



WESTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Annual Instructional Update
2012-2013

Presented to the Board of Education
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UPDATE ON DISTRICT INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT CONTINUOUS INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Academic Innovation and Measurement

Academic Innovation and Measurement (AIM) is the result of a partnership with Teachers College, Columbia University with the continued goal of empowering students to be creative thinkers and innovative problem solvers prepared to take on the challenges of a global society. The 2012-13 academic year marked the third year of successful implementation of the AIM initiative. To date, most teachers in grades 1-12 have participated in the AIM approach to teaching and learning.

Teachers have embraced AIM and take great pride in the work they have accomplished to engage students in learning experiences that challenge them to apply their learning to novel situations. It is common practice throughout the system for teachers to employ their professional meeting time to collaboratively develop their AIM units, analyze assessments, and discuss student performance in relation to 21st century outcomes. Curriculum instructional leaders guide this work and provide teachers with support on the implementation of their units.

While the district's partnership with Teachers College will come to a close this summer, the work will continue to thrive in the next phase of the implementation plan. The district has built the internal capacity to rely on the expertise of teachers who have been involved in AIM to continue the work that lies ahead. Kindergarten teachers and all other remaining teachers are scheduled to be trained during the 2013-14 school year. It is anticipated that the strong enthusiasm for AIM will continue to result in learning experiences that promote high levels of student engagement, discourse, and critical thinking.

Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) outline what students should know and be able to do over the course of their K-12 career. Student performance in relation to the CCSS will be assessed on the new state assessments beginning in the spring of 2015. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) is developing these assessments as online, adaptive tests that will replace the current paper and pencil Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). Connecticut is one of 30 states that will be employing the SBAC assessments, thus it will be possible to examine the performance of our students in relation to a large percentage of students in the country.

Weston students in grades 3-8 and in grade 11 were recently administered a CCSS practice assessment that was administered through an online format. The practice assessment provided students and teachers with a glimpse of the types of questions that will likely appear on the future state assessment. While the individual student results will not be reported, the district will receive grade level feedback that will continue to inform the district's transition to the CCSS. Teachers noted that it required additional time for students to record their responses on a computer, which highlighted the need to incorporate keyboarding skills into the curriculum to a greater extent. The district will transition to using web-based keyboarding programs that will allow students to practice both in school and at home.

The district continues to update the curriculum and align teaching practices with the CCSS for English language arts and mathematics. The instructional approaches the district has adopted for teaching language arts and mathematics support student achievement of the CCSS and the high-priority student outcomes

associated with AIM. Professional development efforts have focused on training teachers on how to employ the Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop model and the *Math in Focus* resources within the context of the CCSS and AIM.

In English language arts, the district has had a purposeful plan to implement the Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop Model in all classrooms in grades K-8. Teachers in grades 1-6 refined their implementation of the Workshop Model with the guidance of the Curriculum Instructional Leaders for Language Arts, while teachers in kindergarten and grades 7-8 have completed their first year of professional development in Workshop. At the secondary level, the district has planned a workshop as part of Weston’s Teaching and Learning Institute for secondary English, science, and social studies teachers to more deeply understand the shifts in the CCSS and how it relates to their discipline. More than 25 teachers have volunteered to participate in this three-day institute scheduled for June 24 through June 26, 2013, titled *Promoting Cognitive Engagement with the CCSS*.

The transition to the CCSS in mathematics focuses on teaching fewer concepts in greater depth at each grade level to promote improved mastery of content and skills. This shift represents a departure from the current spiraling approach where a specific topic may be taught in successive years. This work is well under way in Weston as the district continues to follow the multi-year plan outlined below.

Transition and Implementation Plan
Using *Math in Focus* K-8

2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
All K and 1 pilot	K, 1, 2*	3 and 4*	5 (complete K-5)
	6-1* and 6-2*	7-1 and 7-2**	8-1 (complete 6-8)
		6 pre-algebra**	

*Modified to address any missing content.

**Compacted leading to Algebra 1

During the current school year, teachers in grades K-2 and teachers in grade six received professional development on how to utilize the district-adopted *Math in Focus* resources to support the shift to the CCSS. Several parent workshops were held to inform parents about the CCSS in mathematics and how to support their child. The transition continues next year with a focus on professional development for teachers in grades three, four, and seven as they implement the *Math in Focus* resources to enhance student learning in mathematics.

Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Plan

Three years ago, the district researched and developed an innovative teacher evaluation system designed to accelerate teacher growth and improve student achievement. This work placed Weston at the forefront of the movement to improve supervision and evaluation practices by providing differentiated approaches to professional learning based on a teacher’s developmental and achievement level. Based on feedback from focus groups, teachers and administrators have reported that Weston’s Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Plan is highly effective in providing timely and specific feedback regarding instruction that can be used to improve teaching and learning.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) set forth new guidelines for teacher supervision and evaluation in June 2012, which includes provisions to incorporate standardized testing results as a percentage of a teacher's overall evaluation. In response, the district's Teacher Evaluation Committee was reconvened last fall in order to provide input into refining Weston's plan. The Committee worked diligently to address the changes in State guidelines with an approach that aligns with the values espoused by Weston's Supervision and Evaluation Plan. Many of the changes required by the CSDE were already a part of Weston's Plan, such as the inclusion of teacher performance rubrics that outline the standards of excellence for teacher performance. The committee updated the district's rubrics from the current three-level performance system to align with the CSDE's expectation of a four-level performance appraisal.

The district's revised plan maintains a commitment to providing teachers with high-quality feedback over the course of a full unit of study, which is an approach, supported by the most current research on effective evaluation practices. In fact, the frequency of teacher observations conducted by the administrator during the course of a unit exceeds the expectations in the State requirements. Student learning outcomes, student feedback, and parent feedback have been more formally incorporated into Weston's Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Plan. The revised plan was submitted to the CSDE in May and the district is awaiting feedback from the State on the approval of Weston's Plan.

Contributors

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MATHEMATICS, GRADES K-5

I. 2012-2013 Goals

- Implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for mathematics in grades K-2 using *Math in Focus* Materials.
- Continue progressive adjustments towards the CCSS in grades 3-5.
- Continue instructional coaching utilizing *The Skillful Teacher* training to provide observational feedback to teachers in mathematics for the purpose of reflection, increasing repertoire, and improving instruction. Coaching will focus on teachers changing grade level assignments, teachers implementing our new CCSS based program materials, and grades modifying *Everyday Mathematics* towards the CCSS.

II. Accomplishments

- The *Math in Focus* program was successfully implemented with all students in grades K- 2.
- Professional development was provided to assist in this implementation with outside consultants and curriculum instructional leader (CIL) support.
- Five parent workshops were offered and well attended by parents with children in grades K-2.
- Professional development was provided to teachers in grades 3-5 on the CCSS and the curriculum adjustments necessary for a smooth transition.
- Professional development was provided to teachers in grades 1-5 for the purpose of analyzing Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) data to inform instruction.
- Instructional coaching provided teachers with feedback and questions for the purpose of reflection leading to improvement of instruction and greater differentiation. Weston's Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Plan continued to be helpful in encouraging teachers to avail themselves of instructional coaching.
- The *DreamBox Learning* on-line program was successfully piloted in two sections each in grades K, 2, 3, and 5, as well as two special education and intervention classes.
- We had 49 students from grades four and five participate on our Mathematics Olympiad teams this year. Our fifth grade team was recognized for "Highest Achievement" by ranking in the top 10% of the international competition. We also had 21 individual students, 14 of which were fourth graders, scoring in the top 10% of participants in grades 4-6.

III. Challenges and Needs

- The demands on paraprofessional support at Hurlbutt Elementary School (HES) during the 2012-13 school year created pressure points on available support time devoted to math. As planning and allocation of resources continues for the 2013-14 school year, special consideration should be given to ensure adequate mathematics support at the lower grades, especially during the implementation of *Math in Focus*.
- Implementing a new program and new rigorous standards requires teachers to spend increased time planning and reflecting, both individually and collaboratively. Attention is being paid to the number of initiatives these teachers are involved in through the careful planning of professional development for next year.
- High-quality professional development, using both internal capacity and outside experts continues to be necessary for this implementation.

IV. 2013-2014 Goals

- Implement the CCSS for mathematics in grades three and four using *Math in Focus* materials.
- Continue progressive adjustments towards the CCSS in grade five.
- Build on the first year of experience with full K-2 implementation to further improve instruction at these levels in year two.
- Continue instructional coaching to provide observational feedback to teachers in mathematics for the purpose of reflection, increasing repertoire, and improving instruction. Coaching next year will focus on support for teachers implementing the new CCSS based program materials for the first time, as well as emphasis on the practice standards for teachers in their second year of *Math in Focus*.
- Continue to provide opportunities for parent education at all levels.
- Begin the implementation of *DreamBox Learning* as a blended learning tool in all elementary grade levels by employing a stations model within the classroom for the periodic use of this resource.

MATHEMATICS, GRADES 6-12

I. 2012- 2013 Goals

- Implement sixth-grade, Algebra I, and Geometry curricula aligned to CCSS for mathematics.
- Begin renewal of seventh grade, Algebra II, and Pre-Calculus curricula using previous year's documents as templates for construction.
- Utilize June 22, 2012 AIM professional development to begin planning mathematics units in sixth grade, seventh grade, and at Weston High School (WHS).
- Apply school-wide rubrics on a consistent basis as formative assessment tools at WHS.
- Continued focus on the development and use of performance-based assessments, associated rubrics, and the use of student-centered approaches to instruction, where applicable.

II. Accomplishments

- Sixth grade has implemented the CCSS through the utilization of the *Math in Focus* program. Algebra I in grades 7-9 and geometry in grades 8-10 are currently working with curricula written to align with the CCSS. The identical concepts and skills are being explored at all levels (e.g. standard & honors) with only the pacing and depth differing based on the needs of the class.
- Curriculum has been written for Algebra II and is currently being written for Pre-Calculus; both curricula are aligned to the CCSS and will be implemented in the 2013-2014 school year. The identical concepts and skills are being explored at all levels (e.g. standard and honors) with only the pacing and depth differing based on the needs of the class. Seventh grade teachers have started the process of reviewing the sixth grade curriculum documents and preparing for this summer's work. By the end of the summer, the seventh grade will have the curriculum completed and ready for implementation.
- At WMS, new AIM units were developed in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. The following highlights examples of the units created by teachers:
 - The sixth grade teachers developed a unit that focused on modeling real-world situations using variables to teach about equations and inequalities.
 - Seventh grade teachers employed the stock market to teach about positive and negative rational numbers.
 - In the eighth grade, algebra teachers focused their AIM unit on the topics of linear inequalities and systems of equations, and how these concepts are used to choose an optimum solution to a real-world problem through process known as linear programming.
- Instructional coaching has been used in a variety of ways to assist teachers in broadening their instructional repertoire. In sixth grade, the emphasis has been on assisting teachers with the implementation of *Math in Focus* and providing them with targeted feedback on instructional techniques, questioning strategies, and student-centered approaches. In eighth grade, curriculum partner time was used to discuss lesson planning, assessment development, and collaborative grading of the AIM assessment.
- Sixth and seventh grade teachers, along with K-5 teachers, administrators, and special education staff attended a two-day workshop in August facilitated by Dr. Ban Har Yeap; international authority on Singapore Math. (Singapore Math heavily influenced the development of the CCSS and *Math in Focus*). Plans are being made for another workshop this coming August.

- The ninth grade practice CAPT was scored and redistributed to teachers to review with students. Data will be used by the math department to identify to inform instruction and identify students in need of additional assistance.
- Resources were created for students entering honors courses in Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-Calculus, and Calculus, which will be available on-line this summer. Links to skills, concepts, and resources will also be available for students to support their transition to the next level of mathematics in their course of study. This will be communicated to the community via email, the WHS website, and discussed with students before the summer vacation.
- The WHS Mathematics Team entered its fourth year in the Fairfield County Mathematics League this year and participated in the Mathematics Olympiad to engage students to performance-based problem-solving scenarios.
- A WHS student made the Connecticut State Mathematics team that will compete at Pennsylvania State University later in May.

III. Challenges and Needs

- As we implement the second phase of the K-12 mathematics curriculum renewal, we will continue to develop activities to support instruction around AIM and the Mathematical Practice Standards, develop formative and summative assessments, and provide teachers with CIL instructional coaching and observational feedback. The need for coordinating common meeting time for co-planning, observation, and debriefing grows.
- With the renewal process in progress, we will need to anticipate budgeting for *Math in Focus* texts in grade eight, instructional materials, and professional development. Algebra II and Geometry texts that align to the CCSS will also need replacement, as current texts are over 10 years old.

IV. 2013-2014 Goals

- Continue revision of curricula and implementation of *Math in Focus* in grade six, implement *Math in Focus* in grade seven, align CCSS with Algebra I in grades 7-9, and align CCSS with Geometry in grades 8-10. Begin transition to align CCSS with Algebra II course in grades 9-11 and the pre-calculus course in grades 10-12.
- Begin writing of the eighth grade curriculum.
- Further development of AIM units should continue and all teachers in 6-12 mathematics should have at least two units prepared and implemented by the end of the year.

SCIENCE, GRADES K-5

I. 2012-2013 Goals

- Continue the implementation of AIM units in grades two and five and examine possibilities for the development phase of the AIM initiatives in grades one and four.
- Focus instructional coaching on implementation of inquiry and clarity of instruction, utilizing the *Skillful Teacher* training.
- Examine the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), when released and adopted, to project their impact on our curriculum and practice.

II. Accomplishments

- A three-day inquiry institute took place June 25-27, 2012, and resulted in the training 18 additional elementary and intermediate teachers in the inquiry process. This training was again facilitated by the K-5 CIL and teachers trained in prior years who shared their expertise.
- A new AIM unit was developed in grade one to enhance the student understanding of the concepts of force and motion. All grade one classes took part in this effective modification to the force and motion Unit.
- Grade two piloted an AIM unit for their living things unit with two classes fully participating in the process.
- Grade five rolled out their piloted AIM unit on sustaining life in our solar system with the entire grade.
- At HES, grade level teacher representatives began working with the PTO garden committee to integrate the HES Learning Garden into their spring science units.
- Work with teachers in coaching, modeling, planning, and professional development was focused on teachers new to grade levels, as well as extensive work with the AIM units.

III. Challenges and Needs

- Time and study will be needed to assess areas where we may need to adjust curriculum if and when Connecticut adopts the new national *Next Generation Science Standards* (NGSS).
- Consistent weekly time allotted for science instruction needs to be determined, articulated, and scheduled for each grade level, K-5. Teachers need several substantial blocks of time each week to implement the initiatives of inquiry, science note-booking, hands-on activities, and critical thinking. While some classes experience this consistently, scheduling makes it difficult for others.

IV. 2013-2014 Goals

- Continue the implementation of AIM units in grades one, two, and five and examine possibilities for the development phase of units in grades kindergarten, three, and four.
- Focus instructional coaching on implementation of inquiry and clarity of instruction, utilizing the *Skillful Teacher* training.
- Examine the new NGSS to project their impact on our curriculum and practice.

SCIENCE, GRADES 6-12

I. 2012-2013 Goals

- Ensure that all WHS teachers and seventh-grade science teachers are trained in AIM by the end of the 2012-2013 school year. This means that all teachers will have developed at least three AIM units.
- At WHS, teachers will be applying school-wide rubrics, on a consistent basis, as formative assessment tools.
- At WHS, rewrite curriculum over the next two school years to align with *Understanding by Design* (UbD) template.

II. Accomplishments

- At Weston Middle School (WMS), new AIM units were developed in the sixth and seventh grades. For example, the seventh grade teachers enhanced the energy and earth's systems unit to teach students how to develop good scientific questions. Another AIM unit was developed for the food production and preservation unit, which lends itself to connections with science, technology, and society.
- At WHS, science teachers improved current AIM units as WHS prepared for NEASC.
- Department meetings and curriculum partner time was used to discuss how teachers' instruction has been impacted by AIM, as well as familiarizing teachers with the six-step process in developing an AIM unit.
- The AP Biology audit was completed and accepted by the College Board.
- Work on the WHS curriculum alignment to UbD template was completed for the Honors Biology, Chemistry, Geophysical Science, and Physics courses. Before further revision is made, the department should wait until decisions are made at the state level regarding the NGSS.
- WHS students participated in the 2013 Science Olympiad national competition. The Connecticut State competition was held at the University of Connecticut on April 19. Weston students participated in 23 different events covering aspects of biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, engineering, and technology. The team finished tenth out of 34 teams. Three teachers and one parent were involved in the preparation and facilitation of the competition. A team of students also participated in the Test of Engineering Aptitude, Mathematics, and Science (TEAMS) competition. TEAMS is affiliated with the Technology Students' Association (TSA was formerly JETS). The three teams placed first in CT in their division and are currently ranked fifth nationally out of 89 teams in their division and are awaiting final results of the open-ended questions. In all, 45 students have participated in off campus academic competition events during the 2012-2013 school year.
- Anatomy and Human Physiology was added to the WHS science elective program with an enrollment of over 60 students.
- AP Biology, Physics, and Chemistry courses are all anticipated to run during the 2013-2014 school year.
- Two WHS students were accepted to attend the National Youth Science Camp. Each state is allowed two spots. Since 1963, nearly 5,000 of the nation's top high school science students, about 100 each year, have been selected to attend the NYSC, free of charge, and to learn from a nationally pre-eminent faculty the excitement and social significance of careers in science.

III. Challenges and Needs

- It is important that class size in WHS chemistry classes be maintained at levels appropriate for the allocated space. Square footage and configuration limits the number of stations that can be effectively used during a lab period. In order for inquiry to be used as an effective instructional tool, class size is an important consideration for all science classes.
- With the age of the standard biology text (over 12 years old) replacement for those texts should occur after the CT standards are finalized in the spring of 2013. Research for a new text should occur in 2013-2014 school year in anticipation of a possible purchase in the 2014-2015 school year.
- It is yet to be determined if Connecticut or the majority of states will adopt the new NGSS and what the impact on curriculum will be.

IV. 2013-2014 Goals

- Once the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has made a determination as how much of the NGSS that the state will adopt, the 6-12 science faculty should spend the year assessing and developing a plan for implementing any new CT State Standards.
- Further development of AIM units should continue and all teachers in 6-12 science should have at least two units prepared and implemented by the end of the year.

LANGUAGE ARTS, GRADES K-8

I. 2012-2013 Goals

- With the AIM initiative expanding into grades one, four, and seven next year, we will continue to need to take an active leadership role. We will also be active in supporting current pilot teams as they turn-key this process with their grade level peers. With our participation in the AIM Core Leadership Team, we will work collaboratively with all participating teachers and our partners from Teacher's College to ensure another successful year with the AIM initiative.
- Full implementation of the workshop model at the middle school will be a priority. Through embedded professional development and ongoing coaching, teachers in grades seven and eight will broaden their pedagogical understanding and instructional repertoire. Building on the professional development that was provided in their first year of training in workshop will be the focus in sixth grade. In all grades, student learning and engagement will thrive.
- Supporting our kindergarten team of teachers as they transition to full-day instruction will be necessary as we implement our explicit literacy instruction. We will be making modifications to their curriculum documents this summer and will provide both professional development and ongoing instructional coaching to support this transition.
- Our professional development focus for this upcoming year will include differentiated literacy instruction and expanding professional repertoire, which will enable teachers to best meet the needs of our 21st century learners.
- CILs will be instrumental in the continuation and facilitation of a reflective professional culture among and between K-8 grade level teams in order to broaden and deepen our practice.

II. Accomplishments

- This has been a successful year for AIM implementation across all classrooms in grades 1-8. Units and assessments have been designed and reflected upon in the presence of student work. Teachers have engaged in a high degree of collaboration and reflection that will enable them to create additional units in the upcoming years. As we approach the end of our partnership with Teacher's College, we feel confident we have developed the internal capacity necessary to expand the important work we have accomplished.
- We have completed the four-year process of implementing Reader's and Writer's Workshop in all classrooms K-8. Grades 1-6 have worked to continually refine their practice, while kindergarten and grades seven and eight have completed their first year of professional development in the workshop approach.
- Our curriculum development at WMS has reached completion as we have written and piloted new genre units of study for both reading and writing that are fully aligned with the CCSS. Performance-based assessments have been created, administered, and reflected upon for all units as well.
- Overview documents for Reading and Writing have been created for all units taught in grades kindergarten and one. These documents ensure alignment of practice across classrooms and with the CCSS. This work completes the work of creating such documents for all units K-8.
- We have begun the work of addressing how the major instructional shifts that determine how the CCSS are taught in classrooms. This has been accomplished through targeted professional development, instructional coaching, and curriculum design.
- Kindergarten had a successful transition to a full-day instructional model.

III. Challenges

- Making ourselves available to teachers across buildings during district-wide professional development days has been a challenge. This is mainly the result of common district-wide initiatives that have been prioritized during these times.
- The length of middle school language arts blocks (49 minutes) remains a challenge given that language arts is truly two different curricular areas (reading, writing). In addition, seventh and eighth grade teachers teach these two areas in one period per day.

IV. 2013-2014 Goals

- As a natural part of the curriculum renewal process, we will work to reflect upon and refine our curriculum on an ongoing basis. This will ensure that we are current with best practices in both literacy and pedagogy.
- Next year will be the first year of the curriculum renewal process at WMS. As such it will be imperative to continue to reflect upon and refine the units and assessments we have developed over the past two years.
- Fully addressing the instructional shifts presented in the CCSS will be a priority. These include writing expectations that expand the quality and volume of writing students produce as well as more in-depth application of comprehension strategies to complex texts.
- Further development of additional AIM units will be a priority in all grades as we seek to build upon the momentum we have gained this year. In addition, we will work to build more cross-disciplinary units that allow students to integrate these 21st century skills across subject areas.
- Implementation of an AIM unit of study in kindergarten will be a priority.
- With curriculum completion in the middle school, we will be afforded additional time within all classrooms K-8 to focus on embedded professional development and ongoing instructional coaching.
- There is a need to further develop leadership capacity within grade level teams in order to establish shared responsibility for implementing district initiatives.
- As our district initiatives move forward and develop, we look forward to continuing our work as members of the AIM Leadership Team by collaboratively bringing new insights and vision to the work of the district.

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS, GRADES 9-12

I. 2012-2013 Goals

- Integrate all teachers into the AIM program, implementing a minimum of three AIM-type units each year in every class.
- Continue to create and update performance-based assessments.
- Continue work on updating *Understanding by Design* (UbD) units.
- Continue review of curriculum and core texts.
- Continue to incorporate teacher-as-learner professional learning community workshops.

II. Accomplishments

- All WHS English teachers have been integrated into the AIM program.
- Each English course has a minimum of three AIM-oriented units, with appropriate assessments.
- At least three performance-based assessments have been incorporated into every English course.
- UbDs have been completed for all ninth and tenth grade courses. Eleventh and twelfth grade courses are in the process of accomplishing this task.
- The English department has begun a review of curriculum and core texts in preparation for the curriculum renewal process.
- The English Department has collaborated in developing this year's cornerstone assessment for grade 11. One member, Walter Durand, was one of the designer/writers of the assessment.
- English staff members continue to collaborate on developing curriculum and evaluation, as well as visiting each other's classes to share effective instructional strategies.
- The English staff continues to be very active in co-curricular positions, acting as advisors for the yearbook, the newspaper, the literary magazine, and *COMPANY*.
- English staff members were heavily involved in the NEASC visit, with Christine Cincotta chairing the school committee, and several English staff authoring the document.
- A speaker from Partners in Health, a non-profit organization addressing the problems of medical care for poverty areas in the world, was a guest for all AP Language and Composition classes supporting their summer reading assignment: *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World* by Tracy Kidder.
- As a result of a trip to Bhutan, Julian Jacobs, WHS junior, brought members of Bhutan governance to the school, to determine possibilities of establishing an educational connection, specifically to help with the implementation of a unit on Shakespeare.
- Elliott Eglash, WHS senior has been published in two poetry anthologies: *Polyphony HS* and *Ambigram*.
- Mr. Horton's ninth grade classes collaborated with the special education department on the *R-Word: Spread the Word to End the Word* campaign, using the novel *Flowers for Algernon*. The culminating activity was to write a speech or make a video to persuade people to stop using the R-word.
- In an effort to support the transition of the eighth grade to the high school, two high school English teachers visited the middle school to teach for a day. They reviewed a writing prompt to help give students a better idea of the expectations in ninth grade English.
- The role of the curriculum instructional leader continues to support all of these efforts, as well as individual staff needs.

III. Challenges and Needs

- There is a need to augment the vertical articulation between middle and high school teachers to support students moving from grade eight to nine. Every effort needs to be made to give teachers the opportunity to share curriculum, instructional strategies, and student evaluation.
- It is essential that the department be provided with time for content-specific professional development. Due to the NEASC review this year, there was limited time for our professional learning community to plan and implement these types of workshops.
- There is a need to provide more support for student writers because:
 - The Common Core emphasizes cross-curricular writing and reading;
 - Writing plays an essential role in the development of critical thinking, “...*writing is a critical strategy to build thinking students.*” -John Antonetti.
 - There has been an increase in demands on English teachers’ time for personal writing support.

IV. 2013-2014 Goals

- Begin the process of curriculum renewal with summer work for teachers.
- Complete UBDs for all courses assuring compliance with Common Core expectations.
- Implement content-specific professional development opportunities.
- Re-invigorate the use of higher-order questioning in instructional strategies.
- Implement increased vertical alignment with the middle school.

SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES K-5

I. 2012-2013 Goals

- Modify our units of study (this June and into the summer) to be in alignment with CT's new draft of the social studies standards.
- Create units using a backwards design model and develop performance-based assessments that will reflect the enduring understandings.
- Ensure that teachers are supported with professional development and resources, as these new frameworks contain significant changes for many grade levels.

II. Accomplishments

- Last summer, we worked with grade level teachers to rewrite social studies units in alignment with the draft standards in grades K-4, inclusive of curriculum documents.
- Teachers have piloted the new units, reflected upon their instruction, and suggested modifications have been discussed.
- In grades two and three, social studies units have been cross-disciplinary and embedded with AIM 21st century outcomes.
- Digital and print resources have been established for the new units.
- Teachers have collaborated with Library Resource Center (LRC) and Information Technology Literacy (ITL) staff to integrate digital and research components where appropriate. The research components meet both the social studies standards and CCSS.
- In April 2013, we had the opportunity to present at the Northeastern Regional Conference for the Social Studies (NERC) in Sturbridge, Massachusetts about how our AIM work dovetails with social studies instruction.

III. Challenges and Needs

- The lack of an adopted social studies curriculum framework will continue to be challenging.
- Time did not allow for the fifth grade curriculum to be rewritten.

IV. 2013-2014 Goals

- The fifth grade social studies units will be rewritten this upcoming summer.
- Modifications to current units will continue.
- Digital resources will be expanded upon.
- Performance-based assessments will be designed for each of the social studies units, integrating with other disciplines where appropriate.

SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES 6-12

I. 2012-2013 Goals

- A minimum of 70% of the district's social studies teachers will enter into the AIM initiative.
- Department members will continue to create, revise, implement, and reflect upon common performance-based assessments (PBAs), which incorporate the department-created 21st century design standards. An additional focus needs to be around the creation and in some cases the revision of student rubrics to accompany PBAs.
- All social studies courses will be brought into alignment with the CCSS.
- Grades 6-12 social studies teachers will continue the practice of observing colleagues a minimum of two times throughout the school year.
- Teachers at each course level will collaborate in unit planning in an effort to support collaborative work in lesson planning. In addition, a series of best practice sharing opportunities will be set up to foster collaboration among teachers who do not teach common courses.
- Research will be conducted on the interest and need for additional elective courses.

II. Accomplishments

- At this time 86% of the district's social studies teachers are involved in the AIM initiative.
- Department members did continue to create, revise, implement, and reflect upon common PBAs which incorporate the department-created 21st century design standards. Additionally, student rubrics were created to accompany PBAs.
 - Our seventh grade teams participated in the Performance Assessment Design Initiative (PADI) through the Tri-State Consortium and created one of the most thorough and complete authentic engagements in the program.
 - High school teachers worked with 21st century rubrics to give specific feedback and evaluation to each of their students.
 - Numerous PBAs were revised and course-wide rubrics were introduced for many of these PBAs.
- The process of reviewing the scope and sequence for alignment with the CCSS was completed this year. At this time, social studies course curricula are being brought into alignment with the CCSS.
- Grades 6-12 social studies teachers continue to observe colleagues throughout the school year. In addition, the practice of department learning walks was launched this year.
- Teachers at each course level have collaborated in unit planning. However, as a result of serious time constraints and restrictions on professional development opportunities due to NEASC we were unable to begin our best practice sharing opportunities.
- As a result of research conducted through guidance on student interest we will be re-introducing AP microeconomics next year.
- The department ran three new courses and each ran successfully.
 - Both Introduction to Economics and AP Macroeconomics ran successfully and will be running again next year with solid numbers.
 - The Entrepreneurship Seminar was a successful venture and three of the fifteen students successfully started their own businesses.
- A member of our sixth grade team applied for and received a \$730.00 grant for an art exchange program with students in Jordan.

- Two high school teachers have completed two new AIM units and one new current events project that has AIM components. These units have been especially successful, requiring student presenters to deeply understand a topic and engage the audience in active ways.
- Teachers continue to assess a variety of resources and instructional strategies that will best assist in delivering the curriculum to the students. Many department members have adapted blended learning strategies to help engage students.
- The American studies program maximized the use of their new common planning period revising all power periods for the year and adding a new multi-disciplinary unit with the help of Erik Paul. The new “spirituals power period” occurred in September and was a great success.
- Two members of our high school department are currently Technology Champions and have offered trainings on a variety of technology uses.
- Also notable are the efforts of our teachers in differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students. Honors level courses are offered only in grades 10-12 and basic level courses are not offered in any grade level. Basic level students have been successfully integrated in all standard level courses, including the creation of a co-taught government class which was taught by one social studies department member and one member of the special education department.
- Two department members were invited by *The College Board* to attend the AP United States History reading in June, 2013.
- A member of our eighth grade class competed at the state Geography Bee held at Central Connecticut State University and advanced to the semi-final round.

III. Challenges and Needs

- Professional development time will continue to be needed for alignment with the Common Core, sharing best practices, and the development of PBAs.
- Sections of all courses need to be offered and balanced class sizes need to be scheduled to ensure that students’ needs are being met.
- Curriculum renewal needs to be completed for the department and all courses must be aligned with the CCSS.

IV. 2013-2014 Goals

- 100% of the district’s social studies teachers will enter into the AIM initiative.
- Department members will begin creating PBAs based around the PADI model for which four department members have already been trained.
- All social studies courses will be brought into alignment with the CCSS. Courses will be revised and rewritten as necessary to meet this goal.
- Grades 6-12 social studies teachers will continue the practice of observing colleagues a minimum of two times throughout the school year.
- Teachers at each course level will collaborate in unit planning in an effort to support collaborative work in lesson planning. In addition, a series of best practice sharing opportunities will be set up to foster collaboration among teachers who do not teach common courses.
- Research will be conducted on the interest and need for additional elective courses.
- Curriculum renewal will be completed in 2014.

WORLD LANGUAGE

I. 2012-2013 Goals

- Adjust WIS curriculum to account for decrease in instructional minutes.
- Use built-in common planning time at WHS to continue the development of AIM units, PBAs, and common assessments.
- Involve all world language teachers in the AIM initiative.
- Update grades 5-8 Spanish curricula to avoid repetition.
- Update AP French curriculum to bring it up-to-date with the revised AP Exam.
- To assist the department in building understanding of how to write mastery objectives in conjunction with AIM units.
- Implement new textbook in sixth-grade French course.
- Transition new French teacher at WMS.

II. Accomplishments

- Grade one Spanish students participated in their first AIM unit in Spanish class, focusing on the AIM outcome of *Synthesizing and Applying*.
- Grade two Spanish students completed their first AIM unit on Monarch butterflies, focusing on the AIM outcome of *Engaging in Global Issues* and connecting with children in Mexico. Students "shared" a symbolic Monarch with schools in Mexico in the form of a written letter to the students in Mexico.
- AIM units were implemented in all schools in many levels of Spanish and French at WHS.
- PBAs continue to be implemented and revised in all world language classes, grades K-12.
- New AP French curriculum was implemented to reflect revised AP French exam.
- World language students at WHS and WMS were celebrated during the sixth annual world language celebration ceremonies held at both schools. Students were honored for excellence in second language studies, effort, potential, participation, and dedication to languages for those students enrolled in more than one language course at WHS.
- More than 60 WHS Spanish IV and V Honors, and Spanish I students participated in the National Spanish Exam. Students earned gold, silver, bronze medals, and honorable mentions based on their high scores.
- One Spanish IV Honors student placed in the 96th percentile on the National Spanish Exam, earning national and state recognition and a gold medal.
- Weston High School Latin and French students participated in the Grand Concourse National French Exam, the National Latin Exam, the Latin Mythology Exam, French AP Language Exam, and Spanish AP Language Exam.
- A WHS student placed fourth in Connecticut and eighth in the Nation on the Grand Concours National French Exam.
- A WHS student placed eighth in Connecticut and eighth in the Nation on the Grand Concours National French Exam.
- The WMS afterschool Mandarin enrichment program was a great success, enrolling 17 students after school each Wednesday for 10 weeks, providing exposure to new sounds, written Mandarin characters, and Chinese culture.

- To celebrate literacy month in March/April, Spanish IV honors students and grade five WIS Spanish students spent time together reading and listening to stories written by the Spanish IV honors students.
- Common planning time established for seventh grade Spanish teachers at WMS, Spanish III and Spanish IV teachers at the WHS has improved consistency of delivery of curriculum and assessments.
- Spanish students at WHS in levels III and higher were formally surveyed to help determine enrollment trends in upper level Spanish courses.

III. Challenges and Needs

- Language lab at WHS continues to decline in performance due to age of machines and inability to keep cables and wires together at each of the 30 student stations.
- Due to new changes in the 2014 AP French exam, additional textbooks are needed for WHS AP French course.
- Lack of extended planning time prohibits teachers from creating new AIM units at all schools consistently throughout the year.
- Streamlining fifth grade Spanish curriculum as a result of time reduction.
- All world language teachers are in need of content specific professional development. There is teacher interest and desire to attend workshops, conferences, and share the new learning from these meetings with colleagues.

IV. 2013-2014 Goals

- Research and review effective K-5 world language programs and make recommendations for enhancing Weston's program.
- Create and implement AIM units to areas currently implementing PBAs: WMS French, WHS Chinese, WHS Latin, and some levels of WHS Spanish.
- Use Spanish student survey results to create action plan to increase upperclassmen student interest and enrollment in higher level Spanish courses.
- Implement strategies in response to Spanish student survey results.
- Transition AP French curriculum in direction of newly rewritten AP exam.
- Use common planning time to continue the design of PBAs, AIM units, and assessments.
- Host the spring 2014 world languages SHARE meeting in the WHS Library with colleagues from all districts in Fairfield County.
- In the summer 2014, revise and rewrite world language curriculum through the formal curriculum renewal process.
- Explore trips abroad based on student interest to Spain and France.

MUSIC AND ART DEPARTMENTS, GRADES K-12

I. 2012-2013 Goals

- Continue implementing common assessments in art & music and integrating 21st century skills in all PBAs.
- Continue collaboration between departments on teaching 21st century thinking skills.
- Provide time for collaboration and guidance in creating units that support the AIM initiative in both content areas.
- Begin the process of research and development in the curriculum renewal cycle for the K-12 art and music standards-based curricula.
- Find collaborative planning time for building level departments to meet and discuss updated methodologies and review scope and sequence.
- Provide professional development time to refine rubrics and other measurement tools.
- Provide professional development (from local universities, with coursework, or by bringing in clinicians) that is directly aligned with updated curriculum content and research-based instructional pedagogy in the arts.
- Provide professional development and common time for teachers to work together and integrate new technology in their classrooms.
- Explore the feasibility of providing opportunities for students to continue to develop their musicianship by extending instruction in music into the summer.

II. Accomplishments

Curriculum, Technology, and Instruction

- Art was successfully added to the kindergarten program. The K-5 art teachers worked together to adjust the curriculum in the other grades to reflect the decrease in instructional minutes.
- The K-12 music and art teachers completed curriculum maps for all grade levels and courses.
- Common AIM units by course and content were developed and implemented in all areas of the art and music curricula in grades 1-8. Additional PBAs were also revised to support this initiative in those grades.
- Grades 9-12 music and art teachers participated in the NEASC accreditation process and refined common tasks by course, as well as collaborated with other high school teachers on school-wide committees.
- K-12 music and art teachers reviewed our current scope and sequence and the national standards to determine areas of strength and areas for improvement in the current curriculum.
- WMS eighth grade art students were given the option to participate in a digital photography unit. Students explored the use of digital photography in the visual arts and were asked to use different techniques with a primary focus on compelling content.
- K-12 music and art teachers took part in a variety of professional development activities that aligns with the curriculum. Teachers participated in the Connecticut Music Educators' Association conference and AIM planning workshops. They reviewed disciplinary links to the new CCSS, engaged in Edmodo training, and worked in teams to examine student work together.
- Cooperative mentoring and instructional coaching took place between teachers at all levels.
- The CIL continued to implement a coaching plan for the arts that will further develop teacher growth and reflection in the arts.

- The infusion of technology in the art curriculum continues to develop as we integrate a variety of new technologies and software in our courses each year. Moodle, Edmodo, Photo Shop, In Design, Creative Suite 5, SmartMusic, Sibelius, Garage Band and Interactive NOW represent many of the tools being employed.

All State/Regional Musicians/Honors

- The Weston Public Schools' Music Department was recognized as one of the 2013 Best Communities for Music Education by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM).
- The WMS Jazz Bands, WMS Chamber Orchestra, and the WMS Chamber Singers took top honors at the Music in the Parks Adjudication Festival in Massachusetts. All groups received a first place honor in their division with a superior rating. Each group also won the award for "Best Overall" in their category. In addition, WMS was honored with the Esprit de Corps award.
- Two WHS choral students (Alessandra Edgar and Chloe Mandell) and six WHS band and orchestra students (Matthew Proctor, Daniel Muller, Steve Gorkin, Ross Cohen, Zach Malett and David Fleming) were selected by process of audition to perform in the Western Regional Festival.
- Two WHS band students (Matthew Proctor and Ross Cohen) were selected to participate in the Connecticut All-State Festival.
- Four WMS choral students (Courtney Caolo, Grace Goodrich, Thomas Valenti, Nathan Strauss) and three WMS band students (Eric Hirsch, Jake Young, Julia Schraeder) were selected to participate in the Western Regional Middle School Concert Festival.
- Four WIS and eight WMS students were selected to participate in the Connecticut All-State Elementary Honors Chorus.
- Ten sixth-grade band members were selected to "Play with the Westport Community Band". As part of a Junior Community Band with other nominated sixth grade band members from Fairfield County, the students participated in rehearsals with the adult community band members and performed a concert.
- Several students were involved in area select ensembles such as the Fairfield County Children's Choir, the Norwalk Youth Symphony, the Bridgeport Youth Orchestra, the Ridgefield Youth Symphony, the Fairfield County Strings Festival, and a variety of summer arts ensembles.

Performances & Art Exhibitions

- Two successful main stage high school productions with Company, *The Crucible* and *Kiss Me Kate*, were performed at WHS and benefitted from the talents of student artists, musicians, actors, costume designers, and technical theatre personnel.
- One successful main stage middle school production with Short Wharf, *Grease*, was performed at WHS and benefitted from the talents of student artists, musicians, actors, costume designers, and technical theatre personnel.
- One successful intermediate school musical production with Show Stoppers, *A Wonderful World with Disney*, was performed at WIS and benefitted from the talents of students.
- The WHS chamber chorus performed at a celebration at the PT Barnum Museum in Bridgeport and with the world famous men's a cappella group, Chanticleer, at Darien High School.
- WHS, WMS and WIS students performed in winter and spring choral, band, and orchestra concerts.
- Over 300 WHS and WMS students performed in the band Spectrum Concert on March 14.

- The WMS eighth grade orchestra participated in the Music for Youth Orchestra Exchange with the professional string quartet Voxare and students from High Horizon's and Multi-Cultural Magnet schools in Bridgeport. The Voxare performed a short concert for our WIS students on April 3 and a concert featuring our student musicians and the quartet was held at WHS on May 1.
- A WHS and WMS marching band was formed for students to participate in the Memorial Day Parade on May 31.
- A class from WIS performed patriotic music at a Veteran's Day gathering at town hall on November 11 and all WIS students performed multicultural holiday music at a winter sing along in December.
- WIS grade three music & art festival was held on April 9 and 10. All third grade students performed songs and displayed artwork.
- WIS "Festival Singers" and student band and orchestra musicians performed at the art and music night on May 8. All fourth and fifth grade students displayed artwork.
- The WIS choruses performed a winter concert for HES students in December.
- A class of HES first grade students sang for Weston seniors at the senior center in December and all HES students performed various concerts and were involved in grade level art and music shows.
- A team of Weston High School seniors (Harrison Manning, Walker Edelman and Andrew Katz) won first place for their submission to the 84-hour film challenge at the CT Student Film Festival in Waterbury. This group was also one of the top ten finalists in the 2013 Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles Center for Teen Safe Driving video contest. They produced a public service announcement on this year's theme: "Teen Safe Driving: Are You In?" The video demonstrates what other 16, 17, and 18 year olds, and adults are doing to help teenagers be safer drivers. The competition drew 128 entries from a total of 480 students statewide. The 26 judges included Governor Dannel Malloy, Attorney General George Jepsen, executives from Travelers Insurance, and other teen safe driving advocates from around the state.
- WHS art students' work was displayed in all schools, central office, and at outside exhibitions, both juried and non-juried.
- A WHS art student (Jourdan Ferguson) received honorable mention at the State of CT Scholastic Art & Music Juried Exhibition.

III. Challenges and Needs

- Additional common planning would enhance collaboration at all K-12 levels in both of the content areas when planning, creating assessments, working on AIM units and scoring student work. Teachers of common courses and grades struggle to find time to meet to align instruction.
- The addition of SMART Boards in the music rooms at WIS would support curriculum and instruction.
- Student computers in all K-5 music and art classrooms would support the implementation of the curriculum.
- As we integrate the use of technology and content specific software, it would be beneficial to install these resources on the available laptop carts in each building.
- New acoustic shells are needed in the high school performance space to replace the current set that is broken.
- Art and music teachers are interested in identifying high-quality professional development in their content areas to support their personal and professional growth.

IV. 2013-2014 Goals

- Enhance the use of collaborative planning time for building-level departments to meet and discuss updated methodologies, review scope and sequence, and plan for instruction.
- Use professional development time to refine rubrics and refine essential questions to complement our work with infusing 21st century skills.
- Continue collaboration between departments on teaching 21st century thinking skills.
- Continue work on implementing common assessments in art & music and integrating 21st century skills in all PBAs.
- Continue to review student work with teachers in the same content area and review data to guide planning for instruction.
- Continue to provide time and guidance in creating units that support the AIM initiative in both content areas.
- Provide professional development and common time for teachers to work together and integrate new technology in their classrooms.
- Provide professional development (from local universities, with coursework, or by bringing in clinicians) that is directly aligned with updated curriculum content and research-based instructional pedagogy in the arts.
- Complete planned changes and enhancements to the music and art curriculum documents that reflect the changes made over the past few years, including a reduction in instructional time at the lower levels and the inclusion of AIM assessments.

HEALTH/PHYSICAL EDUCATION/FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCE

I. 2012-2013 Goals

- Connect K-12 health, physical education, and family & consumer science teachers with AIM initiative in all disciplines.
- Monitor implementation of new assessments in physical education.
- Implement curricular adjustments to fifth grade health curriculum.
- Complete assessment task overview and assessments for grades 6-12.
- Provide professional development for health teachers in sexual education and nutrition.
- Complete formal documentation of adaptive health program.
- Develop local operating procedures for Project Adventure courses.
- Develop plan to address course management for the Project Adventure courses.
- Locate shed for Project Adventure course storage.

II. Accomplishments

- Developed K-8 AIM units for health, physical education, and family & consumer science.
- Documented adaptive health program at WHS and WIS.
- Streamlined the fifth grade health curriculum as a result of time reduction.
- Integrated the sixth grade family & consumer science and health curriculum overview.
- Updated the seventh and eighth grade family & consumer science curriculum as a result of the removal of sewing lessons.
- Adjusted WHS schedule for physical education classes to offer choice and common planning time.
- Implemented school-wide rubrics at WHS in all courses with opportunities for student reflection.

III. Challenges and Needs

- The configuration of family & consumer science facilities is in need of review.
- There is a need to balance sections of health and physical education courses at WHS.
- The installation of the Project Adventure storage shed has been delayed.
- There is a need to formalize plans for course management of the Project Adventure course.

IV. 2013-2014 Goals

- Continue to develop AIM lessons across grades K-12.
- Implement integrated family & consumer science and health curricula in sixth grade.
- Study the reconfiguration of family & consumer science facilities to better meet curricular needs of students.
- Develop educational specifications for the family & consumer science facility update.
- Provide professional development for the teachers in nutrition and human sexuality.
- Prepare for the curriculum revision process in either health or physical education.
- Utilize the instructional coaching model throughout an entire unit of study with greater frequency.

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

I. 2012-2013 Goals

- Successfully implement the sixth grade technology education curriculum and the seventh and eighth grade Gateway To Technology (GTT) module at WMS.
- Successfully implement the Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM) course at WHS.
- Increase enrollment in Project Lead the Way (PLTW) for the 2013-2014 school year through advertisement of completed activities and projects in technology classes during the school year (e.g. demonstration of catapult launching for sixth grade classes during simple machines unit).
- Use the PLTW partnership team to arrange field trips and speakers for grades 6-12 technology classes. Develop contacts for and set-up internships for students.
- Continue the practice of project design, construction, and installation to connect the community with the Civil Engineering and Architecture class.

II. Accomplishments

- GTT was implemented at WMS in grades seven and eight with the introduction of the *Design and Modeling* and *Automation and Robotics* courses. The sixth grade curriculum is a Weston-designed curriculum that was developed and implemented this year.
- Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM) was implemented at WHS, making use of the CNC router and three-dimensional printer.
- The new three-dimensional printer has also been used with the Introduction to Engineering (IED) course.
- Enrollment in the PLTW courses increased from 51 in the 2011-2012 school year to 75 in the 2012-2013 school year. Preliminary numbers for the 2013-2014 school year shows an increase to 85 students.
- WHS PLTW students had a guest speaker (Adjunct Professor from the University of Wisconsin) talk to the class about life as a civil engineer and the need for female engineers. This was arranged through the PLTW partnership that was established last year.
- This year's capstone project will be to design and construct an outdoor classroom in the Newton Courtyard at WHS. The Newton Courtyard is the small courtyard that is located near the entrance to the science wing.
- Changes were made to the WHS shop facilities; specifically to the floor surface and location of certain electrical outlets.
- Technology students were key participants in this year's Science Olympiad competition. (See science reference)

III. Challenges and Needs

- It is important to continue to build enrollment in technology courses at WHS, particularly addressing female enrollment. The addition of the partnership committee and the second year development of the GTT program at WMS should help with overall, as well as female enrollment.
- The physical set-up of the classrooms at WMS needs to be carefully monitored during the move to GTT; teachers will be consulted during this process as the primary source as to how curriculum is being delivered.
- Additional storage facilities need to be identified. In addition, the need for a dedicated exhaust system should be studied.

- Begin to purchase VEX kits to replace the Fischertechnics kits at WHS for full implementation by 2015-2016 school year.

IV. 2013-2014 Goals

- Communicate the programming components embedded in the GTT and PLTW curriculum to the Weston community and explore the development of Introductory Computer Science (CS) units at WMS as part of the technology curriculum. Look at alternatives to address the needs of students interested in CS at WHS. Currently, students have pursued independent study programs in CS at WHS.
- Explore ways to increase female interest in Engineering and CS beyond using guest speakers and video endorsements of the need for female engineers.
- Implement third module at WMS in the GTT series, Energy and the Environment.

BUSINESS EDUCATION

I. 2012-2013 Goals

- Continue to explore avenues for increasing enrollment in the Business Education Program.

II. Accomplishments

- The upgrade of technology in room G-0 has been an asset to the instructional process in all business education classes.
- The capstone project in business management, “Presenting a Business Plan to Potential Investors,” continues to be a successful PBA for the course.

III. Challenges and Needs

- Efforts to increase enrollment in the Business Education Program have helped to maintain the status quo, but the department must continue to work with guidance to stimulate the business program’s growth.

IV. 2013-2014 Goals

- Explore ways to link business courses to entrepreneurial and economics courses in social studies to foster the development of cross-curricular experiences.

SCHOOL COUNSELING K-12

I. 2012-2013 Goals

- Complete year two of the Scientific Researched-Based Interventions (SRBI) training which focuses on specific interventions for struggling students.
- Work with the town to develop a plan for addressing drug and alcohol issues.
- Expand on the successful Family University Program.
- Utilize available grant to train high school and middle school staff in understanding students with emotional issues.
- Develop Student Success Plans (SSPs) that are consistent at both the middle and high schools by utilizing the Naviance software program.

II. Accomplishments

- The second year of training in Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with a team from each school was completed. Reviews of the programs occurred at each school by the trainers and we have received strong praise and recognition for this work.
- The Family University Program for parents and students was very successful again this year and focused more on WMS parents and students. The main speaker was well received and spoke about simplicity parenting. We will be moving this program coordination to the Town's Youth Commission.
- Professional development was provided to both the WMS and WHS staff regarding students with emotional concerns at the beginning of the year.
- Provided input to the Town regarding the hiring for the Position of Director of Youth Services. Improved coordination with this office and the school has occurred.
- WMS staff received training on implementing the SSPs. These individual plans are currently being finalized this June.
- WHS became an SAT test center site for the first time this year to provide our students with an opportunity to take the test in their own town.
- Re-designed the WHS College and Career Center for a more professional look.

III. Challenges and Needs

- Increased concern for students with emotional difficulties at the middle and high schools, particularly students with anxiety and/or depressive symptoms and/or truancy issues.
- Difficulties providing tutorial support for students with attendance issues.
- Providing support for students with drug or alcohol concerns at the high school continues to be problematic and this year there was an increased concern in this area.
- Finalizing and implementing SSPs for all students' at the secondary level.

IV. 2013-2014 Goals:

- Complete year three of SRBI training which addresses tier three interventions for students with more difficult issues.
- Visit area school districts to find out information regarding the type of programming they provide for students with emotional issues and/or truancy issues.
- Finalize, implement, and collect data on the SSPs.
- Utilize budget resources for drug and alcohol services and professional development training for staff.
- Revitalize the career counseling center at the WHS.
- Monitor SSP implementation.

PROJECT CHALLENGE, GRADES 3-8

Data for the Project Challenge
Screening Process for 2012-13

Grade	# of new students reviewed based screening process	# of parent referrals	Students identified based on parent referral	Total students reviewed 2012-2013	Newly identified	Total identified	% of grade level
3	39	3	1	42	7	7	3.9%
4	4	3	1	7	0	14	7.3%
5	3	1	0	4	2	14	7.7%
6	11	7	4	18	3	24	10.9%
7	5	1	0	6	0	15	7.1%
8	8	0	0	8	0	18	8.7%

Service Options

Weston Intermediate School

- In grades 3-5, a self-contained class taught by the Project Challenge teacher is provided for identified, gifted students. All students in the self-contained class have a Personalized Education Plan (PEP).
- A math enrichment offering consisting of hands-on applications, problem solving activities, and projects is taught by the Project Challenge teacher.
- There is also a writing enrichment offering aligned with the workshop model that includes mini-lessons and conferencing with students delivered by the Project Challenge teacher. Instruction is tailored to meet student needs and interests.
- Additionally, there are opportunities to participate in Math Olympiad and chess club.

Weston Middle School

- In grades 6-8, a self-contained class taught by the Project Challenge teacher is provided for identified, gifted students. All students in the self-contained class have a PEP.
- A variety of science, technology, engineering, and math offerings are available to students, including but not limited to: Math League, MathCounts, Project Lead The Way, and Science Olympiad.
- There are several humanities enrichment offerings available to students, such as Mock Trial, literary magazine, school newspaper, debate, Mandarin Chinese, and the Geography Bee.

Curricular Units

Weston Intermediate School

- *Relationships and Patterns:* Students explore a variety of different relationships and patterns with a primary focus on the relationships between rules, laws, and equity.
- *Design: Bridge Building:* Students explore the elements and importance of form and function in the design process.
- *Structures: Natural, Conceptual and Technological:* Students explore the concept of both tangible and non-tangible structures in our world across a wide range of areas.

- *Change and Systems:* Students explore the characteristics that make up different types of systems with a focus on our solar system. Students explore the concept of change (physical, chemical, biological, aging, and more) in our world.

Weston Middle School

- *United States. Presidential Election Process* - In this unit, students will understand:
 - there is a structured process to having a president elected;
 - political parties and interest groups seek to influence public policy;
 - media shapes and influences public opinion;
 - there are strategies used by all parties to influence the public in voting for their candidate;
 - there are trends reflecting economic and social climate within our society that influence the campaign;
 - current events can influence public opinion.
- *Turning Points in History: People, Ideas, and Events* (in conjunction with National History Day). In this unit, students will understand:
 - how history shifted because of a personal decision or political choice made by an individual;
 - how this a decision might have repercussions now or in the future;
 - how the impact of decisions are only seen in retrospect;
 - how to identify and research turning points in history.
- *Public Policy:* In this unit, students will understand:
 - there is a process of becoming involved in their community in order to solve local problems;
 - a clearer understanding of how public policy is developed;
 - how to participate effectively to bring about change;
 - the methods used in governmental processes.

Affective Curriculum

- The affective curriculum model is grounded in the Responsive Classroom approach. The Project Challenge teachers have been certified through the training offered by the district to implement this model in the self-contained Project Challenge classroom. Defining characteristics of this practice include the use of morning meetings; sharing time, reflection time, community builders, and the development of classroom rules and procedures.
- The affective curriculum continues to empower students to help them feel that they have a say in how their classroom functions. Developing a sense of belonging for gifted students is critical to their success. This approach has been integral in building both a sense of community and a safe environment to take academic risks. School counselors continue to be a part of the affective curriculum. Topics addressed were in the areas of life skills on social interaction, listening skills, conflict management, collaborative problem solving, and self-advocacy. Intrapersonal skills, such as, learning to be cognizant of your gifts, how to use them effectively, managing your gifts from the inside and outside, managing boundaries, and developing habits for reflection and quiet time were also emphasized.

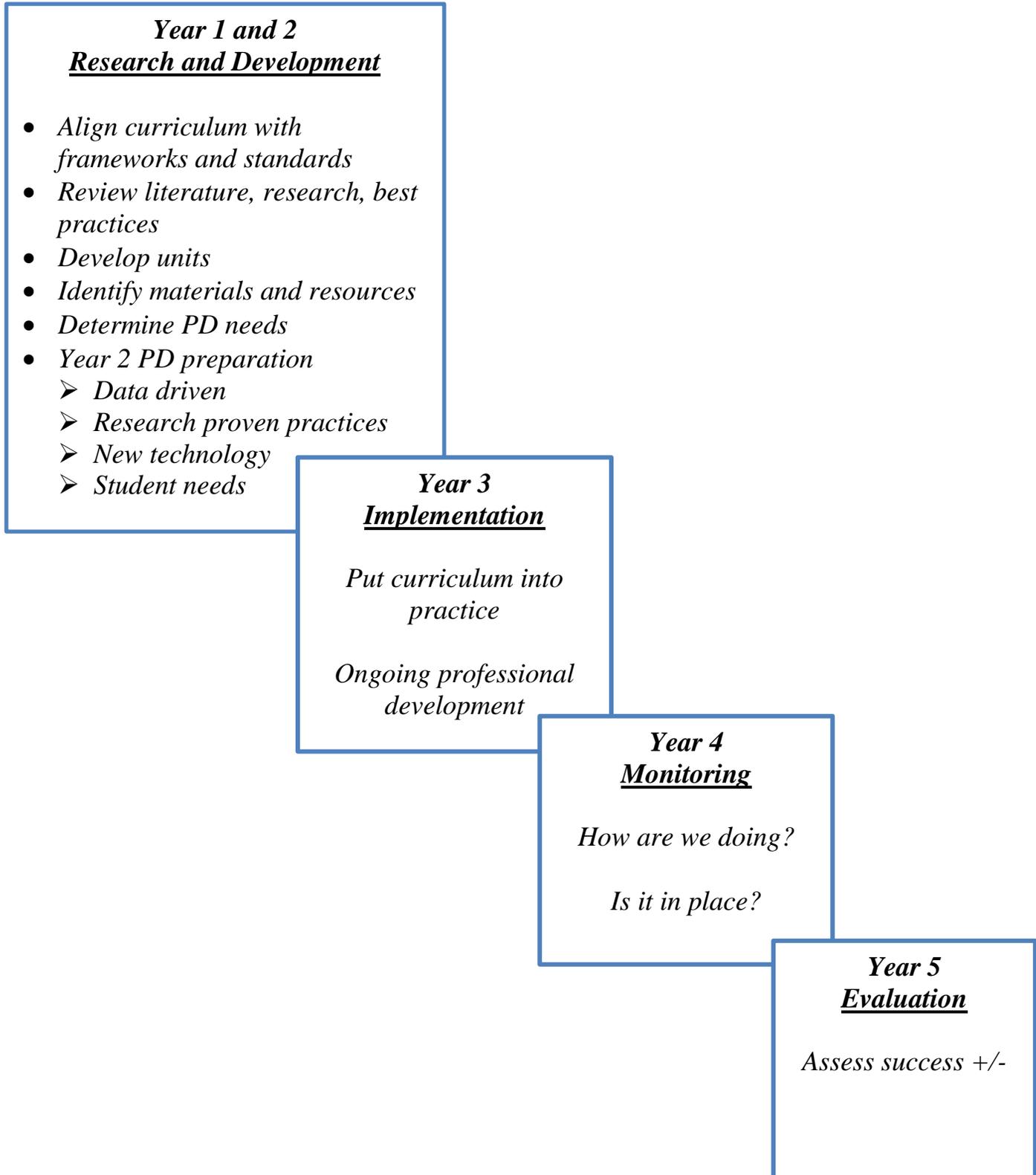
Evidence of Effective Partnerships with Parents

- Experts in a variety of fields were brought in to the classrooms to accentuate the curriculum. Parents were very involved in supporting and assisting in the academic enrichment, in particular the Mock Trial program and the National History Day research unit.
- Student progress with parents was shared at parent conferences, “mini-fairs”, author’s teas, and research project exhibitions.
- A parent’s night was held in March in order to provide information on the identification process and the Project Challenge services.

Professional Development

- The Project Challenge teachers participated in district-wide professional development in the areas of: technology integration, AIM unit development, cornerstone development, and blended learning.
- The Project Challenge teacher at WIS will complete his graduate degree work at the University of Connecticut this summer to earn a Master’s Degree in Educational Psychology with a focus in Gifted Education.
- Additionally, the teachers reviewed the Project Challenge manual and what areas might need to be updated and clarified. The updates to the handbook to reflect the current program will take place over this summer.

Curriculum Renewal Cycle



Curriculum Revision Plan

Revision Year 2008	Revision Year 2009	Revision Year 2010	Revision Year 2011
Language Arts K-5	●	Science K-12	→
Physical Education/Health K-12	●		Math K-12 →
World Languages K-12			
Visual Arts and Music K-12			
Project Challenge	●		

Revision Year 2012	Revision Year 2013	Revision Year 2014	Revision Year 2015
Science K-12 cont. ●	Social Studies K-12		●
Math K-12			●
	English/Language Arts 6-12		●

Each curriculum area has a two-year timeframe for revision. Implementation may vary, according to needs, schedule, and budget. In the case of an extensive K-12 revision, an area may require more than a two-year sequence.