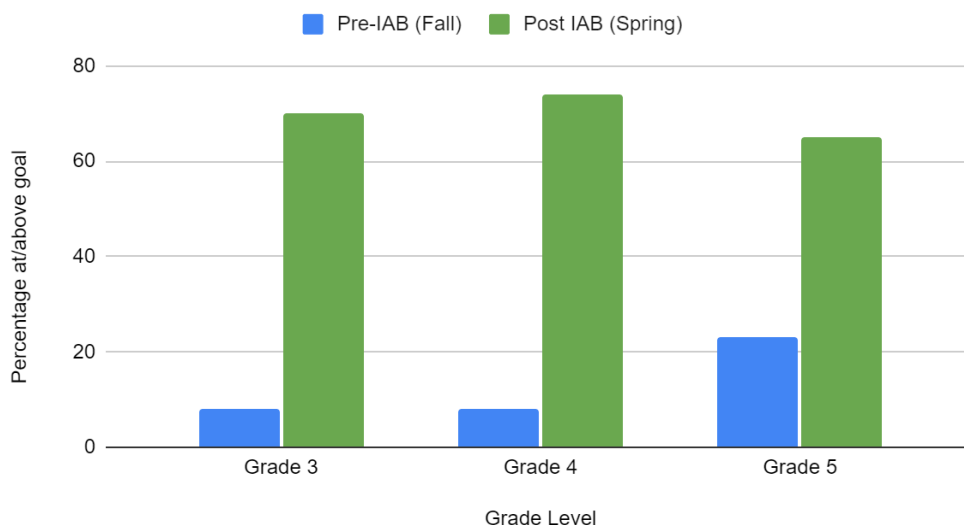


Figure 1: Literary Reading Comprehension growth from pre to post IAB

Writing

All students in grades 3-5 will increase their writing scores from pre to post on-demand in narrative, informational, and opinion writing by an average of 8 points as measured by the Lucy Calkins rubric.

With the support of the K-12 Literacy Specialist during ELA coaching and long-team times, grade level teachers collaboratively scored and analyzed their on-demand writing. As part of the Teachers College Writer's Workshop model, students write a pre and post prompt (beginning and end of unit assessment) in narrative, opinion, and informational writing. The pre-prompts help teachers ascertain background knowledge of the writing genre, which informs their instruction and conferencing with individual students. For example, teachers may determine that the majority of their class is strong with using figurative language, but they need help with crafting an engaging beginning. Teachers then designed lessons to address this. Teachers also used the pre-prompt analysis to identify students who may need more support and instruction. This included the reteaching of concepts, modeling effective writing with think-alouds, and providing students with instructional tools such as graphic organizers, sentence starters, and word banks for vocabulary. The 1:1 integration of Chromebooks has been an instrumental support for our writers, as they use tools such as spell check and adaptive features such as speech-to-text so that students can get their ideas transcribed.

The post prompt serves more as a summative assessment to determine what students' learned over the course of the unit. A writing rubric is used to score these writing prompts, with a raw score total of 44 being the mastery score and 33 being the grade level expectation. This analytic rubric helps teachers objectively assess the introduction, conclusion, transitions, organization, grammar and mechanics, and elaboration of each piece of writing. On average, students are expected to grow 8 points from their pre to their post prompt.

This was set as the school-wide writing goal, which was surpassed by an average writing growth of 13

points, which even exceeds our accomplishment in the school-year 2019-2020 of 12 points.

As in previous years, brief writes were also administered and used instructionally to support students with the writing demands on SBAC. Rather than composing an entire piece, SBAC requires students to write an introduction, conclusion, or add elaboration to a “mock student” given piece. Students must take on the role of that “mock student” and then employ the characteristics of good writing in a paragraph. It’s a unique task, and teachers instructed students on how to apply their writing skills to this task. By reviewing exemplars, writing brief writes together, modeling good writing, and using a 2 point rubric to evaluate writing, students practice the skills needed to be successful on SBAC brief writes. They use the rubric to self-report grades and set their writing goals on brief writes.

Writing Growth

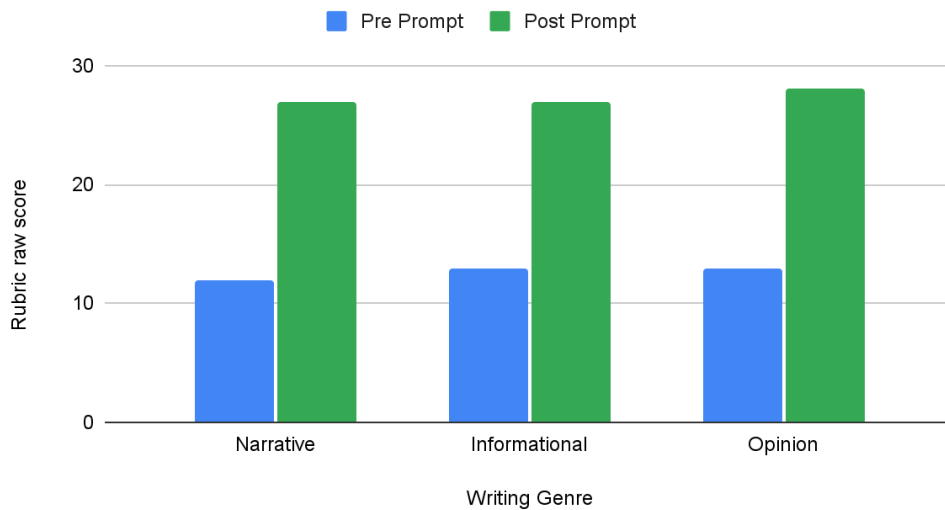


Figure 2: Writing growth from pre to post prompt for each genre

Math

Increase the percentage of Grade 3-5 students who demonstrate at or above goal scores on the Math Interim Assessment Blocks (IAB) by 10 percentage points as measured by the fall 2021 IAB assessment data to the spring 2022 IAB assessment data.

Teachers collaborated with the Director of Teaching and Learning, our K-12 Math Specialist, and our math intervention team to review the baseline assessment data of our Fall interim assessment block. With this information, they designed lessons and practice opportunities that scaffolded the degree of independence of students in the area of operations and algebraic thinking. At the first math coaching session, grade level teams reviewed their pre-assessment IAB data. They utilized the Student Work Protocol to analyze individual student performance, grade level trends, and a question analysis.

In the Fall of 2021, the percentage of students at/above goal for their IAB was 4%, 8%, and 7% in grades 3-5 respectively. On the post-IAB in the spring, students achieved 61% , 77%, and 61% at/above goal in grades 3-5 respectively. This is tremendous growth, resulting in an average of 66% at/above goal, with 60

percentage points of growth on average. Additionally, on the post-assessment, over 39% of students in each grade scored in the Above range, which is tremendous to have so many students scoring in that advanced level.

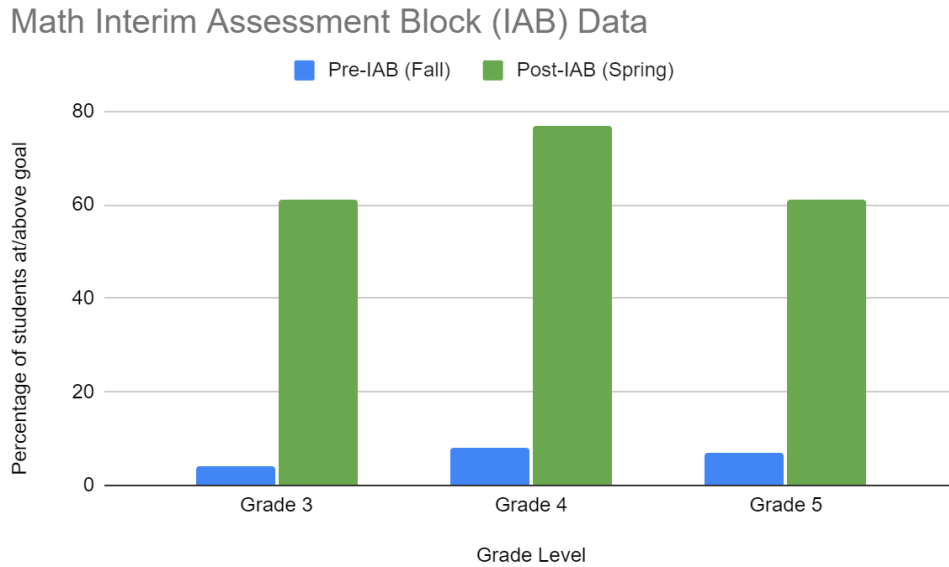


Figure 3: Math IAB growth from pre to post IAB

Whole School Indicator:

All classrooms will implement 18 lessons of Second Step from September - May, embedding trauma-informed practices, with a focus on diversity and equity to support social and emotional development of all students.

By May, all classrooms have implemented the lessons of Second Step. Additionally, please review the detailed description of action steps and indicators under Goal 2: Maintain and promote a positive and respectful learning community.

Parent Feedback Goal

92% or higher of our GHR parent community that responds to the survey will agree or strongly agree that they are aware of their child's progress and growth during the year.

In a survey administered to parents in March following student-led conferences, 98% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they are aware of their child's goals and growth. This was the first time we had conducted Student Led Conferences since Spring 2019, and parents were overwhelmingly positive with their feedback regarding their child's ownership of their own progress over the year. The parent feedback survey asked parents to respond on a Likert Scale from 1-5 on the following three criteria: My child was prepared for the conference; My child shared his or her goals with me; I am aware of my child's goals and

the action steps he or she took to achieve them.

Anecdotal comments include: “It’s great because very few people are comfortable at public speaking, even if it’s just your parents/caregivers. This makes the kids uncomfortable but I think they embrace it (mine did, anyway)”;

“First time experiencing the student-led conferences and I thought it was great. This process makes the communication on what’s happening at school, understanding their feelings of where they stand, along with their own expectations a more interactive and fun way to talk with them about school”;

“Thank you for giving the kids an opportunity to share their goals, and academic aspirations”;

“GHR has done wonders for her! Each year we have enjoyed watching the self pride in her presentation. It is also building confidence in presenting and public speaking. This is a wonderful growth tool for all.”

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

- Continue the work of the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy committee to enhance opportunities for students related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Last summer, GHR staff created a culturally relevant pedagogy committee to promote racial equity and an inclusive learning environment. Over the past year, the committee expanded a Google Drive folder for each month of school with a Google Slides presentation for daily Morning Meeting. The slides presentation includes Morning Messages, historical facts of the day, and curated lessons, resources, and read alouds that aligned with the focus for the month. For example, classrooms recognized Hispanic Heritage Month in September, Disability Awareness Month in October, Native American Heritage Month in November, the Declaration of Universal Human Rights in December, Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement in January, Black History Month in February, Environmental Awareness in April, and Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May. Teachers used recommended picture books as read alouds and shared pertinent information during daily morning meetings. The committee continues to meet regularly to revise their work and update resources.

To support an inclusive school community, all classes read the picture book Just Ask by Sonia Sotomayor as our school-wide mentor text for the year, which celebrates the diversity of our abilities. Student Council was inspired by October Disability Awareness month and each created presentations on a disability of their choice. Throughout the next few months, they presented these projects to Grade 3 and 4 students on topics such as autism, auditory impairments, and Down Syndrome, to name a few. Additionally, all Grade 5 students engaged in virtual workshops with consultants Audley Donaldson and Paul Vivian. We also recognized the following as a school: CCMC PJ Day, Rock your Socks for Down Syndrome, Wear Blue for Autism Awareness, and Wear Purple to support Military Families. We also held a virtual assembly for Veterans Day, featuring 15 members of the CT Air National Guard Flying Yankees under the leadership of Sgt. Sneaha.

Additionally, two Grade 5 classrooms participated in EASTCONN’s faces of culture grant, in which they were partnered with Hartford to promote engagement and interactions between communities. The 2 goals of this program are to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation and to improve student’s academic performance and personal growth through an SEL and arts-focused approach. This program promotes positive relationships and improves students’ cultural competence. Partner classrooms become pen pals, spending 47 hours working together through Skype, letters, and in-class virtual workshops. Students are engaged in mindful practices geared toward developing social and emotional understanding and regulation in self and others. Activities and workshops focus on acceptance, communication, goal setting,

and self-understanding. To address the second goal, students are engaged in studying the Indigenous American Peoples through art. With their partners, they recreate early artwork, research their own personal histories, and create an artistic representation of themselves. This year, cultural expression was explored through virtual visits and lessons by artists, musicians, and storytellers.

As we strive to develop student leadership, we continued our third year of Grade 5 Student Council, composed of 16 students. These students meet every 2-3 weeks to discuss concerns from their classrooms, and brainstorm and implement ideas to improve our school. During the year, Student Council members participated in the Connecticut Association of Schools CAS Elementary Leadership Conference to connect with other Student Council members from across the state. They implemented lessons on various disabilities to Grades 3-4 classes, wrote and delivered Morning Announcements, drafted questions for Author visits, and served as a panel of judges for our t-shirt design contest. They also volunteered to come early on Fridays to operate the school store in conjunction with the PTO. These are young leaders who continue to have a positive impact on their school.

We also showcased and celebrated students in numerous ways. In March, 2 selected Grade 5 students were celebrated at the Connecticut Association of Schools Elementary Celebration of the Arts. Band students created a video collage concert using FlipGrid which was shared with all families of band students and with GHR staff. All students submitted one piece of artwork for our district-wide Virtual Art Show in May, and the Grade 5 Chorus and Band will be hosting their first performance since 2019 in Veterans Auditorium this spring. Monthly, 2 students in each grade level are selected to Principal's Forum based on their Kindness Cards, and 8 other students were identified to be members of the Kindness Squad.

- Continue to implement Second Step, a social skills curriculum to support social and emotional learning, adding to the school-wide approaches of responsive classroom and restorative practices.

For the third consecutive year, Second Step was implemented in all classrooms as a way to ensure a systematic approach to social and emotional instruction across classrooms. This Tier I program includes lessons on perspective-taking, empathy, processing emotions, understanding and resolving conflicts, and building positive relationships. During Morning Meeting, teachers use Second Step lessons to explicitly teach these vital skills. The use of the Second Step program allows for our consistent use of language and reinforcement of skills by all adults in the building. Most classrooms teach one Second Step lesson per week, finishing the entire program by the end of the year.

We embed Second Step lessons in our Morning Meeting, a structure from Responsive Classroom. We have adopted components of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) with the development of school-wide expectations for locations throughout the building and promotion of our C.A.R.E.S. initiative. Students are encouraged to show C.A.R.E.S.: Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy and Self-Control. C.A.R.E.S. banners run down the corridor, and students are recognized with Kindness Cards written by staff and other students for demonstrating C.A.R.E.S. We showcase Kindness Cards school bulletin boards. Each month, selected students who have received Kindness Cards participate in the Principal's Forum and are recognized with a trophy and positive note home. The PBIS strategy of school-wide expectation posters is used to provide a bulleted list of expectations for each area in the building. Our school also promotes Spike's Buddy Bench, a location at recess for students who don't have anyone to play with. Students are taught how to help a friend in need and invite them to play. If

students do not display C.A.R.E.S. behavior, Think Sheets ask students to reflect on their behavior and how it impacted themselves and others. These notes are signed by both the student and parent. These Tier 1 supports have ensured consistency of expectations and a common language in our school.

As one restorative practice, GHR teachers conduct a “Connections Activity” each fall and spring to identify which students with whom they have forged a strong connection. In the fall, this information helps us identify which students may not yet have a trusted adult in the building, and we discuss ways to make sure this child feels connected to the school. Restorative practices are founded on building and maintaining strong respectful relationships.

For Tier II and III supports, we use the Social Thinking Curriculum with the “size of the problem” strategy, provide both formal and informal counseling, and model SEL lessons. Our social worker and school psychologist conduct a therapeutic morning meeting for students who need an added layer of support with skills targeted to address their needs as specified by their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This also gives students an opportunity to foster a relationship with another trusted adult in the building to support their success. This restorative approach is built upon relationships in the building. As Some students also have morning and afternoon check-ins with a support staff member to review their goals and self-reflect on their day, specifically addressing their social and emotional needs.

In terms of school-wide structures that support social and emotional learning, our Safe School committee, composed of the principal, nurse, school social worker, board certified behavior analyst (BCBA) and psychologist meet every other week to discuss the needs of individual students. Our School Climate committee meets several times a year and also includes a parent volunteer for feedback and input related to school culture. Intricately linked to these teams is the Intervention Referral Team (IRT), which also includes classroom teachers and consultation by reading or math specialists, speech and language, BCBA or occupational therapy. Our Intervention Referral Team (IRT), provides a biweekly platform for teachers to share academic or social/behavioral concerns about students with a committee of internal experts, including the Principal, psychologist, social worker, reading specialist, math interventionist, and special education staff. IRTs helps us monitor student growth and progress, and brainstorm strategies along the tiered continuum of supports. These regularly scheduled meetings are structures that allow us to take a holistic and timely approach to student needs, addressing the whole child.

- Continue to provide professional development on culturally responsive education, trauma informed practices and restorative justice.

During Professional Development this year, GHR staff engaged in topics around trauma informed practices and supporting the social and emotional needs of students. We engaged in reading and work based on the book Relationship, Responsibility and Regulation: Trauma-Invested Practices for Fostering Resilient Learners by Kristin Souers and Peter A. Hall. As we read each chapter, we learned about encouraging growth mindset, how to create a classroom culture of safety, and examine interventions to support students and families. We discussed developmentally appropriate strategies to build an inclusive community of learners that honor each individual.

Our Culturally Relevant Pedagogy committee meets 5-6 times over the course of the year. The committee has also attended several professional development sessions under the leadership of CREC as continued professional development. This helped further the knowledge base of the members of the committee and

thus they were able to be instructional leaders at GHR. As a district, we conducted a professional book club on the text Culturally Relevant Teaching and the Brain by Dr. Zaretta-Hammond. Each member of the Culturally Responsive Committee guided staff through the book during faculty meetings. We learned about brain development and cognitive responses, such as fight or flight. The book draws on neuroscience to help us think about the way we structure our classrooms, develop relationships, and foster student independence.

At GHR, we also strive to develop student leaders. Our Grade 5 Student Council is well established, now in its third year. For other leadership opportunities this year, we created a Kindness Squad in January 2022, featuring 8 students who brainstormed ways to improve our school climate. These students had been selected due to some social and emotional challenges they were facing, and/or disengagement from school. As part of our trauma informed approach to supporting all students, this Kindness Squad formed as a way to build community and partnership-- an opportunity to make real changes in their school to feel that sense of ownership and pride. For example, they designed a “Sprinkle Kindness Everywhere” display, and now also serve as Hallway Monitors at dismissal. With official Kindness Squad badges, they remind peers to adhere to hallway expectations and distribute Kindness cards to those doing the right thing. Along with Student Council members, they lead the Morning Announcements daily as another opportunity for authentic student leadership. Students also engaged in some learning around diversity. Our Grade 5 Student Council participated in the CT Association of Schools (CAS) Leadership Conference on Diversity and Equity and Grade 5 attended virtual workshops with local consultants.

- Utilize the DESSA SEL Assessment to develop and implement additional tiered interventions to address students’ social and emotional learning needs.

Early in the year, we established a GHR DESSA Leadership team, composed of myself, school psychologist, school social worker, and a teacher from each grade level. We became trained on the Aperture Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) and explored the Aperture site for resources and lesson ideas to use with students. Over the summer and in a follow-up fall session, we each attended virtual training sessions on the DESSA and scheduled a 1 hour training for all classroom teachers. To organize our work and within a year-long timeframe, we developed an Action Plan. This included action steps such as: “Allocate time for teachers to review their student’s data and review student’s individual item analysis.” and “Pursue opportunities for enrichment groups based on identified strengths for students scoring in the lower range.” Over the course of the year, the DESSA Leadership Team met monthly to continue our progress and ensure we were meeting the needs of our students.

In October, all classroom teachers administered a DESSA screener for each of their students. These results were then analyzed by teams of teachers in conjunction with the DESSA Leadership Team. We used these results to think both in terms of schoolwide areas of strength and needs, and individual students. This asset based model helped us identify the strengths of students in our school, identified as “Relationship Skills” and “Self-Awareness”. The two areas of greatest need were “goal directed behavior” and “personal responsibility”. With this information, grade level teachers on our DESSA Leadership team created 5 lessons targeting skill development in those two areas of need. Teachers implemented these lessons during Morning Meeting in January and February.

We also identified students who need more support with social and emotional skills. We conducted an Interventional Referral Team meeting to discuss with our DESSA leadership team and the classroom teacher. Then, we adjusted programming. For example, some students were added to informal counseling; others were added to a leadership group. For others, we restructured Tier III counseling; the counseling time changed to allow the student to attend their classroom morning meeting, as well as a separate counseling group thus providing them a double dose of SEL instruction. The information gathered from the DESSA screener also informed our IEP goals and objectives, as we used this as a data point to identify what skills the student still needs to learn. We implemented Tier II and III social and emotional support accordingly, and revisited throughout the year. In May, the DESSA screener will be administered again.

- Implement best practices as shared by the District Attendance Committee with our related services team to reduce chronic absenteeism.

With another challenging year in terms of a global pandemic and its impact on student attendance in school, it was imperative that our GHR team worked to improve student attendance this year. We all learned that students do best when they are in school, and while we still began the year with pockets of remote learning and live-streaming, in-person learning attendance increased as the year progressed.

In alignment with the District Attendance Committee, our GHR Safe School committee met weekly, with a focus on student attendance every 2 weeks. Using PowerSchool Attendance reports, we review students with absences that exceeded 10% of the school days. We then made a plan for phone calls home if needed, formal attendance letters at the end of each quarter, parent meetings to review attendance, and home visits. While COVID certainly continued to be a factor in student attendance, we had a much clearer sense of other obstacles that may be preventing students from attending school. We launched efforts to support families- seeing us as a helpful resource to get their child to school each day. In some cases, we helped reimagine morning routines, or provided a morning check-in with students anxious or reluctant to come to school. We also began to address any attendance concerns at PPT or 504 meetings with families, especially as it pertains to the impact of attendance on academic progress. Above all, this effort served as a partnership between school and families as we worked together to reduce chronic absenteeism.

Our nurse, social worker, and myself attended District-wide Attendance Meetings for updates and to maintain consistency of protocols throughout the district. This included the need to change attendance codes for new COVID related situations, as well as vet resources and strategies to support attendance, such as AttendanceWorks. The reduction of chronic absenteeism continues to be an area of ongoing work, and is anticipated to continue next year.

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

- Continue to provide ongoing and personalized professional learning and leadership opportunities for all staff with a focus on effective pedagogical practices, technology integration, and social and emotional strategies.

Our professional development plan was developed in collaboration with all district administrators and instructional coaches. We prioritized instructional coaching in ELA, Math and Science based on the SBAC results from Spring 2021, as we were back in school, full time, and in person. We scheduled 5-6 instructional coaching days per content area over the course of the year, aligning with our instruction and assessment pacing. Grade level teams met with instructional coaches to review recent data, plan future instruction accordingly, adjust pacing calendars, and revise curriculum if necessary. This was imperative as we continued to accelerate learning and implement grade level coursework. The K-12 Literacy, Science and Math coaches, as well as the Educational Technology coach, met with teachers on PD days, coaching days, long team time meetings, and supported numerous teachers by modeling lessons and co-teaching students.

During our Faculty Meetings or Professional Development time, our primary focus was social and emotional learning(SEL) and cultivating a safe school environment. Over the course of the year, we engaged in two professional book clubs as well as workshops on goal setting and critical thinking. This focus on SEL was pervasive during professional development this year.

We also ensure differentiation with professional development, as teachers have different needs. To support meaningful learning, select staff attended conferences as part of the CT Physical Education Association, CT Music Educators Association, CT Reading Association, CT Association of School Librarians, and the Computer Educators Network, to name a few. To help teachers integrate technology, training was offered on programs such as Newsela, Peardeck, and ActiveInspire software. Related arts teachers attended content related PD during the year with colleagues throughout the district, and networked with other districts. Following each professional development day or half day, staff took a reflective survey that provided feedback to the administrative team in terms of what went well and what staff found valuable to their practice, or areas/topics in which they want more support and training. This continued to help personalize the professional development experience.

Staff members are always encouraged to pursue professional development in their areas of interest. As such, numerous teachers are members of professional organizations such as the International Literacy Association, the Connecticut Association for School Librarians, and the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics. Our school psychologist and social worker attended monthly meetings with EASTCONN and CREC as part of their professional network, and have coaching with our district consulting neuropsychologist as they continue to improve their practice.

For continuous collaborative, grade level team meetings were reinstated this year on a weekly basis. Each grade level meets once per week to share lesson ideas, plan the next week, address any concerns, and support one another. These meeting agendas may also include consult with BCBA, reading room, or instructional coaches on a regular basis. For interventionists, bimonthly meetings focused on math and reading intervention are conducted in conjunction with the K-12 Specialist and the Director of Teaching and Learning. These sessions focus on programming for students in intervention to ensure that we are providing the most supportive intervention for them.

- Continue to recognize and honor staff who have demonstrated excellence in teaching and learning in multiple ways, including at faculty meetings, leading professional development, Positive Postcards, and the “Most Valuable Patriot” program.

To promote a positive learning environment for students, the work begins with staff. As such, staff

recognition is vital so that best practices are affirmed. One way in which teachers were validated was through our “Share Out, Shout Out” which was conducted at each faculty meeting. Each meeting, a teacher shared something they were doing with students that is innovative or promotes a positive class culture. One teacher shared a presentation about non-violent communication lessons to supplement Second Step, another shared Mindfulness tools, and a third shared Kindness raffle tickets that were used as a community building activity.

To continue supporting a positive school culture, in conjunction with the PTO, we created a “GHR Wall of Excellence” which featured every staff member’s picture and positive feedback written by students and families. This was a secret from staff, and it was revealed upon their return to school after winter break. Then, in April, we held an April Spirit Month. Each day, there were raffle prizes with our “Lucky Ducks”- numbered rubber ducks for each staff member with prizes called daily. Seemingly frivolous, these celebrations kept spirits high. We also began 2 “GHR Rockstar of the Week” parking spots in the lower lot. This granted the winner a week of prime parking, right by the entrance. As I’ve done for the past few years, I also continued writing positive postcards to staff members, averaging about 3 postcards each week.

This year, the district shifted from the Most Valuable Patriot program to the Teacher of the Year to recognize exemplary teachers. With this change, GHR nominated one teacher to engage in this district-wide process.

To support and retain new teachers, I scheduled new teacher meetings every 5 weeks to discuss topics of relevance such as expectations for parent-teacher conferences, Teacher Evaluations, and parent communication strategies. This provided an added layer of support and provided a small forum where they felt comfortable asking questions. As a result, several teachers identified that they wanted to observe veteran teachers in areas they expressed as a need, such as participation strategies or minimizing transition time. By providing coverage, new teachers were able to watch other teachers and then implement their new learning back in their own classroom.

- Utilize the leadership talent of teachers to lead professional development and discourse around professional readings.

GHR has a dynamic staff who all have so much to contribute to improve our development as educators. As such, I’m very mindful of distributed leadership and providing my staff opportunities to learn from colleagues. At each faculty meeting, two educators were asked to share some of the innovative practices they are employing with their students, serving both as recognition but also providing practical ideas for colleagues. For example, a fourth grade teacher shared her peer Kindness card idea, and another taught us about mindfulness. This teacher also has completed her yoga certification and volunteers to teach a popular weekly staff yoga class at GHR. Each week, I also write three positive postcards for staff members to recognize wonderful things that I notice or hear about. These positive postcards help reinforce the great work of our staff each and every day, and support a positive culture and climate in our building.

Through the district-wide teacher Leadership Academy, two GHR teachers network with other educators throughout the district and meet five times during the year with an EASTCONN consultant. 2 other staff members have just started the Academy as a Year 1 cohort. From self-assessing their leadership qualities to refining their capacity for teacher leadership, the teachers in Year 2 led professional development for our GHR staff on our text Relationship, Responsibility and Regulation. I continue to support teachers in

leadership positions, especially with providing professional development to colleagues. Additionally, all members of the Culturally Responsive Committee presented a chapter of our district-wide professional text, Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain.

During Faculty meetings this year, our K-12 Literacy Specialist, Reading Consultant and Reading teacher engaged staff in reviewing the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), which we had not administered since Fall 2019. One classroom teacher is collaborating with the Director of Technology to present at the upcoming Computer Educators Network on “Leveraging Technology to support SEL”. For members of our DESSA Leadership Team, they created 5-6 lessons on SEL skills for their grade levels to implement with students. This leadership is always well received and teachers become seen as respected leaders in our building.

Additionally, each faculty meeting also includes time for committees to share updates and information, including educators who are part of the District Literacy Committee, Curriculum Cabinet, PD/TEVAL committee, District Attendance Committee, and District Technology committee. All of these opportunities help educators learn from one another and promote teacher leadership and collaboration.

- Maintain partnerships with ECSU, UCONN, and other local universities and colleges through supporting student teacher assignments, practicums and internships.

Our college partnerships were rejuvenated this year to allow for in person student teachers and interns. Fifteen of our tenured teachers are TEAM trained and can support a beginner teacher, student teacher, or intern. As a result, we welcomed two University of Connecticut (UCONN) interns; one taught math intervention, and one taught reading intervention. Additionally, we welcomed 6 Junior observers from UCONN and 4 senior student teachers. From Eastern CT State University (ESCU) we hosted 6 student teachers over the course of the year. We hope to continue this university partnership next year, as it supports our work here at GHR in so many ways.

In partnership with UCONN, we continued Year 2 of our involvement with Project LIFT (Learning Informs Focused Teaching), a research study by Dr. Catherine Little. The project focuses on teacher perceptions of high potential and use of instructional practices that may encourage and develop students’ advanced potential. The program was implemented in a Grade 3 classroom this year with lessons across content areas. These lessons are inquiry based to elicit high potential behaviors in all children, and support the ongoing development of critical and creative thinking skills.. The teacher will also participate in the second year of a summer institute at UCONN and we hope to extend these lessons with other Grade 3 teachers for next year.

- Enhance professional development to provide regular literacy, math, science, and technology coaching to ensure meaningful integration of best practices across the curriculum.

Instructional Coaching was scheduled for 5-6 times per year in each subject area of ELA, Math, and Science, with technology integration and coaching embedded throughout. We went back to our original coaching model with classroom coverage provided for an entire grade level so that the whole team, including special education teachers, could work with our K-12 Instructional coaches. We were also creative with schedules, as coaching also occurred during long team times, professional development days, or brief sessions during weekly grade level meetings.

Instructional Coaching has been instrumental in our continued success at GHR. As an example, Grade 3 engaged in developing and implementing new units of study around word study/phonics to address the identified need of decoding and encoding words. With the gap of the Foundations program in their Grades 1 and 2, we recognized that Grade 3 students had some skill deficits in phonics. As such, in collaboration with our K-12 Literacy Specialist and Reading Consultant, units were created and used across all Grade 3 to address these foundational reading skills. All of this work was done through coaching. In Science, the K-12 Science Specialist focused on Science Performance Tasks aligned to NGSS and used a universal backward design process to plan what skills students needed to accomplish a very challenging engineering task with a particular focus on drawing and interpreting models. In Math, our K-12 Math Specialist met regularly with the Grade 4 team to review the latest IAB data and identify which questions students struggled with the most, and then embedded those requisite skills into daily warmups. Truly, the ongoing and timely nature of instructional coaching leads to its effectiveness.

Following a year of robust and comprehensive technology professional development, our teachers have become experts on the Google Suite, including Google classroom. Staff and students alike can easily navigate Chromebooks with 1:1 implementation, engage in live streaming if needed, manage interactive Google Meets, organize assignments on Google classroom, and implement new programs to increase student engagement. Our K-12 Technology Specialist has continued to provide support, most notably with any new staff, and address new ways to integrate technology into our units of study. This included, for example, students creating a Flipgrid of their band performances, or using Padlet to conduct book groups and document thinking. We continued to receive support on the Securely program to ensure appropriate, safe use of Chromebooks. As needs came up throughout the year, the technology department met individually with teachers or with grade level teams to answer questions and offer suggestions and support.

As we entered spring, instructional coaches met with grade level teams with a particular focus on the Smarter Balanced Assessment, as well as the Next Generation Science Standards Assessment (grade 5 only). Pacing was revised, new instructional materials to support certain identified skills were created, and lessons were implemented through April to support student's success on testing during May. We brainstormed everything from ways to ensure a comfortable testing environment and motivation, to test-taking strategies like reading the question first and using process of elimination. Based on a comprehensive analysis of the SBAC and NGSS from last year, coupled with interim assessments throughout this year, instructional coaches identified discrete skills and content for classroom teachers to address in their daily instruction.