

SOUTHINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Superintendent's Annual Report 2022-2023



Superintendent's Annual Report

2022-2023

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Superintendent's Annual Report

2022-2023

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SUPERINTENDENT'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Steven G. Madancy, Superintendent of Schools

The enclosed Annual Report in its entirety reflects the vast efforts and accomplishments of all staff in the district to provide students with the best learning opportunities for students of the Southington Public Schools.

The two non-negotiables of the district continue to be safety and learning. An added focus is the social and emotional well-being of the students.

In teaching and learning, student success continues to be evidenced by high graduation and college acceptance rates, enrollment and achievement in AP and ECE courses, and awards and honors celebrated by our students throughout the year in all areas, including academics, athletics, the arts, and STEM. Student performance on state-level tests provides further evidence of growth and success across grade levels, especially when compared to like districts within the DRG (demographic reference group) and across the state. Additionally, revising the curriculum and assessment to reflect the 21st-century skills identified within the district's Vision of a Graduate remains a focus for K-12. Professional development for teachers in providing students assured experiences to interact with the associated skills remains essential relative to this work and was a vital component of the ongoing professional development throughout the year.

As for safety, the Board of Education and district administration worked closely with emergency management and town officials to identify and prioritize items that will continue to promote and enhance a safe and secure student environment. The collaboration amongst town agencies continues within the Interagency Safety Committee, which continues to be a model statewide. Staff training, emergency and crisis response, and systems improvement remain the focused priorities of the committee.

The district worked to address the social-emotional needs of students with the addition of mental health staff, including additional social workers, school psychologists, and behavioral therapists, using federal funds associated with ARP ESSER. The added staff helped to address issues of chronic absenteeism, students who may have experienced trauma during COVID-19, experiencing anxiety or other related mental health issues, and incoming students experiencing self-regulation issues. This proved essential as the district saw higher amounts of DCF referrals, 211 mobile crisis calls, restraints and seclusions, and student discipline referrals than in years past. This will need to be a continued focus with the hope of a shift towards a more proactive versus reactive approach moving forward.

The summary of work enclosed within this report is a testament to all staff district-wide's talent, dedication, and professionalism in providing optimal learning opportunities for all students associated with the 2022-2023 academic year.

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Curriculum & Instruction

Stephanie Lawlor, K-8 English Language Arts & K-5 Social Studies Coordinator

Alicia Naleway, K-8 Mathematics & K-5 Science Coordinator

Amy Zappone, Director of Teaching and Learning for Secondary Education

K-8 English Language Arts

During the 2022-2023 school year, the ELA coordinator and literacy coaches studying best practices aligned with the research behind the Science of Reading. Instructional shifts were made to curriculum and instructional practices to align with this research. Professional development was provided to teachers in grades K-5 throughout the year, along with coaching support. The coordinator and the literacy coaches applied for and were awarded two grants. The SEF awarded the coaches \$1,000 to host a *Book Tasting: Read, Rejuvenate, Refuel Your Read Alouds* event. Teachers in grades K-2 were invited after school hours to read and select new read-aloud books for their classrooms that were purchased with this grant. The Main Street Foundation, in collaboration with the SEF, also awarded the team \$50,000 to purchase decodable texts for students in grades K-2. Both grants support the shifts to align with the Science of Reading and spotlight the vital role books play in achieving the goal of a culturally responsive curriculum. Classroom teachers and literacy specialists continued to use data to provide targeted support to students in reading. The ELA coordinator collaborated with the special education coordinators to partner with UCONN to support students in reading. Two elementary schools partnered with UCONN during the 2022-2023 school year. This partnership with UCONN engaged the administrators, special education teachers, and literacy specialists in using data to make decisions about intervention. The remaining six elementary schools will partner with UCONN during the 2023-2024 school year.

The middle school ELA department focused on using data to differentiate lessons and provide small-group instruction. The literacy specialists used data to monitor student progress and provide targeted intervention to students. Grade-level teams collaborated throughout the year to create and revise common tasks and assessments to assess students in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. In addition, teachers continued to implement strategies to engage students in communication.

K-8 Mathematics

Over the 2022-2023 school year, teachers in Grades K-5 continued implementing district iReady Classroom mathematics with a focus on meeting the needs of all learners. Teachers utilized iReady data to track diagnostic data and growth. Teachers used prerequisite reports from iReady to help plan for differentiated instruction and small group work. The elementary math team supported teachers in K-5 by focusing on essential knowledge, high-yield instructional strategies, and math language routines that support all learners. The elementary math specialists in Grades K-5 engaged in coaching cycles, facilitated professional learning, and provided interventions to students needing math support. The Bridges Intervention Program was approved for adoption in the 2022-

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2023 school year and will be formally implemented in the 2023-2024 school year to help support targeted intervention assessment and instruction. The elementary math team continued to work with teachers and students to promote collaboration and discourse through talk moves and discourse cards.

The middle school mathematics department continued the implementation of the district’s Illustrative Mathematics curriculum with a focus on high-yield instructional routines. It was the middle school’s first year utilizing the iReady diagnostic assessment, which has enabled Southington to have a continuous K-8 district math benchmark assessment. Teachers used formative assessment to drive Tier 1 differentiation and small group work in the classroom. The middle school was fortunate to have a math coach in the 6-8 math department to help facilitate professional learning and coaching cycles and provide interventions to students needing math support. The middle school math team facilitated professional development on math language routines and identified and planned language demands to help all students succeed.

K-8 Science

In elementary science, with the support of the grant-funded K-5 District Science Specialist, grades 1 and 2 implemented new Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) units of study that focused on scientific inquiry through phenomena-based instruction. The kindergarten NGSS units were adopted in 2022-2023 and will be formally implemented in the 2023-2024 school year. Kindergarten teachers participated in professional development in the spring to strengthen their knowledge about NGSS and the new kindergarten NGSS units. This professional learning will also be provided in the 2023-2024 school year. Grades 3-5 continued implementation of the district NGSS units. Grade 5 students participated in the Connecticut Invention Convention, which develops creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills through invention and entrepreneurship. At the May 2023 Board of Education meeting, Southington Public Schools was pleased to recognize 20 fifth-grade students for their inventions at the Connecticut Invention Convention.

This year, the district continued its strong partnership with Lewis Educational Agricultural Farm (LEAF). Mark Ramsay worked collaboratively with the science department, students, and teachers at all elementary schools to plant school gardens. In addition, the district continued planning with YMCA Camp Sloper staff to support a fourth-grade field trip to the facility. All fourth-grade students engaged in a field trip at Camp Sloper connected to their science curriculum unit, “Land and Water.” In addition, grade 2 attended Sloper to explore the environment as it related to animal habitats.

The middle school science department further explored *Open Sci Ed* as a high-quality resource for science curriculum and instruction. Grade 7 and 8 science teachers brought forward several new units to the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, which were approved and will be implemented in the 2023-2024 school year. Grade 6 science teachers piloted a unit from *Open Sci Ed* called

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Plate Tectonics, and the team will bring this unit forward to the board this school year. As a department, the team focused on creating assured experiences for students that provide many opportunities for them to engage in Science and Engineering Practices, as outlined in the Next Generation Science Standards.

Teachers in the middle school department engaged in a professional learning series from the Connecticut Science Center that focused on phenomena-based science instruction and 3-dimensional assessments. The department integrated several strategies from this learning into their classrooms. They plan to continue analyzing their curriculum-based assessments in the 2023-2024 school year.

K-8 Social Studies

The social studies curriculum coordinators attended the Social Studies Annual Conference at Southern Connecticut State University. During this session, the coordinators previewed the new social studies standards to be adopted at the Connecticut State Board of Education. Once the standards are adopted, the district will begin the curriculum renewal process.

At the start of the 2022-2023 school year, fifth-grade classes participated in the Connecticut's Kid Governor program. The goals of this program were for students to learn how the government works, the role of people in the success of a community, the power of research, and the importance of critical thinking. In addition, Connecticut's Kid Governor's program supports the Southington Public Schools Vision of a Graduate in the area of citizenship. It teaches students that their words matter and can make a difference. Students identified and researched an issue that mattered and created a platform. All classes in the district voted in the state election, and five students were elected to run in the state election in November. These students were also recognized by the Board of Education and presented with an award.

In the middle school social studies department, professional learning focused on exploring curricular resources such as Newsela to support reading in the content areas. In addition, the team explored lessons that support "Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries" of the inquiry arc. With the anticipation of the new CT Social Standards release, the team spent time reviewing their current curriculum for alignment.

9-12 Academic Departments

Southington High School academic departments engaged in a professional learning series focused on critical teacher clarity tenets, including learning targets and success criteria. This whole school learning was implemented to support best practices and consistency across all classrooms. In addition, all departments attended multiple professional learning sessions focused on strategies for teaching in a block. With SHS transitioning to block scheduling for the 2023-2024 school year, departments spent much of their learning and collaboration time reviewing curriculum and planning lessons to support instruction in longer blocks of time.

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Department leaders and teachers across various departments, such as math, English, science, and social studies, brought multiple new or revised curriculum units to the Curriculum and Instruction committee. In working to address goals identified by the *New England Association of Schools and Colleges* (NEASC), all new and revised curriculum across the SHS academic departments was completed using updated *Understanding by Design* (UbD) templates that integrated the district Vision of a Graduate. This consistent curriculum format will continue to be the standard for all curriculum work at the secondary level and will be made available on our SPS website for public view. Department leaders did exceptional work prioritizing curriculum needs and identifying courses and experiences aligning with career pathways at SHS.

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BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

Jennifer S. Mellitt, Director of Business & Finance

Financial Summary of FY 2022-2023

The 2022-2023 approved operating budget was \$104,418,146. The fiscal year brought some challenges with an increase in McKinney Vento transportation and a reduction in our Title I grant by over \$256,000 due to a lower poverty rate reported at the Federal level. With the poverty rate falling below 5%, Southington was not eligible for the Title I Grant's Targeted and Education Finance Incentive Grant portions. Also, the number of students needing McKinney Vento transportation increased significantly from 2022 to 2023, putting another strain on the operating budget. The district implemented a spending freeze for non-curriculum spending to offset these shortfalls.

The district closed the 2022-23 year with unexpended funds of \$103,708; a portion of the unexpended funds were allocated to an unpaid unemployment claim of \$17,342. After the unemployment claim, the unexpended funds total \$86,366, or 0.08% of our operating budget.

Budget Development 2023-2024

During the 2022-2023 school year, the Board of Education's 2023-2024 Operating Budget was developed and initially presented to the Town of Southington's Board of Finance (BOF) with a requested increase of \$7,357,738 or 7.05%. The Board of Education's (BOE) budget did not include any new personnel, major projects and equipment, or special projects. A subsequent notification from the State's Municipal Employee Retirement System required an additional budget request of \$235,000, bringing the BOE's requested budget increase to \$7,592,738 or 7.27%.

The final approved Operating Budget by the Town of Southington's BOF and Town Council was \$110,460,653, representing a 5.79% increase over the prior year's budget. Although the approved budget was a 5.79% increase, it was a reduction of \$1,550,231 over the BOE's request. The reductions were achieved through an action by the Town's Self-Insurance Committee reducing the BOE's required contributions to the self-insurance fund by \$624,000, a BOF action to use additional self-insurance reserves of \$296,000, and reductions to operating budget line items totaling \$630,231.

The operating budget reductions included eliminating the small sixth-grade cohort at both middle schools, re-assigning the sixth-grade certified teachers to other vacancies across the district, and eliminating a maintenance position after retirement in May 2023.

During the January 2022 budget process, the various boards voted to return \$760,456 of unallocated unexpended funds to the Town.

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Unexpended Funds Account

An additional Non-lapsing Education Account was established for fiscal year 2022 with unexpended funds in the amount of \$495,848. Due to the number of calendar weeks in fiscal year 2022-2023, the hourly staff were paid 27 times. The BOE approved using the fiscal year 2022 unexpended funds in the amount of \$238,986 to fund the unbudgeted 27th pay for hourly employees.

The accounts have been established through the cooperation of the Board of Education, the Board of Finance, and the Town Council. Connecticut General Statute 10-248a permits this account to be created by depositing unexpended Board of Education Operating Budget Funds into the account from the prior fiscal year within the statutory limit. The funds can be used for educational purposes only, and the expenditures shall be authorized by the local Board of Education.

During the budget process action mentioned above, the existing fiscal year 2021 and the new fiscal year 2022 non-lapsing funds were reduced by \$503,594 and \$256,862, respectively.

Purchasing Office

The Purchasing Office worked diligently on bids and RFPs for a sound attenuation project, redesign of school entryways, and contracted custodial, lawn mowing, and snow plowing services.

Payroll Office:

The Payroll Office implemented a new Time and Attendance System, which is fully integrated with our Absence Management system. Hourly staff swipe their school badges to clock in and out daily. The system was rolled out in stages and has eliminated all paper time sheets. The integration has eliminated the need to post absences in two places. The substitute function is currently being formatted. Our Information Systems Manager was instrumental throughout the process.

Food Services

The 2022-2023 school year brought a new program to help provide free meals to students in school. The State of Connecticut established the program and was funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The program (School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition “SMART”) was intended to allow districts and families to return to students paying for meals. The funds provided free meals until our allocation of \$633,164 was depleted in early December. As anticipated, sales of paid meals in January and February were lower than when the meals were provided to students at no cost.

The state recognized the need to continue the program, and the state approved new funds effective March 1st to allow schools to provide meals at no cost to all students through the end of the 2022-2023 school year. The SMART 2.0 Funds program provided an additional \$704,517 in meals at no charge to students.

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The Food Service Director and all the food service employees worked tirelessly and increased their work hours to accommodate the higher meal participation during 2022-2023. Challenges continued during the year and included staffing shortages, food supply chain issues causing last-minute substitutions, and rising costs for food and packaging supplies.

Our Food Service Director announced her retirement after 24 years with the district. Her retirement was effective August 31, 2023. Her efforts, particularly during the pandemic, have been recognized over the years by our Board.

Office of the Director of Business and Finance

The district continued using the ARP ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief), ESSER II, and ARP IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) grants to address learning loss and the student's mental health needs. The district will continue to maximize resources to meet the needs of students and staff while being mindful of the fiscal cliff these temporary funds will create.

Employee Wellness

During 2022-23, The Healthy and Wise Committee re-branded the committee to Southington Health and Wellness. The committee now has four members, two from the Board of Education and two from the Town, and supervision of the committee was transitioned to the Human Resource Manager.

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OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

Peter J. Romano, Director of Operations

The Operations Office has accomplished the following items during the 2022-2023 school year:

Construction and Building System Improvements

The residents of Southington approved the referendum for the replacement of the remainder of the roof at SHS. Work is proposed also to include a photovoltaic system. The total estimate for the project is \$6,920,000. The building committee has been formed. An architect has been selected and has completed a draft set of drawings and specifications. We have applied to the state for the grant and approval of the documents.

The 10,000-gallon underground oil storage tank at Strong Elementary School was removed. The tank was replaced with an above-ground oil storage tank.

The boilers at Strong Elementary School reached the end of their useful life. Both boilers had been leaking water for an extended time. They were replaced with two new efficient cast iron oil-fired boilers.

Maintenance of the school parking lots was addressed per our programming schedule. Crack sealing was performed at Oshana Elementary School and J.A. DePaolo Middle School. Strong and Thalberg Elementary Schools received a fresh coat of paint over the line striping.

Roof observations were performed at all schools on a bi-monthly basis. This provides data for improvement on strategies to ensure the reliable, long-term performance and extension of the life cycle of roofs district-wide.

Operations provided oversight for the improvements completed to the varsity girls' softball and boys' varsity baseball fields.

Classroom modifications were made at SHS for the Bake Shop classrooms. Obsolete cabinets were also removed. Commercial-grade equipment, 3-bay sinks, and hand sinks were installed. Upgrades were performed on the electrical and plumbing services, and the classroom was repainted.

Transportation

Our contract vendor, NBT, had difficulties maintaining adequate staffing to support the district's needs. This was typical of transportation vendors in CT school districts. We had similar problems with our out-of-town transportation with SPED programs. CREC supported transportation for our out-of-town programs, but we had to seek other vendors early in the school year. Transportation was also provided for the newly implemented summer enrichment programs and the annual extended school year program.

Energy Conservation

Energy Management System (EMS): With ten of the district's schools on the web-based dashboard, we continued to monitor systems and programmed them for optimum efficiency and health of the buildings.

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Eversource revamped its energy conservation rebate program. We committed to participate. Electricity usage monitoring equipment has been installed at Southington High School. The program started on June 1, 2020. Rebate checks totaling approximately \$8K were received from Eversource in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Reporting

Radon Testing Programs – Air quality testing for Radon was performed per EPA and state guidelines for ongoing school testing. Radon testing is required at all schools on a three-year cycle.

During the summer break, we worked with vendors to test fire sprinklers, fire alarms, generators, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, and kitchen hoods and systems at all schools. All systems passed, and the results have been shared with the Southington Fire Department.

Health and Safety

Operations, in conjunction with the Southington Police and Fire Departments, coordinated and participated in emergency drills and fire drills at all schools districtwide.

Operations was the chairperson for the Districtwide Safety Committee which met quarterly. Representation from all unions meet to discuss safety concerns that staff may have regarding the district.

Additional 2-way radios were received, programmed, and deployed to schools.

Polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) testing was conducted at J.A. DePaolo Middle School, J.F. Kennedy Middle School, and the John Weichsel Municipal Center. The test results have been substantially lower than EPA guidelines for action, with many areas registering a non-detected result. We continue to work with our environmental attorney to seek relief from this testing.

Administrative Enhancements

Maintenance of an online process created for reporting district-wide fire and safety drills. Drills are reported annually to the CT State Division of Energy Management and Homeland Security.

The Operations Department continues to build on its electronic infrastructure. Operations works closely with all the schools in the district. The department's transition to electronic documentation has allowed greater efficiency and information sharing throughout the community. Much work has been moved to the Google Doc format, including sheets and forms for transportation tracking logs, transportation requests and complaints, snow removal vendors and events, lawn maintenance vendors, and custodian scheduling.

District-wide and Town Collaboration

Shared Resources: The Operations Department continued its' ongoing collaboration with the town to complete repairs, service calls, and projects at town buildings as needed. We performed work at SPD, Animal Control, SFD (multiple buildings), Highway Department, and Town Hall.

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HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT

Michelle Passamano, Human Resource Manager

The focus of the Human Resource Department during the 2022-2023 fiscal year was to establish efficiencies in recruiting and hiring practices, set expectations to motivate and support employees, continue with system upgrades, and continue the collaboration between departments.

Human Resource Information System (Munis)

The Town of Southington utilized Munis as their payroll, benefits, and employee database. The human resource and finance departments evaluated the additional benefits of managing employee information. The intent moving forward is for the human resource team to record all information collected through the onboarding process within Munis. The information that belongs in the system and will be included is *emergency contact information, probationary periods, personal emails, dependents, beneficiaries, EEO race, ethnicity, primary language, etc.*

Collaboration between the technology, finance, payroll, and human resource departments is essential to the success. It will continue to ensure the Town is taking advantage of this system's benefits.

Human Resource Information System (Alio)

The school district employee database is managed through Alio. The human resource, payroll, and technology departments continued collaborating to add new functions that benefit Alio's human resources side. A final review of the fields, job codes, classifications, and how information is stored in Alio was completed. With updated codes and terminology, there is consistency amongst all departments.

Incorporating *position control* continues to be a focal point for the department. This Alio feature documents employee turnover, full-time equivalencies for staffing, and movement throughout the district. The preliminary work required for implementation is in the final stages, and full implementation is expected in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

Human Resource Protocols for the Town of Southington

Consistent communication with employees regarding hiring practices, requests for personal/vacation time use, Family Medical Leave Act, retirement, insurance overviews, expectations, and corrective measures were shared with the department leadership team. All departments utilize the same forms and follow the same processes, ensuring the human resource department provides the best services and tools to our employees.

Employee Expectations and Corrective Measures

The performance of the employees impacts the success of each department. The supervisors were trained and provided with documentation on supervisory responsibilities to their employees, including *providing expectations, offering support and guidance, sharing departmental goals, communicating, leading by example, and proper documentation.*

Superintendent's Annual Report 2022-2023 – Human Resource Department

The supervisors held individual expectation meetings with their employees at the start of the fiscal year. They followed up with a mid-year meeting to check on goal progress and an end-of-year meeting to review their accomplishments.

Supervisors were provided samples of expectations to use with their employees and a template when meeting with employees to set the expectations and recommendations for executing each meeting.

The human resource department strives to support supervisors and employees in maintaining a working environment where all are treated with dignity, decency, and respect. Providing employees with feedback during their progress meetings will continue to foster this environment.

Human Resources Webpage ~ Town of Southington Website

An *employee login* page was added to the Town Website. Employees who log in to this site can access a *Staff Login* webpage. This is a one-stop location for employee resources that include:

- Forms for Making Changes (Beneficiary, Health Insurance, W-4s, Emergency Contacts, Direct Deposit, HSA Account, etc.)
- Employee Toolbox (Employee Handbook, Munis Self-Serve, Employee Assistance, etc.)
- Request for Time Off
- Family Medical Leave (forms and facts)
- Retirement (Process and Forms, Questions and Answers)
- Benefit Coverage Plans
- Supplemental Insurance (AFLAC)

Job Description Review for Southington Public Schools

The department organized a list of job descriptions for all positions (Certified, Classified, Non-union, Administrative, Stipend, and Athletics). In conjunction with the appropriate departments and administrators, the review of these job descriptions started and recommended updates/edits will be presented throughout the 2023-2024 school year to the Policy and Personnel Committee for approval.

Frontline Solutions for Southington Public Schools: Time & Attendance, Absence Management, Recruiting & Hiring

The human resource department and the payroll and technology departments continued collaborating and establishing efficiencies using Frontline Solutions.

Recruiting and Hiring. We established a workflow system that allows the district to schedule interviews through the system. Interview questions, rating rubrics, and reference checks are available during the interview process. Once the hiring committee selects a candidate, a recommendation for hire component within the workflow notifies the human resources office staff for final review. The SPS Hiring Committee continues to update forms and ensure the district is consistent in the hiring process.

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Time and Attendance is the latest solution introduced in August/September and went live in October 2022. It captures employee hours electronically and tracks attendance in real-time. Employees can add comments to note any discrepancies in their recorded time. Before each payroll, administrators review employee time, before approving for payroll.

Absence Management. Employees continued entering absences in Absence Management. When an absence was entered this year, the information was automatically recorded in Time and Attendance. This allows staff to review their sick and personal leave balances within the system.

Bargaining Unit Negotiations

The human resource department participated in the negotiation process for multiple contracts, including:

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1. UPSEU Occupational and Physical Therapist (OT/PT) (contract ratified)

Town of Southington

1. AFSCME Dept Public Works (continued from 2021-2022 fiscal year; contract ratified)
2. UPSEU Town Hall Employees (continued from 2021-2022 fiscal year; contract ratified)
3. IAFF Southington Fire (continued from 2021-2022 fiscal year)

Southington Public Schools Employee Handbook

The template of a new employee handbook started in the spring, with completion anticipated in November 2023. Some items included are an overview of FMLA, the Recruiting and hiring process, Benefits, Professional Responsibilities, and Complaint Procedures.

Town of Southington Human Resource Newsletter

The human resource department continued updating town employees through its quarterly newsletter. Updates include employee movement (retirements, new hires, promotions), upcoming events, training opportunities, and fun facts.

Training for HR Department

1. Legal Updates: School Law (August 2022)
2. Connecticut Association of School Personnel Administrators (October 2022, March 2023, May 2023)
3. Connecticut Criminal History Request System (April 2023)
4. Legal Update for the Public Sector 2023 (May 2023)
5. Frontline Solutions: Discuss and Learn workshop hosted in Southington for all Frontline subscribers in the State of Connecticut (June 2023)

Health & Wellness Program

The human resource department joined the work of the Health and Wellness Committee of Southington. This program is offered through our current healthcare provider, Anthem. This committee takes pride in providing health and wellness opportunities for employees. The human

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resource department is the first point of contact for new employees, and we believe we are essential in promoting and supporting the overall well-being of our employees.

Ongoing Work

The Human Resources department understands that our employees are our customers and will continue to seek ways to enhance their experiences rooted in providing support, automating processes, and offering easy access to Town and School District resources. Seeking feedback and collaborating with all departments, community leaders, administrators, department heads, and employees is how we will continue to grow and be a valuable resource for our employees.

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PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

Rebecca J. Cavallaro, Ed.D., Director of Pupil Personnel Services

The Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) leadership team continues to work collaboratively to ensure staffing and services meet the needs of students and their families while looking at all facets of the district to ensure efficiency. Areas of focus for the Special Education Department for the 2022-2023 school year were:

Program Development for Inclusive Settings: The Pupil Personnel Services leadership team focused on providing high-quality in-district programming for students with more intensive educational needs who might otherwise be outplaced. The department continued to work and refine programming needs throughout the year based on the growing and changing populations of students within Southington. Program name changes and the expansion of district programs were ongoing focuses and are summarized as follows.

- Specialized Learning Center (formerly SPACE) Program was developed as a self-contained program designed to serve students identified as having autism spectrum disorders. This program was identified as needing to be expanded to accommodate the growing number of students. Two classrooms have been developed to support students requiring these intensive services and interventions. This year, the program has continued to grow, with an anticipated 22 students for the 2023-2024 school year, and the Specialized Learning Center will be expanding to three classrooms. One program teacher was shifted to meet this need. An action plan was developed to maintain the high level of services provided to students through professional development over the summer and added a layer of CREC consultation during the school year.
- Comprehensive Learning Center (formerly EASE), located at JFK, was also identified by the leadership team as needing to expand to create increased services for the growing population of learners that require additional structure and support due to their significant developmental delays and challenges. This past year, a third class was added to this program to allow for increased student needs to be met.
- STELLAR, located at 51 North Main Street, is the district's community-based transitional program for students with various developmental disabilities. This year, the program has continued to grow and expand within the community to support the needs of more than twenty students. We added a third vehicle to transport students to job sites, Tunxis programs, and community outings.
- Therapeutic Learning Center (formerly CLP) has undergone revamping in programming and staffing thanks to the efforts of the Pupil Personnel Services leadership team. This program provides school-based clinical intervention services to students at Southington High School at risk of education outplacement. The team has worked to reestablish this program utilizing district clinical staff in favor of a consultative model to support this student population and continue building capacity within the program.

Superintendent's Annual Report 2022-2023 – Pupil Personnel Services

Assistive Technology: The department continued to use an inventory database this school year to track and monitor student devices provided by the district.

State and Federal Compliance: The Pupil Personnel Services Department maintained compliance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), its implementing regulations, and the Connecticut State Statutes and Regulations for Special Education. The Connecticut State Department of Education reports annually on state and district progress on 14 performance indicators in special education. Southington's most recent District Annual Performance Report indicated that Southington was a district classified as "Meets Requirements." Based on the indicators, this rating was determined by ongoing data collection, Special Education Data Application Collection (SEDAC) reports, and numerous other state monitoring reports.

Community and Parent Partnerships: Collaborating with parents, community stakeholders, and local/state agencies is essential to ensure students with disabilities have choices and opportunities in the community and the Southington school district. Those partnerships included the Lewis Educational Agricultural Farm (LEAF), Southington Parks and Recreation programs, Emotional Intelligence (EI) presentations for several groups, Community Mental Health Stakeholders Committee, Student Attendance and Truancy Committee, Southington's Town-wide Effort to Promote Success (STEPS), the Southington YMCA, Southington Early Childhood Collaborative, and Southington Youth Services. With the shift to Connecticut's Special Education Data System, CT-SEDS, steps have been put into place to ensure parents have the information needed to navigate these changes. The Director of Pupil Personnel Services initiated the parent introduction to CT-SEDS with a letter from which future communications will follow.

Special Education Advisory Council: The Director of Pupil Personnel Services engaged in professional development and learning through monthly meetings with the Farmington Valley Directors and the Connecticut Council of Administrators of Special Education (ConnCASE). The updates provided to districts from the state were valuable in providing ongoing support and direction to the department and Southington Public Schools in special education.

School Readiness and Prevention: The Preschool Program continued to successfully meet the district's youngest learners' needs with the increased level of school psychologist support and on-site preschool facilitator. The Family Resource Center (FRC) and the partnership with Birth-to-Three agencies continued to provide support and resources for the youngest students and their families.

Elementary School Level: The four in-district classrooms for students with significant emotional/behavioral issues and significant developmental/cognitive concerns continued to be a great asset in providing a continuum of services for elementary students. The K-5 special education teachers received professional development on using DIBELS for progress monitoring with plans for future professional development focusing on mClass in alignment with the district's shift in benchmark and student progress monitoring. The district entered into a partnership.

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with the UCONN Neag School of Education and all eight elementary schools to bring Data-Based Individualization to Southington to increase literacy achievement.

Middle School Level: The Reading Academy at J. F. Kennedy Middle School continued to be very successful this year, meeting the needs of middle school students with Dyslexia. This intense literacy program (scientifically research-based) meets the needs of students with significant reading disabilities, including Dyslexia. The CLC program, formerly EASE, at J. F. Kennedy Middle School, and the TLC program, formerly TEAM, at J. A. DePaolo Middle School, provided structure and resources for students with significant developmental delays and social/emotional challenges.

High School Level: The PPS Department continued to plan for professional development regarding the PPT (Planning and Placement Team) process, best practices in creating IEPs (Individual Education Plans), and maximizing resources based on student's needs. In collaboration with the team at SHS, the PPS Department has worked to continue to revise programming and services to meet the needs of our students. The Comprehensive Learning Center (CLC), formerly ACHIEVE, and the Therapeutic Learning Center (TLC), formerly CLP, structure and resources for students with significant developmental delays and students with significant social/emotional challenges.

A great deal of work throughout the district was done in support, ongoing training, and technical assistance with the transition to CTSEDS.

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TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Tyler Savage, Network Manager

Goals

As we continue navigating the post-pandemic public school environment. An area that remains key is the increased opportunities technology can provide staff and students. The following are the goals set by the Technology Department to maximize the investment in Technology:

- Increase the dependability of the network.
- Increase data security for staff and students.
- Improve efficiencies of systems, both within the department and the district as a whole.
- Increase awareness and capacity to utilize current district technology.
- Increase the depth of knowledge for all members of the Technology Department to support the district effectively.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of all technology tools through the following questions:
 - Does this increase the efficiency of our teachers, which frees them to do impactful teaching and learning with students?
 - Does this create more profound learning opportunities for students, opening up access to information and people that would not be possible without the technology?

Operational Enhancements

The 2022-2023 school year was full of district-wide projects, new equipment, and ongoing long-term planning. The following were the primary technology initiatives accomplished.

Network Improvements

Replaced 393 WiFi Access Points to provide more reliable and faster internet speeds. Replaced 28 network switches throughout the district to ensure network uptime. Removed additional legacy networks that were causing interference and general stability issues.

Security

We deployed advanced antivirus utilities to enhance security and compliance with the Cyber Security Insurance requirements. Giving us real-time updates on potential viruses and proactive blocking of ransomware attacks. The firewall was upgraded to improve network security and close vulnerable gaps. We expanded our disaster recovery tool set by utilizing encrypted at-rest backups. This was in addition to our existing backup repositories increasing redundancy to recover from an attack. The team deployed simulated phishing software to improve the staff's awareness of potential threats. Providing a strengthened first line of defense.

Hardware

The Technology Department was awarded grant funds that allowed us to catch up in the replacement cycle for staff and devices. Just over 100 new MacBooks and Windows Laptops were deployed to staff. In addition, just over 1,000 Chromebooks were deployed to students. We are continuing year two of a five-year replacement plan that was developed to allow us to stay current on our infrastructure's hardware, software, network, and other vital components.

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Department Efficiencies

With limited staff and an increase in the number of supported devices, a focus on creating efficient processes led to three main areas of improvement. Created a Tech Team knowledge share to increase awareness of the team. This has allowed the staff to help when experts in specific areas investigate other issues elsewhere within the district.

Student Information Systems

PowerSchool consistently pushes out new updates and features that help teachers and administrative staff stay on top of the day-to-day information to keep students safe and on track. Many of our purchased tools and resources use PowerSchool as the initial source of information to generate rosters and accounts. Significant improvements to the Naviance software have allowed a better streamlining of data between PowerSchool and Naviance so counselors can focus on meeting the needs of students rather than worrying about keeping their information up to date.

With the purchased Phoenix Learning Systems Vault add-on, we have begun to archive and electronically distribute student documents as needed. For high school, mid-year and end-of-year unofficial transcripts are mass-uploaded and made available to students and families. Students and parents can access their unofficial transcripts to review and print as needed through the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

Enrollment Express

The new student registration process transitioned from using Enrollment to Enrollment Express, both of which are partner products of PowerSchool. Enrollment Express is an add-on to PowerSchool where new incoming families are asked to fill out several registration forms to compile all the necessary information to enroll in Southington. While there are always pros and cons to new products, we found that there were a few features that the district wanted to utilize. Enrollment Express forms are embedded directly within their Parent Portal account, which can be used to track attendance and grade information once the student is active in the district. Families are required to complete forms that include demographic, emergency, and medical information. In addition, all the necessary documentation to register a student into a new school district can now be electronically uploaded. Parents upload copies of the student's birth certificate, custody documentation, and residency documentation, all examples of electronically stored and reviewed documentation to ensure a streamlined, paperless process between the district registrar and the school offices.

CT-SEDS

With the transition away from Frontline's IEP Direct and 504 Direct, historical student documents were exported out of Frontline and uploaded into CT-SEDS to ensure all historical documents were captured and archived onto the student's record.

Staff Information Systems

When Absence Management (formally known as AESOP) was first implemented in 2016, the system was set up and used only by our paraeducators and certified staff. Working in conjunction

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with Human Resource staff and Payroll staff, all employees were added to Absence Management and began inputting all absence requests. A report was created to allow the Payroll Department to export bi-weekly absence data from Frontline to import into Alio to reduce the need for the school offices to input absence information manually.

With the big push to utilize Absence Management to its full potential, Time & Attendance was purchased to replace TimeClock Plus. Working with Frontline through an extensive implementation process, Technology and Payroll worked to set up all the necessary settings to migrate all hourly employees to Frontline's Time & Attendance. Touch Chromebooks with badge scanners were purchased to replace the old TimeClock Plus units. With the staff badges already utilized for building access and printing, staff can tap their badge on the scanner to quickly clock in and out.

For summer school, ESY, and curriculum writing, all staff utilized Time & Attendance to submit and approve timesheets, eliminating the need for paper timesheets.

Instructional Enhancements - Instruction Management Tools

No new software packages were added during the 2022-2023 school year. Instead, the department focused on how these resources can increase efficiency, deepen learning, and drive personalized instruction. Software packages such as ClassLink, GoGuardian, ParentSquare, and Lyman Data Warehouse are examples of tools that put the technology in the hands of teachers, parents, and students more effectively.

Curriculum Tools

The Technology Department collaborated with the Curriculum and Instruction Team to offer training sessions for many instructional programs that directly support our adopted curriculum. Examples include STAR, iReady, RAZ-Kids, CommonLit, Newsela, Mystery Science, Adobe, and Make Music.

Instructional Support Tools

Some tools are designed to be content-agnostic, aiming to enhance instruction regardless of the subject. We continue to refine this list based on teacher and student usage, impact on learning, and ease of implementation. Examples include Canvas, Classroom, EdPuzzle, BrainPop, WeVideo, Padlet, and Kami.

Technology Celebrations

The collaboration between the Technology Department and other departments, such as Human Resources, Operations, Curriculum and Instruction, Pupil Personnel Services, and Food Service, has increased dramatically. This was primarily driven by the increased expectations to leverage the technology in ways that made all departments more efficient. Projects like the new Help Desk System, ClassLink, Absence Management, and Time & Attendance have streamlined internal systems.

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The department was awarded various grants, including E-Rate, the Emergency Connectivity Fund, and a state Pegpetia grant. These grants enabled us to recover the staff and student device replacement cycle, improve the audio/visual equipment quality in the classrooms by installing ViewSonic interactives, and refresh aging network hardware.

Technology Ongoing Work

The Technology Leadership team recognizes the importance of various technologies in facilitating the classroom learning experience. The Technology Department is committed to collaborating with district leadership and staff to identify technology needs that promote teaching and learning while balancing the financial burden with rapidly advancing technology.

SOUTHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

Michael E. Crocco, Principal

Broad-Based Enhancements

Last year, Southington High School embarked on a momentous shift in our approach, aiming to provide students with an enriching high school experience that goes beyond facilitating graduation. It encompasses aiding in the formulation of a robust post-graduation plan. In light of escalating college costs and the emergence of opportunities in diverse employment sectors, offering our students specialized support for college and career readiness has become paramount. As a result, we have revamped our program of studies to better align class offerings with potential career prospects, an initiative heightened by our annual College Fair and the inaugural Career Fair. Here, local businesses presented myriad career opportunities to students, ranging from immediate post-high school positions to those necessitating two and four years of postsecondary education. The goal was to inspire students to consider how their passions could translate into promising careers.

In parallel, we have revised our daily student schedule, transitioning to block scheduling for the 2023-2024 school year. The previously eight-period schedule is now divided over two days, allowing for extended class durations and offering 88 minutes of instructional time each day, as opposed to the prior 45 minutes per class. This shift, orchestrated through meticulous planning in teaching, learning, and building operations, fosters a conducive learning environment. Joint efforts between our administrative team and department heads have enabled professional development for our teaching staff to adapt to this new format, emphasizing both department-specific and comprehensive instructional strategies. The considerable groundwork undertaken in organizing and scheduling promises a seamless transition.

In collaboration with the Wall of Honor committee, our facilities team has expertly refurbished the Southington High School Wall of Honor. This revitalized section prominently showcases the exceptional achievements of our alumni, encouraging vibrant discussions about our distinguished alumni network. Additional upgrades comprise a renovated parking lot and an expanded bake shop, fostering collaborative learning experiences.

To bolster communication and accessibility, we continue to utilize a principal's Instagram page. In conjunction with ParentSquare Smart Alerts and weekly telephone updates, this platform is a crucial tool for keeping our community informed and engaged. Our YouTube channel further encourages remote participation in school events, celebrating our students' accomplishments. Notably, our broadcasting club has utilized this channel proficiently to live stream home sporting and musical events.

We have also upgraded the technological infrastructure within our premises, broadening wireless connectivity across the building. Our ongoing updates to technology hardware include replacing smartboards with ViewSonic boards and interactive displays akin to sizable iPads. These eliminate the need for projectors and significantly simplify instruction planning and delivery. Thus far,

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we've replaced 29 of 160 smartboards with these new boards, expanded Wi-Fi access points, and enhanced security by closing all open networks.

Celebrations

We recognized Mr. Kevin Curtiss as the Southington High School Teacher of the Year. His heartfelt and amusing speech at the graduation ceremony fostered a connection between the current student generation and those born between 1900 and 1925, renowned as the greatest generation. Additionally, we celebrated the successful launch of our Certified Nurse's Aid program and the remarkable achievements of our AP scholars and athletes. During the 2023-2024 school year, we had 84 top AP scholars, 26 AP scholars with distinction, and 17 AP scholars with honors. Most of our athletic teams qualified for postseason play, with our Girls' gymnastics team clinching the Class L State Championship. Our Arts programs continue to flourish at Southington High School. Our Drama Club put on two fabulous productions: *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* in the fall and *Legally Blonde* in the spring. Winter Color Guard swept the competition in their first winter season in over 20 years, eventually leading them to place 1st in the MAC (Musical Arts Conference) championship show. Winter percussion also took first place in all their competitions for their first winter season since 2006. The orchestra had another successful competition season, coming in first place in three competitions. The Southington High School Art Department proudly announced four student award winners from the Connecticut Region Scholastic Art Awards. A panel of creative professionals recognized their work as the most outstanding work submitted among their peers. The competition includes public, parochial, and private schools from around the state and is the premier competition to participate in at the high school level.

Ongoing Work

As we strive for continuous improvement, our focus remains unwavering on refining our practices to enhance the College and Career Pathway work and block scheduling. We are dedicated to improving organizational and academic structures, continually emphasizing professional development to cultivate engaging and meaningful learning experiences. We are also thrilled to have secured a ninety-thousand-dollar grant to strengthen our dual enrollment credit offerings and reinforce our partnership with Connecticut's higher education institutions. Our Scientifically Researched Based Intervention program continues to grow as classroom teachers and administrators collaborate to assist students needing extra assistance in their classes. Teams continue to meet once a week and monitor student progress. Currently, we are planning renovations to our roof and are continually working on upgrading our fields. Recent efforts include overhauling our softball facility, including covered dugouts, two warm-up areas for our pitchers, and a regulation-compliant new fence. Additionally, we have leveled the terrain between the infield and outfield on the baseball diamond.

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KAREN SMITH ACADEMY

Jess W. Levin, Director

Karen Smith Academy (KSA) had a smaller senior class last school year. Seven KSA students earned their Southington High School Diploma. The Sophomore and Junior classes were significantly larger, with fifteen and sixteen students, respectively.

KSA staff and administration continued the ongoing work with our middle schools and high school to ensure that the student referral process was seamless and working to support students in need of KSA. The communication and teamwork were tangible and evident, producing positive student results.

KSA administration is continuing the work of curricular alignment with SHS and working with district instructional support staff on assessment, performance tasks, and the use of supplemental technology that supports the NGSS standards and framework.

KSA staff continue to bolster and improve our transitional program for graduating students. KSA had seventeen guest career speakers over the course of the school year and will continue with the same program in 2023-2024. One KSA student took part in a six-month internship at Good Guys Auto in Southington, CT, and is now doing a post-graduate year in automotive at Bristol Tech.

Attendance rates continue to improve at KSA, and chronic absenteeism is declining. This is attributed to consistent parent communication and clear messages to students about the importance of attending school.

Our continued work will focus on developing relevant, cohesive, meaningful assessments for students and the evolution of our transition program for potential graduating Seniors.

A new pilot program KSA started this summer called YETI continues to grow and be supported. A group of KSA students did extensive community service work/project over one month and were able to receive community-based credit or school credit. The program was run by KSA staff in collaboration with Southington Youth Services and was a huge success. The hope is to expand this program to both middle schools and Southington High School. Students learned the importance of commitment, hard work, and being part of a community. Students created a journal/ binder capturing their work and personal reflections on each project.

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Joseph A. DePaolo Middle School

Chris Palmieri, Principal

Broad-Based Enhancements

DePaolo furthered technology integration into the curriculum across all subjects. Teachers could fully utilize the district's online learning platform, Canvas. ParentSquare was used as the primary source of communication between school and families. A new math progress monitoring program, iReady, was introduced to all students.

Several new after-school extracurricular clubs were introduced based on student interest.

All teachers received professional development to support the newly adopted Special Education data system, CT-SEDS.

A School Resource Officer (SRO) was added this year, and the officer's time was split between Kennedy and DePaolo Middle Schools. Aside from assisting with numerous situations as they arose, the officer made positive connections with many students.

The grade eight class worked to create a community service project this year. As a result, enough money was raised to donate a bench for the Barnes Museum in town.

Celebrations

DePaolo recognizes students in numerous ways. Aside from each team selecting a "Student of the Month," they also offer a variety of positive reinforcements for all students throughout the year. "Patriot Pride In Practice" is another way to recognize students for their positive behavior. Teachers nominate students for exceeding expectations in numerous areas according to behavioral norms established by "Patriot Pride." In addition, DePaolo hosted Principals' Breakfasts several times this year, where families were invited to hear words of praise shared by teachers. Staff Shining Stars continued this year to recognize staff that go above and beyond to assist their professional colleagues.

DePaolo held several fundraisers and themed events throughout the year. Some highlights include Unity Day, which occurred on October 19, 2022. The school community came together to show unity for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion and to send a visible message that no child should ever experience bullying. A toiletry drive was conducted in November, and all items were donated to the Veterans home in Rocky Hill. DePaolo's annual pajama day fundraiser to raise money for the Connecticut Children's Medical Center cancer unit occurred in December. DePaolo donated \$1,100 for this event. DePaolo also raised \$1,600 for YMCA Camp Sloper at the annual Sloper Plunge. The school community organized a "Soup" er Bowl challenge to collect canned food to assist Community Services.

Aside from traditional concerts by music students, band members, chorus, and orchestra performed at several community events. DePaolo (in partnership with Kennedy Middle School) also produced the Broadway musical "Matilda" in April.

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In June, the first annual poetry and prose evening was held; DePaolo recognized 76 students at the eighth-grade annual awards night, and also, in June, a class day and a class night for grade eight students were held in celebration of the students' three years in middle school.

Ongoing Work

Social Justice work continued this year. Two diversity presenters led conversations with students three times throughout the year. In addition, DePaolo's lobby display was enhanced. After polling all DePaolo students, flags were purchased to represent the countries where all current students were born. DePaolo also celebrated many families with a "Taste of Culture" event in February.

Emotional Intelligence activities were offered throughout the school year. Aside from implementing RULER strategies outlined by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, teachers found ways to ensure the emotional well-being of their students. Research has shown that healthy emotional regulation has an impact on less stress, better health, and positive relationships. A school-wide Charter was created to build a positive emotional climate by documenting how everyone would like to feel while in the school.

Over 200 students were involved in DePaolo's Leadership Program. After being trained in communication, team building, and leadership, all students were selected from various clubs and activities in the school and the community. Some community activities included DePaolo students volunteering at Zion Nursery School, the Calendar House, and Hatton Elementary School.

During the 2022-2023 school year, DePaolo continued to offer Advisory lessons to all students. Advisory teachers and groups remain the same year to year as another way to foster strong relationships. Thirteen lessons were delivered to the students over the year. The lesson topics included team building, service to others, locus of control, goal setting, understanding plagiarism, communication, and further development of their emotional vocabulary to support the Emotional Intelligence initiative.

A focus on the curriculum in Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, and Family and Consumer Science occurred during the year. Social Studies teachers revised existing units of study while the other departments introduced new units.

A priority for DePaolo continues to be the Vision of the Graduate. Staff furthered their work by shifting to create more opportunities for students to engage in 21st-century skills. These include Communication, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, and Creativity. The focus is to prepare students for the future, whether they pursue education beyond high school or enter the workforce directly after graduation.

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Additional academic support was offered every other day during the school day so that students could have the opportunity to receive additional support from various teachers. This time, CORE (Creative Opportunities for Reinforcement and Enrichment) strengthened student learning, especially in relation to our language arts and math curriculum. Below are some of the benefits of this reallocated time:

- Provided additional activities for students to strengthen math skills and reading and writing fluency.
- Designated time for teachers to create individualized learning plans for each student to support growth and achievement in math.
- Created opportunities for Language Arts teachers to conference individually with students and check in on progress.
- Allowed teachers to help students struggling with a particular topic (especially if students could not stay after school for extra help).
- Provided time for teachers to strengthen organizational and executive functioning skills with students.
- Specified time for students to get caught up on missing graded classwork after absences.

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JOHN F. KENNEDY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Susanne Vitcavage, Principal

Enhancements

KBlock continued into its second year of full implementation at JFK. This intervention/enrichment block allowed students to extend their learning in academic and Unified Arts classes. Tiered instruction in literacy and math, extra learning support to students with individualized educational plans, and Advisory lessons were delivered during KBlock.

Extra-curricular clubs, activities, and athletics teams provided opportunities for students to extend their school experience beyond the school day. With over thirty clubs held year-round at JFK, something was offered for everyone. Clubs and sporting events were well attended throughout the year. The FIRST Lego Team advanced to the state championship finals in the fall. The Robotics team invited SHS Robotics Team 195 members to judge a friendly competition between JFK and JAD in the spring. Through the generosity of Marc Ramsay at LEAF, the Hive Club planted a vegetable garden that members of the JFK community could nurture and harvest throughout the summer.

Unified Theater held its annual evening performance in November. Once again, Ron Ingriselli and Unico were acknowledged for their generous yearly donation to this collaborative student event. In December, Southington Fire Department Battalion Chief Dube spoke to 6th graders about heat transfer and fire safety. Students learned how fires begin and what to do if a fire occurs.

In January, Eashon Sanganalmath and his family donated school supplies for the JFK community. Every year, Eashon and his family make it a custom to collect school supplies in lieu of gifts during an Indian festival day. The PTO invited New York Times bestselling author Sarah Albee to speak with all students in February. The presentations were interactive and engaging. Students asked insightful questions about her work and career. A Taste of Culture, held in March, brought many students and families back to JFK after school to learn about and celebrate many different cultures. Food, cultural relics, and personal stories allowed one to experience another culture.

The National Junior Honor Society aligned its eligibility requirements to those of SHS's National Honor Society. A ceremony was held in the spring where 28 new members were inducted into NJHS. Former JFK NJHS member and current Southington High School NHS president Abigail Galvin spoke at the induction. Eighth-grader Arshi Roy was recognized as the recipient of a 2023 National Honor Society Outstanding Achievement Award in recognition of her commitment to the five pillars of NJHS: scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship.

Several JFK students attended the annual Student-Manufacturer Connection Fair at the State Capital in May. Students met with manufacturers to learn about high-tech careers. Over 30 local manufacturing companies were represented and provided hands-on activities and displays to

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introduce students to various career paths. Former JFK Technology Education teacher Jeff Drogosek visited JFK and spoke to 8th-grade students about his current career as Assistant Manager at Network Framing Solutions.

The seventh and eighth graders attended out-of-state day field trips to Medieval Times (New Jersey), Newport, and Sturbridge. An on-site field trip for 6th graders featured a program from Mad Scientist. The generosity of the PTO offset the cost of these trips.

JFK's Instagram page (JFKMS06479) provided snapshots of numerous school events during the school year, celebrating many everyday and special events at JFK.

Celebrations

Kennedy Middle School teachers nominated students who demonstrated Eagle Excellence (be safe, respectful, responsible) for Students of the Month recognition. The students were recognized and awarded for their efforts. Thank you to Dairy Queen of Southington for their sponsorship of this program. Numerous local businesses continued supporting JFK with donations for enrichment activities, school awards, and recognition throughout the year.

November was a busy month and brought back an in-person Career Day. Eighteen guest speakers shared stories of their career paths with 7th graders. Some featured careers were fitness instructor, counselor, engineer, plumber, school administrator, librarian, and estimator.

The annual Veteran's Day concert and celebration was well attended. JFK students invited veterans to attend this appreciation event. The JFK band and chorus performed, and a reception was held in the media center. Mr. Ryan Hartt, a social studies teacher and the brother of a veteran, attended this special event. In addition to this event, local veterans Wayne White, Dave Brennan, and Lou Urso visited with JFK students to share their experiences in the military with them.

Also, in November, JFK students and families donated over 975 non-perishable food items (1,146 pounds) for the food pantry at Southington Community Services. JFK Supported other local organizations throughout the year, including Bread for Life, Prudence Crandall Center, and CCMC, among others.

In December, the Southington Education Foundation recognized Mrs. Amy Perry and Mrs. Sarah Brown for their grant awards, *Illuminating the Power of Diversity* and *21st Century Skills – Middle School Robotics*, respectively.

In January, Reverend Sharon Holt and the First Baptist Church of Southington honored 7th grade Mame (M.N.) Diop was the recipient of the church's Martin Luther King, Jr. Award. In conjunction with Calendar House, the Intergenerational Valentine's Day dance was held in February. This event brought together senior citizens and JFK students to share dances, laughs, and dinner.

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On behalf of JFK, Mrs. Amy Perry was recognized by the State in April for the incredible work JFK does for veterans through the “Remembering our Veterans” program. Local Southington veterans presented the award to Mrs. Perry at a Board of Education meeting. In May, sixth grader Mia Wills won the patriotism essay contest sponsored by the American Legion Kiltonic Post 72 Ladies Auxiliary.

Ongoing Work

Diversity presenters Audley Donaldson and Paul Vivian visited all seventh-grade classes three times this year. In the fall, the themes of acceptance and tolerance were highlighted as students recalled family histories of immigration to the United States.

Implementation of JFK's three-year SRBI plan focused on providing teachers with practical tools and strategies to strengthen differentiation and tier-one instruction in all areas, including KBlock.

Special education teachers continued to be solely assigned to one subject (math or Language Arts) to strengthen their curriculum mastery. Dedicated planning time between co-taught teachers supported an alignment between IEP goals and objectives to daily instructional practice.

The Vision of the Graduate continued to be a focus at JFK. Teachers made a conscious effort to provide students opportunities for communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity in the classroom, necessary skills for post-graduate success.

WALTER A. DERYNOSKI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Jan Verderame, Principal

School Accomplishments

The 2022-2023 school year at Walter A. Derynoski Elementary School was filled with learning and excitement. Derynoski students had monthly whole-school celebrations, but the one that sparked the most excitement was the One School, One Book spearheaded by Mrs. Nichols. The PTO and school committee transformed the building into a recreation of the book and movie, “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.” Staff and students engaged in reading activities for three weeks. This was fun for all!

In the academic areas, Derynoski teachers have targeted strategies and best practices in reading to align with the “science of reading.” In the primary grades, a focus on building foundational reading skills in phonics and phonological awareness was targeted to support this work. Kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers received training from the district literacy coaches to enhance small-group reading and strategy groups to meet individual student needs. Another instructional focus included improving communication and collaboration in the classroom to align with the Vision of a Graduate. This work included inquiry-based learning in all content areas targeting the 4 C’s (critical thinking, communication, creativity, and collaboration).

Social-emotional learning was a priority at Derynoski again this year. This included the continued implementation of the RULER Program with students growing their emotional intelligence. Students and teachers developed individual classroom charters to establish positive classroom communities. Lessons were implemented for all components of the RULER program. These lessons taught students how to recognize, understand, label, express, and regulate emotions. Teachers were provided multiple lessons to support this work in the Morning Meeting. This will be enhanced next year to generalize strategies the counseling staff offers each week to support social-emotional learning. Each week, the counseling and physical education staff shared strategies to support staff and students' social and emotional well-being through Mindfulness Mondays, Tranquil Tuesdays, and Wellness Wednesdays.

Safety continued to be a primary focus area all year. The School Safety Plan was updated and reviewed with team members and all staff. First responders were present at fire and lockdown drills to provide feedback and attended committee meetings in the building. Overall, Derynoski received “high marks” from the first responders on our safety drills. A district Alice training was done by the police department in November, and follow-up was completed in the building throughout the rest of the year. All staff received tourniquet training from the school nurse.

The PTO partnership was instrumental in securing materials to support learning and building a school community. Monthly family events were planned throughout the year to build the Derynoski School Community. This year, the PTO continued its support for teachers and staff with a monthly treat, a week-long teacher appreciation event, and a luncheon. Due to the fundraising success this year, the PTO provided the school with scholastic news for all students and supported classroom furniture, recess equipment, books, and other classroom materials.

Celebrations/Diversity

Derynoski demonstrated the value of community throughout the school year. The fifth-grade students honored local veterans in a ceremony in the auditorium for Veteran's Day, which ended with each class completing the "white table" ceremony. Students spearheaded many fundraisers this year to support the greater community. Derynoski sponsored scholarships for the YMCA and provided families in need with financial support for summer camp. Derynoski had a large Polar Plunge Team and raised over 1,000 dollars. Derynoski also supported Connecticut Children's Medical Center with two fundraisers this year. Derynoski students were recognized as *Heroes Among Us* for their charitable work. Examples of this work were students who, instead of birthday presents, had donations made to Bread for Life and students who cleaned up the school playground on the weekends. Derynoski Girl Scouts also donated their time to make the school grounds beautiful with a Saturday clean-up day.

This year, a focus on cultural awareness continued with diversity workshops for third and fifth-grade students led by Mr. Paul Vivian and Dr. Audley Donaldson. These workshops provided students with practical experiences to examine diversity in everyday life. The STEPS/Character Counts Program continued this year to promote pillars of character and asset building to support inclusion and acceptance for all. The STEPS leadership program had over sixty students who shared target assets and strategies to promote inclusion at Derynoski.

Kindergarten

This year, the kindergarten team analyzed i-Ready and STAR data to differentiate instruction. Using this data, teachers created a rigorous classroom environment focused on collaboration and meaningful discourse around language arts and math. The team took the initiative to engage in professional development further to develop their knowledge of the science of reading. The team applied this knowledge to enhance the current language arts curriculum to help students become stronger decoders. Teachers used practices grounded in research to assist students in applying skills. This year, teachers have seen the most growth in their student's ability to decode and spell, as evident in district assessments and ongoing data analysis. The kindergarten team focused on implementing small groups in literacy and numeracy with fidelity, which allowed them to support each child's individual academic needs to make learning gains.

Grade 1

The reading and writing workshop model was followed with fidelity as the grade one team implemented an adjusted curriculum aligned with the reading science. This year, teachers in grade one participated in multiple professional development days focused on incorporating the science of reading into the current ELA curriculum. The grade one team received professional development on new decodable texts, including leveled texts for small groups and shared reading to align with the shift to the Science of Reading. The first-grade team created tool kits to use during small groups to help elevate guided reading groups. The writing instruction included narrative, informational writing, and opinion genres. The team worked hard to have students edit and revise their work. Teachers continued to teach phonics daily with fidelity. Every day, the students were involved in explicit instruction and activities that allowed Superintendent's Annual Report 2022-2023 – Derynoski Elementary School to work with partners and small groups and teacher-guided

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small group instruction to reinforce the skills taught. Phonological Awareness assessments were used to measure growth throughout the year. These assessments guided instruction for both whole group and small group instruction. One challenge this year included finding and creating resources for Social Studies to go along with the new given scope and sequence. The Ready Math curriculum was again implemented, and small groups were differentiated to meet the needs of all learners with a focus on problem-solving, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. The Patterns of Power book lessons were followed to support grammar instruction. Lastly, SRBI (Scientific Research-Based Intervention) has been a school focus this year. The first-grade team collaborated monthly with specialists and administration to refine goals and interventions and differentiate instruction for Tiers 1, 2, and 3.

Grade 2

After several professional development sessions on the “science of reading,” the second-grade team implemented this work during literacy instruction. In the fall, a set of decodable texts were provided to each team member, and these materials and lessons were implemented with small groups during iBlock and Reader’s Workshop. The second-grade team implemented Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop supported by the Lucy Calkins Phonics program. In writing, students wrote for different audiences. They created writing such as personal narrative stories, informational pieces including reports, brochures, and newsletters, and writing about reading in the form of opinion (letter) writing. Daily Patterns of Power lessons as well as Teacher’s

College phonics lessons explicitly taught in both whole group and small flex groups supported reading and writing growth throughout the year. The Math Workshop model was followed with differentiated stations, including students using the iReady pathway lessons. Stations were adjusted throughout the year to target individual student needs. New science units were implemented this year. Professional Development was provided before the beginning of each new unit. These units consisted of learning sequences aligned with the NGSS and engaged students in inquiry, engineering design, and problem-solving. Grade two continued to have daily morning meetings focusing on building students’ emotional intelligence using mentor texts and everyday examples to help students navigate social situations during their school day.

Grade 3

The third-grade team has worked hard to embrace many new challenges and implement new teaching and learning styles in their classrooms. Small group instruction was a renewed focus this year. After receiving professional development throughout the year, teachers increased group frequency, targeting specific skills based on data and assessments. Small group instruction occurred daily during reading, writing, and math. While the demands of data analysis, differentiated small-group planning/instruction, and whole-group instruction have challenged the team, their instructional practice has grown this year. In language arts, teachers continued to grow as facilitators of the Reading and Writing Workshop while integrating more elements of the Science of Reading. Professional development in vocabulary and syllabication/decoding was immediately implemented into grade three schedules. Students were enthusiastic participants in Word Love lessons. The literacy coach provided coaching and co-teaching opportunities (in large and small groups) for all teachers to select what best fits their needs and the needs of their students. The team continued to utilize Learning Progressions in both Reader’s and Writer’s

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Workshop to drive instruction and provide a framework to support students in achieving their personal goals. In addition to composing texts in narrative, informational, and opinion writing genres, students could publish and present texts in various modes, including handwriting, Google Docs, Google slideshows, and speeches. In Math, the team continued to build their practice in the Math Workshop model while integrating the iReady resources. Through training with the math specialist, the teachers revisited the “Three Reads” process to use during math mini-lessons. The third-grade team adjusted math workshop stations to create more targeted skill groups based on the iReady Diagnostic results. The team implemented a new earth science unit this year, the Grand Canyon Seashells. This and other NGSS units encouraged exploration and use of the 4Cs to foster student growth. Staff communication with families continued to grow with the third-grade team. All third-grade teachers used Parent Square. Newsletters, Padlets, videos, and photo shares helped bring families together in the joy of learning.

Grade 4

This year, much of the fourth-grade work focused on small-group differentiated instruction. All team members continued to further their Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop skills through the support of literacy coaches, literacy specialists, and professional development. The fourth-grade team developed Reader’s Workshop tool kits to support narrative, informational units, and small group instruction. With the support of literacy specialists and tutors, teachers were able to enhance student learning and focus on individual student goals to assist with SRBI goals. All classrooms incorporated a new vocabulary curriculum, Word Love, which supplemented the reading units and allowed students to acquire knowledge of unknown words. In writing, students had experiences with three types of writing (narrative, opinion, and informational) with a continued focus on the writing process and incorporating the Patterns of Power grammar skills. All classrooms utilized the iBlock instructional period to meet with small groups of students in various areas (fluency, decoding, encoding, comprehension, and math instruction). The team continued the implementation of the Math Workshop in all classrooms with mini lessons and differentiated stations. The classroom benefited from the support of the math specialist and math tutors to assist with student needs and SRBI goals. The team continued implementing the RULER program with mood meters, strategy walls, and cozy corners to support students' emotional well-being. Morning Meetings took place each day to build a classroom community. Derynoski School also participated in One School/One Book. This community-building event allowed students to read along with staff, answer trivia questions, and participate in grand discussions of the text.

Grade 5

Grade 5 teachers received coaching from literacy coaches, and nearly all of the professional development revolved around small-group instruction in language arts. The team used this extensive training in their daily instruction, including iBlock and language arts instruction. The teachers added Word Love to their language arts instruction and phonemic awareness. The teachers implemented the language arts curriculum with fidelity but were eager to learn more about the Science of Reading. Students read and analyzed historical fiction, narrative, and fantasy texts. Identification of themes, main ideas, and cause and effect were some of the target learning strategies for these genres. Integration of the learning progressions and opportunities for self-assessment facilitated student ownership of learning. The team worked closely with the literacy coach in reviewing best practices for groups, student discourse, test prep, and critical thinking.

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Narrative, fantasy, research, opinion, and memoirs were some focus areas in writing. In math, the iReady Math program was driven by Pathways data and was utilized for differentiated instruction, including station work. Students communicated and collaborated within math centers via partnerships. Students enjoyed continued inquiry-based science lessons aligning with the NGSS model, with updated space systems and a separate Invention Convention Unit. Students developed their inventions for the Invention Convention. Social Studies began with The Kid Governor Program and culminated with students participating in the statewide election. A field trip to the Old State House reviewed the Kid Governor lessons. The developmental asset building blocks of the STEPS program could be seen throughout the classrooms. The RULER Program was implemented with fidelity and enhanced the STEPS program. The C3 STEPS program, which replaced DARE, started this year and was taught by Officer Verab from the Southington Police Department.

Library-Media

At Derynoski Elementary School, the library is where students can feel safe and inspired and foster their creativity. This year, we had books circulate over 10,000 times. The books circulated provided opportunities for students to honor, develop, and explore their identities through engagement with texts and resources that reflect themselves and others. New books with diverse characters were added in the fall and through donations from the PTO book fair. The hope is that these books will spur compassion, understanding, and change.

In the DES library, students followed three units of study: Research & Information Literacy, Technology Operations, and Innovative Designing. In addition, all students were taught the ethical use of information and technology. Students in kindergarten, first, and second grade use the PebbleGo database to look at a wide variety of up-to-date, high-interest articles at a lower reading level. The Third, Fourth, and Fifth-grade students used school-safe search engines to research a famous historical figure and will be creating a “Living Wax Museum” in the DES library in May.

In addition, we have grown our relationship with the Southington Public Library in town. The library is also sending a representative to Derynoski to promote its summer reading program and its incentives.

Ongoing Work & School Improvement

Derynoski's work next year will focus on the continued alignment with the science of reading, enhancing our differentiated, small-group instruction. Teachers will continue to build their “toolkits” and capacity in the language arts area. Derynoski will implement the second year of the three-year SRBI plan and will be fortunate enough to work with the UCONN team to incorporate the DBI system. This process will support the SRBI and special education teams with data analysis for struggling students in the SRBI and special education programs. The SRBI team and school will align their practice with the school's second year of the 3-year SRBI plan, which was developed to enhance the process in math, reading, and behavior. This includes continued refinement of targeted, explicit instruction to support Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 levels, along with progress monitoring practices. Teachers will also have a new benchmark assessment in literacy for grades k-5, a target area for further learning for the teachers next year. The 4 C's (Critical

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Thinking, Collaboration, Communication, and Creativity) will continue to be an area of focus and will be integrated into all content areas. To increase classroom community and overall school climate, an enhanced version of the morning meeting will be implemented to generalize the weekly mindfulness and wellness strategies given by the School Social worker, School Psychologist, and PE teacher over the announcements. Safety protocols will continue to be a consistent message for all staff. Training will occur before school, and follow-up will occur throughout the school year.

FLANDERS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Katie T. Guerrette, Principal

School Accomplishments

Flanders Elementary School proudly provides students with a safe and supportive school environment for learning and growing. Flanders School continued to support the local community through fundraisers for non-profit organizations, including Bread for Life with the Annual SOUPer Bowl Food Drive, Connecticut Children's Foundation with Pajama Day, and YMCA Camp Sloper through the Sloper Plunge with seventeen jumpers from Flanders this year. In addition to fundraising for the greater community, Flanders held the First Annual Flanders Flash Color Dash, where students took pledges and ran that combined fitness, fundraising for the school's PTO, and a whole lot of fun for all! Flanders also held the school's 18th Annual Veterans Day Ceremony, honoring all who served through an in-person in-school ceremony. Family members of our students and staff who served were invited to Flanders as honored guests and enjoyed breakfast, along with songs and poems performed by the Flanders students. Social-emotional learning continued to be a focus in all classrooms daily. Utilizing the RULER approach, students practiced using the Mood Meter to recognize emotions in themselves and others, and the classroom charters provided a framework for classroom expectations. Flanders takes great pride in fostering academic and social-emotional excellence and achievement for all students.

Celebrations

Flanders School held the sixth annual *One School, One Book* with the community reading Fenway and Hattie by Victoria J. Coe. This shared literacy experience was a wonderful way to build the home-school connection and promote family literacy. Families were assigned chapters to read throughout the event, trivia questions were posed at school, and students were entered into weekly raffles to win books and prizes. The Flanders PTO continued to support the school and make Flanders a wonderful place for students and staff. The PTO generously sponsored a cultural arts program this year with Leland Faulkner - A Walk Between Two Worlds, where he took us on a journey into the Native American Culture through storytelling.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten students worked hard to become readers and writers this school year. Students engaged in phonological awareness to support their growth in literacy. They learned about letters and words through phonics and applied this new knowledge into their everyday reading and writing. Kindergarteners were challenged during math stations where they learned to add and subtract fluently through five. Students learned to navigate relationships and solve conflicts with their peers throughout the day and learned to use the mood meter to plot their feelings daily.

Grade 1

First-grade students had a great year of growth. First graders strengthened their decoding and encoding skills by becoming word detectives and word builders in reading and phonics. Students deepened their understanding of place value and learned various addition and subtraction strategies by practicing word problems and engaging in hands-on learning through

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math centers. Students had many discussions about emotions and feelings through read-alouds and the use of the Mood Meter. The first graders also had an exciting field trip to the Beardsley Zoo, where students observed many different animals and their habitats.

Grade 2

Second grade had an exciting year. Writing brought many new opportunities for second graders to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Students became experts on reading fluency and comprehension strategies. Math focused on adding and subtracting three-digit numbers and measurement. Second graders enjoyed the new Science Units that focused on the states of matter, beaver habitats, and plant needs. The students were excited to go on a field trip to Camp Sloper, where they applied what they had learned in the Science curriculum through hands-on activities. Second graders became proficient at using the Mood Meter daily to support self-regulation.

Grade 3

Third graders explored the changing Earth through fossils in the Grand Canyon. They spent a day at the Connecticut Historical Society and Museum learning about colonial kids' lives and the charter oak's legend. The literacy focus included fiction, characters, and informational texts, fostering a love for reading. Third graders were empowered to voice opinions through persuasive writing and entertained them with creative narratives. Math skills were strengthened in multiplication, fractions, and rounding. Overall, third grade was transformative as students gained knowledge in geography, literacy, writing, and mathematics, developing confidence and critical thinking skills for the future.

Grade 4

Fourth-grade students had a fantastic year of school. Students explored the world of biomimicry with the new Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) unit. Through the Writer's Workshop, students wrote for various purposes in multiple genres. In Reader's Workshop, students focused on nonfiction, read the weather, and learned about the Revolutionary War. In math, students used math centers to push their thinking and used iReady to support their mathematical needs. Students continued to expand on social-emotional learning with The Mood Meter, Second Step, and class discussions.

Grade 5

Fifth-grade students made the most of their learning opportunities through many exciting events. Students learned about the history of the government by participating in the CT Kid Governor program and creating a Colonial America Living Museum. They explored the way of the world through the implementation of NGSS and by participating in the CT Invention Convention. Reader's and Writer's workshop allowed students to engage in regular, meaningful discussions that pushed their understanding of the ELA Curriculum. Students visited Mystic Aquarium to apply their knowledge of argument and advocacy in a real-life situation. The mathematics curriculum was implemented with real-life applications through the math workshop model and engaging centers. Additionally, by participating in the STEPS and C3 programs, students formed strong classroom relationships such as empathy, problem-solving, and being an upstander.

Ongoing Work and School Improvement

Flanders will continue to utilize a continuous growth model with data-driven decision-making in academic and social-emotional learning to adjust instruction and opportunities to meet the needs of all learners. Flanders found great success in emphasizing small group differentiated instruction in language arts and mathematics to ensure each student's needs are met with fidelity in every classroom and will continue those proven practices going forward. Flanders continues to focus on fostering a safe, respectful, and consistently positive community for learning, valuing kindness and hard work.

WILLIAM H. HATTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Robert Garry, Principal

School Information

Hatton Elementary School remained committed to excellence in teaching and learning this year. The school theme was “Excellence through Effort” and encouraged students and teachers to focus on setting personal learning goals and creating an action plan to achieve them. In addition to our Emotional Intelligence work, growth mindset lessons were integrated into classrooms, and teachers regularly met with students about their progress. Achievement data was analyzed frequently and increased small group and 1:1 learning opportunities contributed to student success. Regular communication with families is an integral part of the work at Hatton. Families are engaged as partners in their student’s learning and are provided opportunities to enhance student learning at home. One of the core strengths of Hatton School is the partnership with families in support of all students.

The Hatton School staff maintains a focus on total involvement and continuous improvement. Teachers are members of one or more teams that focus on school improvement, data teams, SRBI, STEM, and Emotional Intelligence, and our membership includes both teachers and support staff. Classroom teachers engaged in ongoing professional development throughout the year from reading and numeracy specialists and onsite coaching to enhance their teaching practices. The Hatton SRBI team met regularly to review student achievement data and assist teachers in providing intervention and acceleration for their students. The SRBI leadership team created a database to monitor student progress closely and worked with classroom teachers to design instruction to meet targeted areas. An important focus for this work was increasing student agency and ownership of their progress. Classroom teachers held conferences and set learning goals with each of their students, and a school-wide “pep rally” in January brought some fun and motivation to all classes. The work to support students at all ability levels was successful as the number of students performing at grade level and meeting academic growth goals increased steadily.

In addition to encouraging teacher leadership, Hatton students were engaged in leadership development opportunities through the STEPS team and leadership assemblies, as well as participation in the CT Association of Schools Leadership and Celebration of the Arts Conferences. The Hatton staff remains dedicated to supporting town initiatives, including STEPS and the annual YMCA Polar Plunge, and our entire school community rallied behind several students who had been impacted by challenging medical diagnoses.

The Hatton PTO continued to support the entire school community through enrichment activities, cultural arts programs, and a variety of family night events, including book fairs, arts enrichment programs, bingo night, pizza cooking nights with the principal, monthly movie nights, an ice cream social and a pasta supper. The PTO supported literacy across the school through purchases for classroom libraries and keeping the book vending machine in our media center stocked with high-interest books for our students. The book vending machine remains a powerful incentive to recognize the positive efforts of our students each week. The PTO also purchased a new sound system for our cafeteria for cultural arts events, performances, and school assemblies and continues to look for ways to improve the school experience for every student at Hatton.

Celebrations

A highlight of this school year was the continuation of our One School, One Book project in coordination with our PTO. A copy of *The One and Only Ivan* was provided for every family, and a school-wide reveal was planned in advance of the project roll-out. Nightly activities consisted of virtual staff readers, trivia contests, in-school activities in all classrooms, and a cultural arts project day for all classes aligned with the book's theme. The PTO sponsored a movie night for all families as a finale for the activity. While the Hatton Community benefited from this work, the project was also shared with other elementary schools as they too worked to incorporate a one school - one book activity into their schools.

The Hatton Friday Phone Call was again a highlight for students and families. This weekly phone call to families by the school principal occurred right in the classroom to celebrate an individual student's success. Students are recognized with tangible rewards, including a special gold coin to purchase their book from the Book Vending Machine in our library. Friday Phone Calls were an excellent motivator for the students and remained a meaningful way to recognize and reinforce positive contributions to the school community. The continued positive impact of these calls reduced discipline issues and improved school culture. This practice has also been shared successfully with other Southington schools. Over 700 calls were made this year to the delight of Hatton families.

Kindergarten

The kindergarten classes took two exciting and informative field trips this year. In the Fall, students went to Indian Rock Reserve, and in the Spring, they visited Flanders Nature Center in Woodbury. Students learned about the orchards and how apples grow. They also learned how to make apple cider and even tried it! The hayride was the highlight of this trip. Students also learned about living and nonliving things, along with the life cycle of plants. They were also able to plant their own flowers to take home on this trip. The year concluded with students performing in a Flag Day and Graduation Program for their families. Kindergarten students also participated in a school-wide Field Day celebration in which they worked on team-building skills.

Grade 1

Each first-grade class created a class charter and used the mood meter daily for students to check in on how they felt throughout the day. In reading, the first-grade team received decodable books and professional development on *Shifting the Balance* to incorporate more Science of Reading (SOR) into daily instruction and practice. Abbreviated reading units and modifications to current units of study to better align with new SOR practices were also added to the grade one curriculum. In Science, the team rolled out new NGSS-aligned units covering *Playground Shadows*, *Film Animation*, *Senses in Nature*, and *Seasonal Changes*. Additionally, all three classes successfully incubated twenty-three eggs and hatched fifteen chickens. This year, the First-Grade classes performed a play, *Once Upon a Lily Pad*, for the school and held an evening performance for parents and relatives. The annual first-grade play is a valuable opportunity for students to work on listening and speaking skills for an authentic purpose.

Grade 2

The grade two team incorporated a new science and engineering curriculum this year. The units surrounded topics involving erosion and landscapes, matter, plants, seeds, and pollination. Students enjoyed the many hands-on activities that went along with each unit. Teachers also had two cycles with the math specialist as a coach in our classrooms. Much of our time with the math specialist was centered around improving the math workshop. Teachers added more opportunities for peer collaboration and student-led conversations around problem-solving. The team worked to improve how math centers were facilitated. Grade two also had professional development sessions focused on the Science of Reading with the literacy specialist. They developed focus groups based on phonics assessment outcomes and incorporated new techniques for decoding and encoding words. Students also went on two field trips focused on nature and landscapes. This year, as in the past, families were invited to come in and read for Read Across America. Finally, daily schedules were aligned across each class to maximize students' time on task for learning and provide opportunities for cross-classroom groupings to meet students' needs best.

Grade 3

Third-grade students created maps of Connecticut to show the variety of geography-related skills. Students also learned about the three branches of Connecticut's government: history, economy, and government. In science, students worked on inquiry-based units covering the topics of forces and magnetic interactions, organisms and their environments, and the life cycle of a monarch butterfly. Each class worked to improve narrative stories, informational writing skills, and learning how to craft a compelling opinion piece. In math, the students increased their understanding of essential addition and subtraction computation, and they tackled new concepts like multiplication, division, introductory algebra, fractions, area, perimeter, and measurement. In reading, students worked to improve their responses to various genres of texts. Students developed skills for summarizing, describing characters, and comparing and contrasting story elements. Teachers also worked to incorporate close reads and guided reading groups to boost comprehension skills. Throughout the school year, Grade 3 students were able to adapt to the demands of a large class size by working as a team and being able to help each other grow. Our students showed flexibility and determination during this school year.

Grade 4

Fourth grade had another successful year. Every teacher took great pride in fostering academic and social-emotional excellence and achievement for all students. The mathematics curriculum was implemented with real-life applications through math workshops and centers. The exploration-based science units prepared students to interact with and appreciate all exhibits during their field trip to the CT Science Center and Camp Sloper. In the Reader's Workshop, students focused on non-fiction. They read about the weather and had meteorologist Sam Kantrow visit the class to share a professional perspective and enhance the student's learning experiences. In Writer's Workshop, students learned about writing about history and had a debate between the Loyalists and Patriots. Students also wrote to Southington restaurants during our persuasive essays unit and supported our local community with a food drive for the Humane Society.

Grade 5

This past year was an engaging, productive year for fifth grade. In language arts, we continued to work through the workshop model, focusing on small groups. To enhance our nonfiction unit in which we studied reptiles, students participated in a hands-on visit from Reptile Shows of New England. In Social Studies, our students participated in Connecticut's Kid Governor program, learning the ins and outs of state government through a student-run election. In addition to our studies of U.S. history, the fifth grade invited local veterans to school to share their experiences and teach the students about the many duties of the armed forces. Science found us studying the sun, moon, and stars, which was enhanced with a trip to the Connecticut Science Center. Our students' math skills were put to the real-world test when they assisted in running Hatton's school store. Throughout the year, many of our students were trained as STEPS champions and led our school in the ABC classroom model. All students acted as role models to students in grade one as part of our 'first-grade buddies' program. In addition, all fifth graders participated in the C3 program with STEPS and Officer Olsen in the spring. Many fifth-grade students had the incredible opportunity to participate as coaches in the Unified Sports and Unified Theater programs throughout the school year, culminating in an exhibition for parents of all involved. Students continued their studies of the arts this year. They showcased their hard work with a chorus concert in the winter and band and orchestra concerts in the winter and spring. Our fifth graders ended the year with preparations for middle school, including STEPS Asset Day at YMCA Camp Sloper and a visit to DePaolo Middle School.

URBIN T. KELLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Marilyn Kahl, Principal

Enhancements

During the 2022-2023 school year, Urbin T. Kelley Elementary School teachers demonstrated a commitment to their continued learning by participating in numerous professional development workshops in reading and math and collaboration during grade-level common planning time and school-based meetings. Integration of the fundamentals of The Science of Reading was the focus for teachers in grades K-2. All teachers continued to broaden their understanding and implementation of Tier I SRBI Interventions in literacy and mathematics. This included using a daily intervention block to support students in need. Daily check-ins on the Mood Meter and the development of classroom Charters supported the continued dedication to Emotional Intelligence.

Celebrations

A dedicated Parent Teacher Organization supports the staff and students. The PTO provided funds for field trips, in-school cultural events, carpets for classrooms, books for class libraries, and 5th grade Class Day at YMCA Camp Sloper. PTO-sponsored events were held throughout the year, including a Welcome Back Picnic, a town-wide Scavenger Hunt for families, Scholastic Book Fairs, a Holiday Fair, an Egg Drop, and Kelley School Field Day. The PTO also sponsored the KES Kindness Club and Art Club. Fifth-grade STEPS Ambassadors once again served as outstanding role models for all Kelley School students. They ran monthly Town Meetings educating all other students on the Asset of the Month and how to integrate assets into their daily lives. The Ambassadors also coordinated the Thanksgiving food drive benefiting Bread for Life and the annual “Soup-er Bowl” can/food drive benefiting Southington Community Services. Diversity workshops, under the direction of Mr. Paul Vivian and Dr. Reverend Audley Donaldson, were presented to third and fifth-grade students throughout the year. These engaging workshops focused discussions on important topics, including stereotypes, bullying, acceptance, and diversity. This year marked the return of the Kelley School Robotics Team and Math Olympiad Team. Additionally, the Kelley School Unified Sports Team provided an opportunity for students of all abilities to work together in an athletic environment and enjoy success. Under the supervision of staff volunteers, eight weeks of team practices culminated in a successful Olympic event held in collaboration with Derynoski School’s Unified Sports Team. This program continued to bring a sense of purpose and compassion to all who volunteered their time. The annual Veterans’ Day Program and Parade honored Kelley School's family and friends who have served in the military. In addition to the in-school program and parade, a donation drive provided boxes of health and beauty items donated to the Veterans Center in Rocky Hill.

Ongoing Work

Kelley School’s principal, special education teachers and literacy specialist will be working with UConn’s NEAG School of Education members to implement Data-Based Individualization (DBI) strategies and tools to meet the needs of Kelley School students better. Teachers in grades

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K-2 will continue their work integrating the Science of Reading into their literacy instruction and assessment. The introduction of mClass will provide teacher-administered literacy assessments and intervention support for students. Ongoing professional development will be provided for all teachers on this new initiative. A continued focus will also be on integrating the 4 C's into instructional practices and student success.

Kindergarten

Kelley School's youngest learners benefited from structured play, centers-based instruction, and the continued focus on the workshop model in reading, writing, and mathematics. Year three of integrating the Phonics Program in Kindergarten proved successful as well. Teachers participated in collaborative professional development and lesson modeling on using decodable texts in literacy instruction with the district Literacy Coach. Integration of components of The Science of Reading continued to be the focus of professional learning, classroom instruction, and student performance.

Grade 1

Phonics, Readers', and Writers' Workshop instruction and success were driven by the Lucy Calkins Units of Study and resources. The first-grade team met for professional development workshops with the literacy coach throughout the school year, with their professional learning focused on using supplemental materials to support The Science of Reading. Students continued to work in "Rug Clubs" and were able to participate in partnerships and small groups. The students continued to grasp concepts and skills at their just right reading level. The continued implementation of Ready Classroom further differentiated instruction and student work in mathematics. The children completed 45 minutes weekly on "My Path" to maintain and strengthen their understanding of the skills taught. Math centers were used to enhance the curriculum. Support from the KES math specialist and results from the diagnostic assessment enhanced teachers' understanding of this resource to maximize student growth. New units of study were introduced in the science curriculum.

Grade 2

Literacy instruction in grade 2 continued to be driven by implementing units of study in Readers' and Writers' Workshop, including year two of utilizing the phonics program. Professional learning sessions with the district literacy coach focused on using decodable texts to help strengthen students' phonics skills. Building Blocks videos were used to support phonics instruction. The implementation of Math Workshop positively impacted students' mathematics achievement in second grade. Math centers provided differentiated and engaging student activities, with lessons aligned to the grade level curriculum and CCSS. In addition, students spent at least 45 minutes on their I-Ready Pathway and were assigned skills-related lessons. Implementing I-Block allowed for differentiation, small group work, and 1-1 guided practice each day. Science continued to provide many opportunities for problem-solving and hands-on learning. This year, the approach to science was engineering-based. Science was divided into 3 units: The 4th Little Pig, The Koa Tree, and Beavers. Support from the district science specialist early in the school year proved very beneficial in learning and delivering the new lessons. The students enjoyed the hands-on activities that went along with each unit, allowing all students to communicate & work together collaboratively.

Grade 3

Implementing the Math Workshop in third grade positively impacted students' mathematics achievement over the school year. Differentiated student groups met at least twice a week, allowing teachers to provide support or enrichment for students based on analysis of assessment data. The iReady Mathematics Pathway online program allowed students to work independently for practice and reinforcement of skills taught during math instruction. A new science unit about Fossils was introduced this year. Aligned with the NGSS, Grand Canyon Seashells allowed the students to be secret agents from the environmental archeology division. They made observations and asked questions about the seemingly odd marine fossils in the Grand Canyon. Throughout the unit, students defined how this strange phenomenon came to be. Students continued to grow and achieve in reading and writing by utilizing the workshop model and the Teachers' College Units of Study.

Grade 4

Readers Workshop consisted of units of study centered around characters, themes, and perspectives. In the Writer's Workshop, students focused on narratives, opinions, and informational essays. Fourth graders took a trip to Camp Sloper for hands-on experiences involving erosion that aligned with their Land and Water unit in science. Some activities included building a dam to save a village and completing a scavenger hunt on the trails. Students were also introduced to the idea of biomimicry, which is when humans mimic nature in their designs. They compared and contrasted energy transfer in the natural and designed worlds, focusing on how both receive and perceive electric currents, light, and sound. At the end of the unit, students identified how an existing device mimics the natural world and provided one way to improve the device using biomimicry. In Social Studies, the year ended with a final state float project where students demonstrated their understanding of the US regions. A field trip to Mystic Seaport also allowed students to take a step back in time and experience life in Colonial New England.

Grade 5

Fifth graders again benefited from departmentalized instruction this year. Students switched classes for writing, math, and reading instruction with the three grade-level teachers. Science and Social Studies were taught in each homeroom. This provided consistency of instruction in these areas and prepared students for the middle school class model. Every student participated in the Invention Convention, with several students reaching the state level of competition for their creative inventions and one student qualifying for the national competition. A field trip to Boston's Freedom Trail in the fall enhanced the study of American History in Social Studies throughout the year. Teachers facilitated student-led parent conferences that allowed students to take ownership of their learning and share their progress with their adults. Students also participated in a STEPS middle school transition day in the Spring.

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ZAYA A. OSHANA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Josephine Rogala, Principal

Zaya A. Oshana Elementary School had a successful 2022-23 school year, focusing on academic performance and social-emotional learning while maintaining safety and positive family engagement throughout the year. Adding a full-time social worker contributed to improved SRBI interventions for students with behavior needs and proactive social-emotional support that strengthened our tiered behavior response and contributed to an overall positive school climate. Oshana special education teachers, the literacy specialist, and the school principal participated in ongoing DBI work with UCONN throughout the school year, analyzing and improving how we use data to monitor and adapt our intervention to improve student reading. Teachers focused on providing opportunities for students to engage in the 4C's: collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking while building their citizenship through school and community service projects. The Oshana PTO sponsored many family and student events, including our annual Ice Cream Kick Social, Halloween Family Night, Bingo Night, Scholastic Book Fairs, Holiday Bazaar, and a Birds of Prey assembly. Monthly PTO meetings and school assemblies were held to recognize student achievement and celebrations. The Oshana drama club performed The Wizard of Oz to sold-out audiences over two days; 4th and 5th grade students participated in Robotics Club and Math Olympiads, and a school-wide Art Show exhibit held in June showcased student art.

Kindergarten

Students engaged in multi-disciplinary learning throughout the school year. Examples included a field trip to Indian Rock Nature Preserve, observations of butterfly and ladybug life cycles, investigations of sinking and floating through shipbuilding in science, and pumpkin and apple curriculum theme-based learning stations, to name a few. Parent engagement activities were held throughout the school year, such as Friday Mystery Readers, parent-led learning stations, and assistance with blanket making for Southington Community Services. Teachers engaged in professional development with the literacy coaches, introducing 'de-codable' small group instruction focusing on bridging the science of reading research with readers' and writers' workshops.

Grade 1

Teachers engaged in ongoing professional development with the literacy coach, focusing on small group instruction through decodable texts, and collaborated with the math specialist to strengthen their ability to differentiate through math centers. First-grade students were word detectives, investigating and solving new words and then building them to create a 'Vowel Town' based on their learning. Students studied life cycles and hatched baby chicks, filled a pumpkin with trash, and buried it, only to dig it up on Earth Day to see what happened. First graders also engaged in diverse books, learning about different holiday traditions, investigated how to use their shadows to determine the shifting pattern of the sun, created sound makers to study how vibrations create sounds, and made a field guide showing how animals adapted to changing seasons.

Grade 2

Second-grade students and teachers hosted a food drive to help support the Southington Community Services food pantry after learning about communities in social studies. Students

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learned more about their hometown of Southington and hosted a visit from the Barnes Museum, researched animals and created posters using Poster My Wall in media skills, invited parents in throughout March as Mystery Readers, discovered how animals depend on one another and their environment through a field trip to Camp Sloper, and planted vegetable and fruit plants in the school garden in collaboration with LEAF and Mark Ramsey. Teachers engaged in ongoing professional development with the literacy coach to improve small group instruction using decodable texts. They improved how they facilitated math centers with the support of the math coach.

Grade 3

Teachers engaged in coaching cycles in both literacy and math, focusing on small-group instruction. Third graders engaged in diversity lessons led by consultants Mr. Paul Vivian and Dr. Audley Donaldson, celebrating the uniqueness of each family. Students worked collaboratively to research extreme weather and then designed and built models representing ways to protect our school. Third graders studied animals and created animal slideshows, which they presented to their classmates. They also observed the life cycles of butterflies.

Grade 4

Fourth-grade students participated in a science field trip to Camp Sloper to research erosion, completed independent research about the American Revolution, and then published a writing piece on their learning. Teachers worked with the math specialist to strengthen small-group instruction through math centers. They participated in coaching cycles with the literacy coach, focusing on small group instruction while moving students up the bands of texts. Students engaged in multiple opportunities to collaborate and communicate with one another through grand conversations, partner work, and small groups across all content areas.

Grade 5

Teachers engaged in ongoing collaboration with the math specialist to improve small group instruction, using iReady data and student work to address skill development and enrichment opportunities. Teachers also engaged in coaching cycles with the district literacy coach, focusing on small group instruction, and participated in ongoing professional development to facilitate word work lessons. Students participated in the CT Kid Governor Program, inspiring some to see their CKG platforms to completion by collaborating with their teacher, principal, and classmates to facilitate school-wide activities, including Kindness Week, Boost Up Mirror, and Dishes of Kindness Rocks in each classroom. Additionally, students and teachers collaborated with parents to make blankets for Southington Community Services, participated in diversity workshops with Mr. Vivian and Dr. Donaldson, and facilitated student-led conferences for parents in the spring.

Ongoing Work/School Improvement

Oshana staff will continue to focus on improving SRBI practices and small group instruction while engaging in professional development to support the implementation of new assessments in the area of reading during the 2023-24 school year. Staff will continue to build capacity around the Vision of a Graduate and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the six competencies across all content areas.

SOUTH END ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Rita H. Stearns

Enhancements

The 2022-23 school year was filled with many accomplishments for both students and staff at South End Elementary School. South End School continued to focus on creating a safe school climate. Social and emotional well-being was stressed from the start of the school year. This was supported by continued implementation of the RULER approach from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. Not only was this a focus in each classroom and schoolwide, but it also extended to parents to support this growth at home. South End celebrated Classroom Charter Champs monthly during schoolwide town meetings centered on caring for school climate, safety, achievement motivation, positive peer influence, self-esteem, and reading for pleasure. 5th-grade STEPS Ambassadors led these Town Meetings.

Celebrations

The South End PTO continued to support our students with their time and generous donations. These included in-house field trips, cultural arts opportunities, classroom books from the Scholastic Book Fair, and a captivating field day for all students. In December, the students of South End collected baskets of snacks, drinks, chapsticks, and hand sanitizers for Southington's Police and Fire Departments to recognize the STEPS Asset of the Month: safety. Second graders presented their Patriotic Program to families, local veterans, and military members in May. Students performed patriotic songs under the direction of our music teacher and created Patriotic bookmarks to share with active duty and retired military personnel. Continued efforts to promote cultural awareness were a focus this year. Paul Vivian and Audley Donaldson returned to South End to provide diversity training to third and fifth-grade students. Conversation topics included breaking stereotypes, diversity, bullying, and acceptance. Read Across America week saw South End host a schoolwide Book Swap. Students at each grade level donated their gently used books, and all students were gifted with a new to them book. Over 350 books were collected and exchanged. In May, the South End Drama Club performed three sold-out performances of Matilda, Jr.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten teachers continued their work with district coaches in both literacy and mathematics. Literacy work was centered on phonics and the use of decodable texts. The Science of Reading continued to be the focus of classroom instruction and student performance. Kindergarten also delved into many Science topics this year. They were visited in November by live turkeys from Indian Rock Nature Preserve, learned about liquids and solids to see how matter changes, and were visited by live animals through an in-house field trip with The Children's Science Museum.

Grade 1

First-grade teachers met with literacy specialists for professional development as they implemented the Science of Reading into daily reading lessons, small group instruction, and phonics lessons. Ready Mathematics was implemented in classrooms to strengthen differentiation of instruction. Children also utilized *My Path* to work on individual math goals and strengthen

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previously taught skills. Math centers and support from math specialists also provided additional reinforcement. The research skill was introduced to first graders to encourage peer communication and collaboration. Students delved into a new science curriculum using Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) units of study. Units included Playground Shadows, Film Animation, Senses in Nature, and Seasonal Changes. This year, an after-school Lego Robotics Club introduced to first graders was a success.

Grade 2

Units of study in Reader's and Writer's Workshop were the driving force behind literacy instruction. Professional learning occurred with district literacy coaches to strengthen phonics skills through decodable texts. The Math Workshop model, math centers, and block time provided students differentiated lessons and instruction. Students continued with individual skill strengthening using the I-Ready Pathway to target their personal growth. Two out-of-school opportunities, Camp Sloper and Roaring Brook Nature Center, allowed students to explore and learn more about local animal habitats.

Grade 3

Work continued in Reader's and Writer's workshops as students participated in collaborative groups focusing on communication and critical thinking skills. Partners worked together during a mystery unit to be sleuths and solve a crime. In writing, third graders wrote non-fiction books based on a topic for which they considered themselves to be experts. Students were introduced to more challenging concepts such as geometry, algebra, area, and perimeter. Math centers strengthened these skills, and students continued with *My Path* to reinforce individual skills. As part of their science curriculum, classes visited Roaring Brook Nature Preserve to explore butterflies and habitats. Mr. Paul Vivian and Dr. Audley Donaldson met with students to share diversity lessons.

Grade 4

Reader's Workshop topics focused on historical fiction with a focus on the American Revolution. Students wrote personal narratives, opinion essays, and nonfiction texts on high-interest topics. The Math Workshop model and math centers were utilized to strengthen skills. Students who used the NGSS science standards visited the Connecticut Science Center to learn more about erosion, biomimicry, and energy. A trip to Camp Sloper also complimented their lesson on erosion.

Grade 5

Fifth grade had a very successful year. Students worked towards ownership of their learning in both Reader's and Writer's Workshop. They honed their self-assessment skills as they prepared to transition to middle school. I-Ready was utilized as a self-measuring tool in math, and students worked diligently to strengthen their skills. STEPS Ambassadors volunteered and mentored in kindergarten and first-grade classrooms, supporting students in literacy and numeracy. All students participated in the Invention Convention, with one student reaching the state level. A culminating field trip with Empowering Leadership reinforced team building, confidence, and perseverance.

Ongoing Work/School Improvement

South End continues to work at creating a positive school climate where all students thrive and grow. Social and emotional work will continue in classrooms with Class Charters and the Ruler approach. The continuation and fine-tuning of SRBI (Scientific Research-Based Interventions) will continue as classroom-based Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports are strengthened. Data-driven instruction will guide our literacy and numeracy specialists in providing tiered instruction.

This school year, select staff members will collaborate with a UConn team learning DBI (Data Based Individualization) to strengthen interventions. Our special education team will be at the forefront of this training. The Science of Reading continues to be a significant shift in how reading instruction is provided to all students. Teachers will continue to receive professional development throughout the year. The four C's continue to be an area of focus as teachers work to integrate all content areas.

WILLIAM M. STRONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Melissa Barbuto, Principal

Enhancements

The 2022/2023 school year was another year full of impressive accomplishments at William M. Strong Elementary School! This year, Strong School focused on cultivating a positive school climate. To foster a positive school climate that promotes the learning and well-being of the school community, the entire school implemented components of the Responsive Classroom approach, expanded the implementation of Emotional Intelligence to all students and parents, and encouraged a Growth Mindset for all students and staff through monthly whole school activities and presentations led by staff and students. Academic growth and achievement were a focus for all students as well. Intervention support and enrichment were provided in all content areas based on student needs. Due to this, students made significant academic and social/emotional growth.

Celebrations

The PTO continued to support the Strong School community through cultural arts programs, enrichment activities, after-school clubs, fundraisers, and family night events. These included book fairs, a reading under the stars event, a karate club, a family movie night, a Yard Goats game, and an APEX fundraiser. Throughout the year, the PTO also provided staff with materials for their classrooms and recess equipment.

Work around Emotional Intelligence continued to expand and thrive this year with the implementation of Student Self Awareness Leaders. Student Self Awareness Leaders led the school in recognizing, labeling, and regulating their emotions daily. Each month, students voted for a Charter Champion in their classrooms to recognize and celebrate someone who “lived” the Charter daily. Charter Champions were recognized monthly through whole-school meetings and family newsletters. Furthermore, throughout the year, several staff meetings were designated to focus on self-care for staff to strengthen their emotional well-being.

Continued efforts to enhance cultural awareness among students were taken. Paul Vivian and Audley Donaldson returned to Strong School to provide third and fifth graders with diversity training. Classroom libraries were expanded to include diverse texts to provide students with books that are both lenses and mirrors into themselves and others.

Kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers continued incorporating critical components of the Responsive Classroom Approach into their classrooms to build a positive community. In addition to Morning Meeting, all teachers implemented critical components of Emotional Intelligence by creating classroom Charters, checking in on the Mood Meter, creating strategy walls, and implementing conflict resolution lessons, positively impacting students' social and emotional growth.

All kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers implemented the Ready Classroom math program in conjunction with MyPath and workshop stations to differentiate instruction. Along with

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this implementation, all teachers received coaching from the math specialist to deepen their understanding of the math curriculum and math instructional practices.

Staff continued to deepen their understanding and implementation of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity across all content areas to support Southington Public School's Vision of a Graduate.

Staff focused on individual student growth through the implementation of our SRBI Action Plan and Strong School's partnership with UCONN to implement a multi-tiered system of support and data-based individualization. This process closely monitored students' progress to ensure they received the appropriate interventions and services. Adaptations to each student's plan were made as needed based on an in-depth data analysis.

Ongoing Work

Teacher professional learning will expand during the 2023-2024 school year, focusing on integrating the science of reading practices, utilizing iReady enhancements, and continued coaching in math and literacy.

As the school continues to work on creating a positive school climate, staff will continue to deepen and expand their understanding of Emotional Intelligence. Staff will continue to grow the work in this area by embedding the anchor tools of Emotional Intelligence into classroom and school environments through student leadership. Student and parent leadership teams will be expanded to embed this approach into the community. Teachers will also continue to utilize the Responsive Classroom component "Morning Meeting" as a structure to implement Emotional Intelligence and build a positive school community.

Strong School will participate in the "One School, One Book" program in collaboration with the PTO. One School One Book allows all families at Strong School to experience the same book simultaneously. The fundamental purpose of this program is to build a community of readers, encourage family discussions, and generate the excitement of being part of fun reading activities!

REUBEN E. THALBERG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Erin Natrass, Principal

School Accomplishments

The 2022-23 school year was a successful year filled with accomplishments at Thalberg Elementary School. There was a continued focus on creating a safe school climate. Social and emotional well-being were a priority from the start of the school year. This was supported by continued implementation of the RULER approach from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. Each classroom established a charter to promote a positive climate and expectations. Thalberg celebrated Classroom Charter Champs each month during school assemblies, highlighting a student from each class who best lived the charter. Academic growth and achievement were a focus for all students. Intervention support was provided in literacy and mathematics based on student needs. Small group strategy work within the classroom increased language arts and mathematics performance.

Celebrations

Thalberg School welcomed a new principal this school year. Mrs. Erin Natrass worked to build relationships with staff, students, and families by listening, learning, and collaborating. The Thalberg PTO prioritized enhancing the school community. Monthly meetings were held in person to plan special events and fundraising for the year. The PTO supported family events such as the trunk or treat, special person night with a schoolwide scavenger hunt, and a country-themed family night. The PTO and each classroom sponsored two book fairs and benefited from book donations after each event. The PTO provided cultural arts programs for all students this year. An a cappella group performed, and a karate program taught students about hard work and commitment. A subcommittee of the PTO planned a special Class Day for fifth-grade students and a promotion ceremony to commemorate their years at Thalberg School before transitioning into middle school.

Continued efforts to promote cultural awareness were a focus this year. Mr. Paul Vivian and Dr. Audley Donaldson returned to Thalberg to provide third- and fifth graders with diversity training. Students in grades 3 and 5 engaged in lessons about diversity, stereotypes, bullying, and developing understanding, empathy, and acceptance. They relate to students through humor to teach ways to celebrate what each student brings to Thalberg. Book orders were structured to fill classroom libraries with 'lenses and mirrors' text for students.

The fifth-grade STEPS Leadership club collaborated with the school Social Worker to facilitate a winter clothing drive. Thalberg School donated close to 1,000 items to Southington Community Services. Additionally, the fifth-grade leaders established a Kindness Club. The group focused on noticing random acts of kindness throughout the school to be shared each week over the intercom to be acknowledged by the Thalberg school community.

Kindergarten

Students in kindergarten benefited from instruction that included centers-based, differentiated instruction and structured play. Utilizing the workshop model across subject areas, students

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developed foundational reading and mathematics skills. Lucy Calkins's Units of Study provided strong phonics instruction. Teachers participated in collaborative professional learning with the district literacy coach to incorporate decodable text into small-group reading instruction. Kindergarten students experienced a hands-on learning experience during an in-school program with the West Hartford Children's Museum.

Grade 1

Students continued to build foundational literacy skills through the differentiated instruction of Reader's and Writer's Workshop and Lucy Calkins Units of Study resource for phonics. Teachers focused on student growth in math using the iReady curriculum, MyPath for individualized skill development, and differentiated centers focused on power standards to support skill development. During a field trip to Flaming Farm, students experienced animals firsthand to support their scientific study of animals. Additionally, the students participated in the hatching process of baby chicks in each class, learning to care for the chicks after hatching. The students in grade 1 learned about service to their community by organizing a successful "Summer Stock Up" food drive to donate snacks to Bread for Life.

Grade 2

Students continued to grow their reading skills, developing higher-order thinking skills during the Reader's and Writer's Workshop. Students collaborated to share thoughts about the text in depth and thoughts about character development and change along with the theme and author's craft. Grade 2 students continued to grow their skills in mathematics, rising to the challenge of mathematical application of power standards. Teachers tied student learning to the community of Southington by welcoming visitors from the Barnes Museum to share the town's history. Additionally, a representative from the Southington Public Library offered further history of the town and shared opportunities the library provides the youth of Southington.

Grade 3

Third graders continued to develop their collaboration and communication skills through reading, writing, and mathematics. Reader's Workshop and Book Clubs supported student conversation about text and learning to think critically about their reading. Differentiated math centers provided students an opportunity to master power standards and practice the application of skills. Third graders experienced the government and history of Connecticut during a visit to the State Capitol. Third-grade students were introduced to reading music using the recorder in music class. This work culminated with a performance for parents to enjoy.

Grade 4

Fourth graders grew into critical thinkers this year. Across subject areas, they gained experience asking questions, thinking beyond the literal text, and developing application strategies using skills they mastered. As developing writers, students in grade 4 learned to use rubrics to refine their writing and provide actionable feedback to peers. Students in grade 4 developed strong mathematics skills through the use of differentiated centers focusing on the reinforcement of power standards along with application skills. The students who demonstrated mastery of grade 4 standards persevered with challenges in differentiated centers.

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Grade 5

Fifth graders benefited from departmentalization this year. Students switched classes for language arts/social studies and math/science. They began to develop executive functioning skills such as responsibility and organization in preparation for the transition to middle school. All students participated in the Invention Convention to apply skills in inquiry and investigation. Four students from Thalberg went on to the state level; of those, two students moved on to the national level of competition for their creative inventions. Each student participated in a team-building day at Camp Sloper to support the transition to middle school. Fifth graders participated in the first year of the C3 curriculum implemented by a Southington police officer in collaboration with Southington STEPS to build decision-making capacity.

Ongoing Work

Thalberg continues incorporating indicators of collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity into daily instruction.

Teacher Professional Learning will expand during the 2023-24 school year, focusing on integrating the science of reading and utilizing iReady enhancements. Collaboration between teachers and district coaches will be essential to ensure high-quality instruction to attain rigorous student achievement goals.