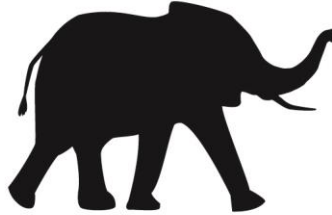




SCSD

SOMERS CENTRAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT



Forward in Excellence

Focus on Curriculum

Central Office Report to the Board of Education

September 13, 2016

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Assistant Superintendent for Learning

+ Tri-State Consultancy February 2016



- On February 3-5, 2016, Somers Central School District hosted a visiting team from the Tri-State Consortium to examine our work to support students in their Social, Emotional and Physical Wellness and Learning.
- A team of 18 – including Tri-State Executive Director, Dr. Martin G. Brooks and Director of Training, Ms. Kathleen Reilly – spent time in our district, visiting with students, parents, teachers and administrators. They visited classrooms, shadowed students and examined artifacts related to our focus on the Whole Child.



Essential Questions for the Visit

- Question 1: To what extent is social and emotional development embedded in our K-12 programs and curriculum, and how consistently are those programs and curricula supported and implemented across grades and disciplines?
- Question 2: To what extent is our faculty supported in learning deeply about Social and Emotional Wellness and in using appropriate practices to promote social emotional learning with their students?
- Question 3: To what extent is our approach to social and emotional wellness based on current research, and how will the district know whether our approach is generating the desired results?



Tri-State Consultancy

Executive Summary Highlights

“Clear understanding – in all four schools – that educating the “Whole Child” is of utmost importance to the Somers community.”

“Further, in 2011, the creation of Whole Child Success Teams in each building, aligned by appropriate and specific student developmental needs, research-based decision making, and identification of effective instructional strategies was the catalyst that resulted in the current iteration of the program.”



- Practices in the elementary level – including the implementation of Responsive Classroom (morning meeting), mindfulness exercises (visualization and deep breathing) and proactive behavioral strategies employing support staff such as psychologists, social worker, school counselors (Friendship Groups, Lunch Bunch, etc.)
- At the Middle School, evidence of clear supports in place – Advisory, public recognition of student success (STAR, TUSKER programs), True North and Team TUSKERS Mentoring Program.
- At the High School, students and faculty alike report a high degree of “connectedness”. Throughout the high school there is an environment of purposeful calm, and friendly, respectful engagement.



- Faculty shared that Social Emotional Learning is AS important as academic learning.
- Faculty continues to have opportunities to further their commitment to SEL – Responsive Classroom, Omega Institute
- PLC time is devoted to topics related to SEL – as are programs that teachers initiate and develop (6th grade and HS orientation programs)
- Book Study Groups and other professional readings shared in department or school meetings focus on SEL
- The ASCA (American School Counselor Association) standards guide the work of counselors – district-wide.
- Presentations and guest speakers have focused on issues of SEL – for example a teacher sharing her own personal experience with ADD as a child, athlete sharing his battle with addiction and a GLSEN presentation.



- Work at the elementary level is grounded in ASCA standards and Responsive classroom – which draw from research-based current best practices
- Use of tools such as the “40 Developmental Assets Survey” have been used with middle level students – this survey is a product of the Search Institute and Research on Adolescent Development (Scales and Leffert)
- Work of Carol Dweck (Stanford University) on “Open Mindset” has driven work at the HS level and taken down barriers to student access of challenging course material.
- Brainology – implemented at SHS – is a program based upon Dweck’s work



Recommendations

- Continue to review data related to SEL – from curriculum to attendance and behavior reports – to determine the effectiveness of programs
- Ensure the SEL outcomes are embedded in curriculum to guarantee desired outcomes.
- Continue to invest in professional learning
- Include the district's learning coaches in this work – supporting best instructional practices that promote student SE well-being and therefore result in improved learning
- Reduce the clustering of assessments to minimize stress on students



Recommendations

- Elicit feedback from students and work to make adjustments based upon this feedback where appropriate.
- Examine prerequisites for admission to Honors and AP courses and seek ways to ease student transition into these higher order thinking environments
- Continue commitment to programs such as Responsive Classroom, Advisory Program.
- Examine the Whole Child Success Team and how the process to identify and support teachers and students can be enhanced.
- Build a collection of resources for students around wellness



Recommendations

- Encourage student self-reflection, goal setting and self-management or monitoring of their SE well-being. Consider a tool to help track and communicate the students' progress.
- Continue to use tools such as Alpine and Panorama to help gather and organize SEL data in order to guide next steps.

“The district belief is that there is a direct connection between Somers students academic growth and the processes that lead them toward becoming citizens who are resilient, reflective, empathic, and responsible to others.”



Global Citizenship Task Force - Spring 2016



- Consisted of faculty, administration, HS students, parents (k-12) and community members
- Met three times
- Examined the Teaching Tolerance Anti-Bias Framework as a tool for guiding our work with students and faculty
- Revised our vision around Global Citizenship
- Identified next steps – including No Place for Hate, Peer Training from the ADL and ongoing professional learning through Operation Respect
- Taking a closer look at curriculum and resources to build global awareness and an understanding of multiple perspectives



International Baccalaureate Candidate Status at SHS



- At least 16 teachers have attended IB training with a few remaining training sessions scheduled for this fall/winter
- Course outlines have been created and curriculum maps are in development
- We have just learned that our verification visit will take place on November 14-15, 2016
 - During this visit:
 - The team (2 IB consultants) will meet with teachers, students and parents, tour the HS facility and get a sense of HS operations
 - Their essential question – can SHS support the IB Diploma Program!



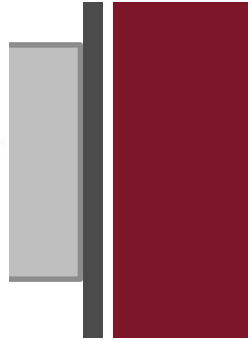
Summer Curriculum Work Update



■ Facts and Figures:

- 72 Teachers engaged in
- 32 projects, in
- All 4 schools, covering curriculum in
- Most major curriculum areas including ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, Health, Special Education, Technology and Art

Mr. Edward Amato attended Project Lead The Way training in *Digital Electronics* bringing to 4 the number of PLTW college-credit bearing courses we can offer to SHS students – Intro to Engineering Design, Principles of Engineering, Civil Engineering and Architecture – and now *Digital Electronics*



- Administrators attended four retreat days – as a team – this summer – exploring ways to foster professional learning communities that truly embrace our vision of success for all students by creating relevant, rigorous and engaging 21st century learning experiences.
- Approximately 40 teachers leaders attended a two day Curriculum Leaders' retreat. Joined by our full administrative team, the focus was on embracing a continuous learner's stance and exploring learner engagement. One way to engage learners is to provide choice and we modeled that by offering breakout sessions on Global Citizenship, Curriculum Mapping, Formative Assessment, Use of Protocols in PLCs, and exploration of the Learning Coach model.
- Our year got off to a great start with a professional learning day on August 31st to focus our work – prior to school opening on September 1st. Again, our district focus is on student engagement in learning!



Learning Coaches



- Beginning our second year
- There is a Learning Coach in each building and each one is ready to work alongside teachers to support their continued professional growth
- A new mission statement: *Our mission is to sustain and build upon the passion for teaching and learning throughout our professional community, to ensure rich, engaging learning for all students.*
- We look forward to hearing more – from the Learning Coaches and some of the teachers they work with at the November 8th Board of Education Workshop meeting



Constitution Day



- Students will be engaged in a variety of age-appropriate learning experiences this Friday related to the commemoration of the signing of the Constitution on September 17, 1787.
- Experiences will include recognition of how significant this document is in the life of every American and will be a combination of celebration, commemoration and learning.
- At the secondary levels, learning about the Constitution is embedded in our Social Studies curriculum.

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Inspire, Engage, Succeed!

Thank you for supporting learning!

