Primary Years Programme Feasibility Study

Spring 2024 Findings and Considerations
Structure and Outcome:

31 Team Participants:
- Teachers
- Administrators
- Parents
- Board of Education Members

- Orientation Meeting
- 2 Off-site School Visits
- Debrief Meeting

Many strengths of the PYP framework were observed

More exploration is needed

Balance of initiatives in 24-25

Focused professional learning in Literacy
Continue learning more about PYP
Goals of the Study:

- Team will gain insight on approaches to implementing the Primary Years Programme K-5
- Team will gain insight on the impact to teaching and learning, inclusive of all classrooms K-5
- Team will observe, inquire and note similarities and differences in learning environments through site visits
- Team will summarize possible benefits of pursuing the Primary Years Programme for SCSD grades K-5
- Team will identify considerations for next steps
Our Site Visits:

Feb. 15th
Greenburgh Central School District

Feb. 28th
East Hartford Public Schools
Similarities and Differences:

Similarities observed in classrooms/approaches among Somers and the PYP schools:

• Strong student engagement
• Similar curricular programs
• Continuum of services
• Balance of explicit instruction and student inquiry to meet standards
• Use of learning charts and visuals
• 1:1 student device program
• Evidence of student work throughout the building
• Student collaboration/cooperative group work
• Teacher investment
• Celebration of student success
• Community-based partnerships and events
• Support of school organizations

Differences observed in classrooms/approaches between Somers and the PYP schools:

In PYP classrooms:

• Common language used across classrooms
• Unit topics, essential questions, learner profile traits posted and referenced
• Cross-content connections were clear
• High occurrence of student driven learning, ownership and inquiry
• Student tables instead of desks
• World language spans K-5
• 5th grade Capstone project
Strengths and Wonderings:

**Strengths observed in the PYP classrooms/schools:**

- Vertical/horizontal alignment
- Cross-content connections
- Student ownership of learning - hands-on, inquiry-based
- Rich accountable talk and strong student presentation skills
- Celebration of risk-taking in learning
- Reflection on learning by students and teachers
- Daily integration of Learner Profile traits
- Structured/on-going professional learning for faculty
- Strong investment and partnership of students/staff/families

**Observations left us wondering:**

- What is the best inroad to start PYP work? What are costs associated?
- How are PYP units developed?
- How does unit planning support the needs of diverse learners?
- How is the ratio of explicit vs. inquiry-based learning determined?
- What makes the IB professional learning different?
- If the PYP framework can’t be measured as a direct impact to ELA and Math proficiency, what are districts' reasons for pursuing/abandoning the work?
- What is our clear "why" if moving forward. Should this be our path or is there another path?
Possibilities:

Could PYP enhance of district mission/vision for our K-5 learners? In what ways?

- Professional learning and collaboration that is consistent and spans across subjects
- Vertical alignment of students' social-emotional learning through the IB Learner Profile Traits
- Consistency in language and approaches for families across multiple school buildings
- Opportunities to support students' executive functioning skills through IB Approaches to Learning
- Opportunities to bolster students' collaboration and presentation skills and passion to explore
- Structures to support students' metacognition
- Learning experiences to increase students' awareness of own community and communities beyond Somers
Considerations for Next Steps:
What must-haves would be important to consider moving forward?

- Balance Initiatives and priorities in professional learning and curriculum alignment K-5
- Guaranteed collaborative planning time, inclusive of all departments
- Creation of small steps and small goals over time-intentional planning tied to the district success plan
- Make steps of the journey clear to all stakeholders (including costs associated for start-up and on-going implementation, lesson comparison samples)
- Learn about schools in our region that are moving toward PYP exploration. Are there also those that have moved away from exploring? Why?
- Build relationships with partner schools-"Critical friends," learn more about the lessons learned along the way
- Learn more about how our curriculum applies/doesn't apply to the PYP framework
- Learn more about how the PYP framework supports Special Education, ENL, and related-service programming