



WESTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Annual Instructional Update 2013-2014

Presented to the
Board of Education
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WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Weston Public Schools, as a caring and supportive community partnership, is to empower each student to achieve success and contribute to our global society by developing and cultivating character, knowledge and creativity through a dynamic learning experience that challenges each student to continually pursue personal excellence.

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UPDATE ON CONTINUOUS INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT IN WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

This is an unprecedented time in education with school districts dealing with a series of federal and state mandates, including requirements for teacher evaluation, the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, and a new system of standardized testing anticipated for the spring 2015. The district advocated for flexibility in addressing State mandates and was successful in obtaining a one-year waiver to implement our pre-existing and highly effective teacher evaluation plan during the 2013-14 school year. The positive impact of obtaining the waiver cannot be understated. It has allowed our teachers the ability to focus on the needs of our students, district goals, and their own professional growth. Our administrators employed the State of Connecticut's System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED) model, which is not aligned with our teacher evaluation plan. The district plans to request a waiver for both teacher and administrator evaluation for the 2014-15 school year as it is in the best interest of our system.

Weston Public Schools has remained steadfast in its mission to inspire students to accept the challenges of a global society. Having a rich set of curricular experiences already in place, this year the district improved its programs and services by maintaining an environment that supports teacher creativity and innovation, resulting in high levels of student engagement in the classroom. The Academic Innovation and Measurement (AIM) initiative, nearing the completion of the fourth year of implementation, continued to provide the framework for Weston to achieve this mission. All students in grades K-12 experience AIM in their classrooms through units and assessments that place greater emphasis on deep understanding and application of learning.

As part of the AIM initiative, our teacher teams have developed and implemented a Cornerstone assessment, in grades 2, 5, 8, and 11. A Cornerstone is a highly engaging, cross-disciplinary, end-of-year assessment used to gauge student mastery of high priority skills, such as critical thinking and creative thinking. This year, our design teams have refined the Cornerstone tasks in grades 2, 5, and 8 shifting them from an *Assessments of Learning* to *Assessments for and of Learning*. The distinction is that these Cornerstones now serve as both a learning experience for students as well as a measurement of 21st century skills that our teachers use to inform instruction. The district also recognized the need to close the feedback loop so students and parents would receive timely information on how their child performed on the Cornerstone in relation to the AIM learning outcomes. This has been a challenge in previous years, which our design teams have addressed by establishing a thoughtful process by which the results of student learning will be shared with parents in the spring.

Looking back on this year, the district successfully initiated a systemic approach to improving K-12 writing instruction. Our administrators developed and implemented action plans to improve writing instruction, including providing teachers with high-quality professional development opportunities. At the K-5 level, there has been a goal to increase the quality of writing produced by students and to increase writing stamina. Sample student work illustrating improvement in these areas was shared at a

recent Board of Education meeting. At the secondary level, there has been professional development focusing on providing students with high-quality feedback on their writing through effective conferencing strategies, as well as building in increased opportunities for students to reflect on their writing. The pilot writing portfolio process in the tenth grade has supported these efforts and will be expanded to the full grade next year, as well as piloted in the eighth grade.

The areas of focus for next year for sustaining an exemplary instructional program consist of continued teacher training on AIM, effective teaching of writing, Common Core State Standards, and the integration of technology. The district will continue to offer Teaching and Learning Institutes during the upcoming summer months to support these needs. This summer's sessions will include institutes on the Common Core State Standards for interested K-5 teachers, implementing electronic writing portfolios at the eighth grade level, and the technology integration in grades 6-12.

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MATHEMATICS, GRADES K-5

I. 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 in preparation for full implementation in 2014-2015.
- 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 data to teachers in mathematics for the purpose of reflection, increasing repertoire, and improving instruction. Coaching will focus on support for teachers implementing the new CCSS based program materials for the first time, as well as emphasis on the mathematical practice standards for teachers in their second year of implementing *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 grade levels by employing a stations model within the classroom for the periodic use of this resource.

II. Accomplishments

- The *Math in Focus* program was successfully implemented with all students in grades three and four.
- Professional development was provided to assist in this implementation by both outside consultants and CIL.
- This year's professional development began in August with workshops presented by Dr. Yeap Ban Har, one of Singapore's foremost educational leaders. Grades three and four attended several introductory workshops. Teachers of grades kindergarten, one, two, and five attended sessions to continue their growth.
- The professional development days in the fall continued to support the grade three and four transition through CIL led professional development.
- Patti Chesney, a Math in Focus trainer, visited in March to model lessons and consulted with our teachers, CIL, and administrators on our transition thus far.
- Specific professional development was provided to teachers new to the district or new to a grade on both curriculum and instructional practice.
- Grade-level meeting time was used to continue to support the growth of elementary teachers in their instructional strategies.
- The CIL provided professional development to the WIS faculty on the new computer-based Smarter Balanced Assessments. Teachers took the sample online tests and reflected on their implications.
- Instructional coaching provided data and questions for the purpose of reflection, leading to improvement of instruction and greater differentiation. The Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Plan continued to be helpful in encouraging teachers to avail themselves of instructional coaching.
- Coaching was provided to assist teachers in interpreting Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) data and to use it for greater differentiation in their classroom.
- The *DreamBox Learning* online program was successfully implemented in grades K-5. This allowed for more specific differentiation for students both at school and at home. Since beginning this fall, our elementary and intermediate students have collectively logged a total

of over 10,000 hours of supplementary instruction specifically adapted to their individual needs.

- Six parent workshops were offered and well attended by K-5 parents. The morning and evening sessions at HES provided an introduction to the ways our primary students learn mathematics. The WIS sessions helped parents understand the transition as well as methods used in the classroom. Later in the fall, there were also sessions on problem solving for parents of grades 2-5.
- In addition to the above, many parents attended the K-5 math sessions of the Common Core Parent Night and saw examples of the mathematical practices in action from our K-5 students.
- We had 51 students from grades four and five participate on our Mathematical Olympiad teams this year. These students met before school on Tuesday mornings. Our teams continue to excel in this international competition.

III. Challenges and Needs

- High-quality professional development, using both internal capacity and outside experts continues to be necessary for this implementation as we bring on grade five and continue to support other grades.
- Given the needs of the grades in the first year rollout of Math in Focus, the CIL has strategically allocated a significant portion of her time to support these teachers.
- As we continue to integrate a blended learning approach into math instruction at the K-5 level, the WIS will benefit from the addition of 75 laptops that are being allocated to the building for 2014-15 as a result of the budget process. This will provide teachers with the flexibility of having some computers located in their classrooms to use in a station rotation model.

IV. 2014-2015 Goals

- Complete our implementation of *Math in Focus* by transitioning grade five to the full implementation of these materials.
- Build on the first year of experience of third and fourth grade and second year with full K-2 implementation to further improve instruction at these levels.
- Continue instructional coaching to provide observational data to teachers in mathematics for the purpose of reflection, increasing repertoire, and improving instruction. Coaching next year will focus on support for teachers implementing *Math in Focus* for the first time, as well as further supporting the pedagogy of teachers in their second and third year of *Math in Focus*.
- Continue to provide opportunities for parent education at all levels.
- Continue to refine draft of progress report standards K-5 and align with rubrics and assessments for rollout in fall 2014.
- Complete curriculum revision using Atlas Rubicon electronic mapping for grades K-2 during the summer of 2014, bringing these revised documents to the Board next year.
- Use our upcoming Tri-State Consortium math visit, March 2015, as an opportunity to gain valuable insights to inform the continuous growth of our program.

MATHEMATICS, GRADES 6-12

I. 2013- 2014 Goals

- Implement seventh grade and Algebra 2 curricula aligned to CCSS for mathematics.
- Begin renewal of eighth grade curriculum using previous year's documents as templates for construction.
- Implement department wide use of Common Core practice standards for mathematics.
- Begin work on 8-1 course for transition into *Math in Focus Course 3* and alignment with CCSS for 2014-15.
- Begin examination and revision of placement process for Honors Algebra 2 utilizing Algebra 1 objectives, as well as its use in informing instruction and addressing individual student needs.
- Continued focus on the development and use of performance-based assessments, associated rubrics, and the use of student-centered approaches to instruction, where applicable.
- Begin to enter electronic copies of the curriculum's scope and sequence into the web-based application Atlas Rubicon.

II. Accomplishments

- Seventh grade has implemented the CCSS through the utilization of the *Math in Focus* program. Algebra I in grades seven through nine and geometry in grades eight through ten are currently working with curricula written to align with the CCSS. A new algebra textbook fully aligned to our curriculum and CCSS was used in seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. 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. Scope and sequence of the math curriculum continues to be documented in Atlas.
- Seventh and eighth grade teachers, along with K-5 teachers, administrators, and special education staff attended a two-day workshop in August facilitated by Dr. Yeap Ban Har; international authority on Singapore Math. (Singapore Math heavily influenced the development of the CCSS and *Math in Focus*). This was in addition to last workshop in August 2012.
- Eighth grade teachers have started the process of reviewing the seventh grade curriculum documents as well as the *Math in Focus Course 3* objectives in preparing for this summer's work. By the end of the summer, the eighth grade will have the curriculum completed and ready for implementation.
- The high school math department adopted departmental goals utilizing Common Core Practice Standards number one and number three, which emphasizes problem solving and reasoning. This is aligned with earlier professional development work with John Antonetti on cognitive engagement and level of rigor.
- Professional development work included work with John Keogh, the CES facilitator for the Cooperative Educational Services High School Math Council, in an effort to further develop understanding and connections of the CCSS for K-12. Department meetings and professional development included the use of Dan Meyer's Three Act Math as a method of engagement, as well as developmental understanding in reasoning and problem solving.
- The high school math department began the development of AIM units in each course. The sixth grade incorporated a new AIM unit that incorporates research and Google tools in making the choice for a school field trip.

- The geometry transition to CCSS included a unit on constructions that was shared in honors, standard, and eighth grade; bridging the gap among what has been three differing courses.
- Seventh and eighth grade teachers, as well a high school algebra teacher, were part of a *Math in Focus* professional development with Patti Chesney, *Math in Focus* trainer. She completed model lessons in seventh and eighth grade classes with debriefing on methods, transitioning, and learning expectations.
- Two teachers from both the high school and middle school received Tri-State Consortium training in preparation for the upcoming mathematics Tri-State visit.
- Using professional development and department meeting time, the math department developed a common definition of a performance assessment (distinguishable difference from performance task) and continues to create new and refine prior performance assessments.
- A follow up to the placement test given in the fifth grade was created and used in verifying placement and informing teachers. Both tests had results broken into strands to better inform students and teachers.
- A new placement test for Honors Algebra 2 was developed and used this year. The test broke objectives into strands to better inform students and teachers, allowing for adjustments to be made for the upcoming year. This also afforded students the opportunity to revisit areas of concern and be re-evaluated for placement. In addition, results of all ninth grade placement tests were better communicated to inform students and teachers.
- The Probability & Statistics course implemented changes to better align content with AP Statistics course; offering students greater depth of understanding of statistics and probability.
- The Discrete Mathematics course continued its development of depth in real-world applications. A unit was developed that centered on buying a car and home, as well the connections to the math on future and present values.
- The need for a transitional course to prepare students for pre-calculus was identified. As a result, the one semester trigonometry course was brought back as an option for the upcoming school year. Curriculum work will be needed to further align the transition made to the CCSS.
- The high school math department began using the website from The University of Texas at Austin for online homework and assessments. Assignments can be designed using a variety of resources and is delivered through the Quest Learning and Assessment content delivery tool.
- A web-based program that provides instruction and assessment for students in need of intervention or acceleration is being explored as a pilot. The web-based program MathXL for School provides interactive assistance, practice problems, homework, and testing where progress, results, and time spent is provided to the teacher. One student used this as a way to successfully accelerate into the AP Calculus AB course in December.
- A fifth to sixth grade math transition night was introduced in April allowing the opportunity for parents to obtain a better understanding of the placement process, the transition into the new *Math in Focus* curriculum, and the pathways of math through high school.
- Teachers explored and incorporated test content and question techniques from SBAC into their curriculum. Students were guided through practice tests and samples in the computer lab.
- Two teams of students from the high school entered Moody's Mega Math Challenge; an annual internet-based applied math contest organized by the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics. Students in teams of five are given a real-world issue on a weekend morning and have fourteen hours to submit their solution.

- The WHS Mathematics Team entered its fifth year in the Fairfield County Mathematics League this year and participated in the Mathematics Olympiad to engage students in performance-based problem-solving scenarios.

III. Challenges and Needs

- As we continue to transition to the CCSS and implement the *Math in Focus* series, we will continue to develop activities and assessments to support instruction. In particular, the eighth grade implementation of *Math in Focus* and further implementation of CCSS in geometry and Algebra 2 will require more professional development opportunities.
- With the renewal process in progress and transition to the CCSS, we will need to anticipate budgeting for textbooks in Algebra 2 and continued professional development for *Math in Focus* in the seventh and eighth grade levels. AP Statistics books will also need to be replaced and updated as they are 13 years old.
- We will be using a new textbook for geometry at all levels and will need to continue to align the standards and prepare for transitional gaps.
- There is a need to develop a data team to examine progress, placement, and needs at every level in math courses grades 6-12 for intervention and acceleration. The needs must be clearly identified and aligned with current learning and curriculum objectives.
- In addition to a data team, the current model of providing academic assistance at WMS needs to be reviewed in order to better provide remediation and intervention. In addition, appropriate entry and exit processes should be established.
- As the Smarter Balanced testing is instituted, we will need to look at alignment of content and types of questions as they align to our curriculum and assessments. We will also need to explore how this new data can be utilized to inform teaching and learning.

IV. 2014-2015 Goals

- We need to continue the revision of our placement process in each grade and develop testing aligned with CCSS to inform instruction for all classes, not just honors placement.
- We need to continue revision of curriculum and implementation of *Math in Focus* in grade seven, implement *Math in Focus* in grade eight, align CCSS with geometry in grades eight through ten using the new textbook, and align CCSS with Algebra 2 and Honors Algebra 2. We will need to examine the impact of changes made in the curriculum in the past year in terms of its impact in pre-calculus.
- 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.
- We need to continue Smarter Balanced alignment and begin to use pretests to inform instruction.
- We need to modify and develop the current curriculum for the trigonometry course and develop the curriculum for the planned computer programming course.
- Continue to explore blended learning opportunities that will enhance the delivery of math instruction in meeting the needs of all learners.

SCIENCE, GRADES K-5

I. 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 Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), to project their impact on our curriculum and practice.

II. Accomplishments

- A new AIM unit was developed in kindergarten. All kindergarten classes took part in this effective modification of their Properties unit. It was structured with the AIM capacity of creative thinking, focused on design and research and involved the science and engineering practices from NGSS.
- 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.
- Our students continued to take part in rich science experiences involving inquiry, the use of science notebooks, and thinking deeply about their science content.

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 NGSS. A decision on this was slated for early 2014, but we are still waiting for approval.
- 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 grades experience this consistently, scheduling makes it difficult for others.

IV. 2014-2015 Goals

- Continue the implementation and explore the development of AIM units in all grades, K-5.
- Focus instructional coaching on implementation of inquiry and clarity of instruction, utilizing the Skillful Teacher training.
- Examine the impact of Connecticut's decision on NGSS and project and plan for curriculum adjustments that might be necessary.

SCIENCE, GRADES 6-12

I. 2013-2014 Goals

- In anticipation of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) adopting the NGSS, familiarize the science faculty with the features and shifts of the NGSS.
- Develop shared understandings and expectations of the NGSS Dimension: Science & Engineering Practices.
- Further development of AIM units such that all science courses contain an AIM-aligned experience.

II. Accomplishments

- Monthly department meetings at both WMS and WHS focused on Dimension 1 of the NGSS: the Science and Engineering Practices. Each month we have focused on one skill such as Argue from Evidence, Using Models, and Designing and Conducting Investigations. Teachers have read and discussed corresponding selections from “A Framework for K-12 Science Education”, as well as relevant pieces from the scholarly and popular literature in science education.
- Disciplinary teams at WHS have met monthly to review the content descriptions of the NGSS in relevant areas.
- Joint department meetings were held with the Science & Technology departments at each school, in part to strengthen science teachers’ understandings of engineering practices, as will support the infused-technology paradigm of science instruction in the NGSS.
- WHS and WMS teachers have worked together for three district-wide professional development sessions. These sessions included initial training in the NGSS, AIM training and unit development, and creation of shared rubric resources. In addition to efficiency, these joint meetings foster 6-12 alignment, shared curricular ownership, and shared community.
- All teachers have continued work with AIM in their science courses. The alignment of AIM with the Science and Engineering Practices was discussed and opportunities for overlap identified and exploited.
- At WMS, the majority of units now explicitly include AIM outcomes. New AIM units this year include two sixth grade units, two seventh grade units, and one eighth grade unit, in addition to revisions to one existing sixth grade AIM unit, two existing seventh grade AIM units, and one existing eighth grade AIM unit.
- At WHS, Honors Biology, Standard Biology, Honors Physics, Standard Physics, and AP Biology all contain new AIM-aligned units, in addition to many already AIM-enriched units and assignments.
- Physics teachers Jack Kingston and Anna Balouskus participated in a summer professional development from Tufts University on the web-based course tool, Interlace. Standard Physics classes are part of an ongoing research study. The entire science department has received professional development from Tufts researchers on the Interlace tool.
- Science and social studies teachers are part of Cohort III of Performance Assessment Design Initiative (PADI), tasked to create one or more interdisciplinary units. Science representatives are: Darcy Ronan, Jamie Charles, Anna Balouskus, and Lauren Hauser.
- The AP Chemistry audit was completed and accepted by the College Board.
- Prompted by a shift in College Board offerings, the Honors Physics course has been renamed

AP Physics I. Dr. Jack Kingston will prepare a course audit for approval during Summer 2014, Weston students will take the AP Physics I exam the first time it is offered in May 2015.

- Darcy Ronan (CIL) and Melanie Welsh (sixth grade teacher) attended the National Science Teachers Association conference in Boston, MA this April, collecting resources for further implementation of the NGSS in Weston.
- Chemistry teachers reviewed and selected a new text for Honors Chemistry, pending the adoption process.

III. Challenges and Needs

- Now that teachers have developed shared understanding of the Science and Engineering Practices, these skills need to be mapped against curriculum to identify opportunities for instruction and ensure coverage across grade bands.
- Significant revision of the curriculum, including potential reorganization of courses and course sequences, will be required to bring Weston's curriculum into alignment with the NGSS. For now, this work awaits state-level development of NGSS-aligned, CT-specific frameworks.
- The Standard Biology textbook is over 12 years old and will need to be replaced. We are awaiting the arrival of NGSS-aligned textbooks on the market.
- The configuration of the laboratory stations in biology and chemistry limits the implementation of select inquiry-based experiments when class sizes exceed the number of stations. While not a safety issue, the arrangement of lab stations is a consideration when planning laboratory investigations.

IV. 2014-2015 Goals

- Explicitly identify, teach, assess and track the Science and Engineering Practices through the 6-12 Science Curriculum.
- Begin discussion on another critical thread of science education in the NGSS - instruction on the Nature of Science.
- Continue to expand efforts in performance-based assessment to ensure access to high-quality performance assessment throughout courses, levels, and sections.
- Continue to expand the WHS science department's use of Interlace, as a tool for AIM and Science and Engineering Practices desired outcomes.

LANGUAGE ARTS, GRADES K-8

I. 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 at WMS, 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.

II. Accomplishments

- The curricular refinements that have been made this year reflect current research in best practices and have been driven by a deeper understanding of the CCSS. These revisions have occurred in grades K-8.
- As we refined our WMS units of study, curricular documents, assessments, and common teacher resources, these improvements have been uploaded to the Rubicon Atlas electronic mapping software. This provides teachers with a central access point for accessing pertinent curricular documents.
- In correlation with the district-wide initiative on strengthening student writing, professional development has focused on establishing common writing expectations that expand the quality and volume of writing students produce.
- AIM implementation across all classrooms has continued to grow and develop. This year, the creation of an AIM science unit in kindergarten broadens our implementation to K-8. Current units and assessments have been refined in the presence of student work. Teachers have engaged in a highly reflective, collaborative revision process.
- Two grade four teachers were trained in Cohort 2 of the Performance Assessment Design Initiative (PADI) through Tri-State. This initiative seeks to develop learning experiences and assessments that are highly authentic and engaging. As a result, the fourth grade team refined two units of study within the PADI model that also allowed them to expand upon their AIM work through the course of the year.

- The PADI model guided our next level of work in revising our current performance-based assessments to include greater authenticity and real-world problem solving.
- The second and fifth grade teams had the opportunity to work with a PADI consultant, who served as a critical friend in our ongoing Cornerstone development. This allowed us to ensure that our Cornerstone tasks are truly interdisciplinary and meet the criteria for being an assessment *for and of* learning.
- Ongoing reflective practices in Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop continued to be a focus in grades K-8. This professional development has occurred through a differentiated approach that enabled us to tailor support to individual and team needs.
- Addressing how the major instructional shifts that determine how the CCSS are taught in classrooms has and will continue to be a priority.

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 the WMS 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 grades teach these two areas in one period per day.

IV. 2014-2015 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 second 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 three years.
- Fully addressing the instructional shifts presented in the CCSS will continue to be a priority.
- Refinement of existing AIM units and assessments in alignment with the PADI model will be a priority in all grades.
- Differentiated professional development and ongoing instructional coaching will continue to be a priority.
- There is a need to further develop leadership capacity within grade level teams in order to establish shared responsibility for implementing district initiatives.

ENGLISH, GRADES 9-12

I. 2013-2014 Goals

- Begin review of curriculum and core texts in preparation for our curriculum renewal.
- Complete Understanding by Design (UbDs) for all courses, assuring compliance with Common Core expectations.
- Implement content-specific professional development opportunities.
- Continue to create and update authentic assessments and performance-based assessments.
- Re-invigorate the use of higher order questioning in instructional strategies.
- Implement increased vertical alignment with the middle school.

II. Accomplishments

- The English department is in the process of reviewing curriculum and core texts in preparation for the curriculum renewal process.
- All English teachers have been introduced to Atlas Rubicon electronic curriculum mapping tool. The curriculum has been mapped for core courses and teachers will create and revise their units in Atlas, assuring alignment with Common Core expectations, as they renew their curriculum over the next year.
- English department staff members participated in three professional development sessions regarding four major instructional shifts promoted by the Common Core. Teachers explored text complexity, close reading, argumentative writing, and oral discourse in the secondary English classroom.
- English staff members continue to collaborate on developing curriculum and evaluation, as well as visiting each other's classes to share effective instructional strategies.
- One department member will attend a week-long AP English Language and Composition Workshop at the Taft Educational this summer.
- In an effort to support the transition of the eighth grade to the high school, three high school English teachers visited the middle school to teach for the day. They reviewed an analytical writing prompt that the students completed to help give students a better idea of the expectations in ninth grade English.
- Three English teachers were involved in the creation of the Sophomore Writing Portfolio pilot.
- Three English teachers visited Joel Barlow High School in Redding, CT and participated in the scoring of their Junior Writing Portfolio. This scoring session informed our work on our Sophomore Writing Portfolio.
- Two department members participated in a research study on how tenth-grade students come to read complex texts in their English classes conducted by a Ph.D. candidate from Teachers College, Columbia University. Six of our students were chosen to participate in this research.
- The English staff continues to be very active in co-curricular positions, acting as advisors for the freshman class, newspaper, literary magazine, and COMPANY.
- The role of the Curriculum Instructional Leader continues to support all of these efforts, as well as individual staff needs.

III. Challenges and Needs

- We need to improve the understanding of skill requirements for students moving from grade eight to grade nine. Every effort needs to be made to give teachers the opportunity to share

curriculum, instructional strategies, and student evaluation with the middle school English staff.

- There is an especially urgent need to provide more support and feedback for our student writers as the Common Core emphasizes cross-curricular writing and reading.
- Teachers involved with the Sophomore Writing Portfolio will require additional training and support to meet the needs of all learners.
- There continues to be an escalation in demands on English teachers' time for personal writing support.
- Since the Sophomore Writing Portfolio is a cross-curricular endeavor, the work associated with this project should be shared among departments. Additional resources will be needed to organize and coordinate this process, as we expect the entire sophomore class to submit portfolios in 2014-2015.

IV. 2014-2015 Goals

- Continue the curriculum renewal process.
- Review the data from the 2014 Sophomore Writing Portfolio and make revisions to the process as needed.
- Complete the rollout of the Sophomore Writing Portfolio.
- Implement additional content-specific professional development opportunities.
- Implement specific curricular strategies for vertical alignment with grade eight.

SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES K-5

I. 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.

II. Accomplishments

- Last summer, K-2 grade level teachers worked to refine the social studies units of study in alignment with the draft social studies standards. Performance-based assessments were designed for these units of study.
- Teachers continue to reflect and refine their social studies curricular units.
- Additional digital and print resources, inclusive of primary source documents have been added to units of study.
- Teachers continue to collaborate with LRC and media center staff to integrate digital and research components where appropriate. The research components meet both social studies and CCSS.

III. Challenges and Needs

- Additional curriculum work has been tabled this school year as we awaited the publication of the College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework.
- It is anticipated that the Connecticut State Department of Education will adopt a social studies curriculum framework this summer.

IV. 2014-2015 Goals

- When the State adopts their social studies curriculum framework, we will need to assess alignment and prioritize current units based upon the adopted standards.
- Ensure alignment of resources in light of curricular changes.
- Modify performance-based assessments, as needed.

SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES 6-12

I. 2013-2014 Goals

- 100% of the district's social studies teachers will enter into the AIM initiative.
- Department members will begin creating performance-based assessments 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 initiated in 2014.

II. Accomplishments

- The social studies department hired three new department members.
- At this time 100% of the district's social studies teachers have received professional development in the AIM initiative.
- A 6-12 reading for information/document-based question rubric was designed. This rubric has been used to score and give feedback to students.
- Professional Development to create this document as well as the scaffolding and training on skills students need was conducted by department members Jeanie Bennett and Dan Passarelli.
- All members of the department participated in a three-day institute conducted by John Antonetti on implementing the Common Core.
- Curriculum Instructional Leader Brian Scott was invited to participate in the creation of a proposal to the National Science Foundation to develop a Global STEM Entrepreneurship Academy. This proposal is being developed by Dr. Yong Zhao, who is an internationally known scholar, author, and speaker.
- Three members of the department participated in the training and pilot of the tenth grade writing portfolio. This training and pilot work was conducted with the English Department.
- Members of our local government participated in two panel discussions with students in the American Government program. Topics for the panel included the role of local government and civic responsibility.
- Seventh grade students participated in presentations on Weston Public Schools enrollment trends. This was part of a performance based assessment created by Barbara George and Andrew Marone. A special thank you to our community leaders and school board members who gave constructive feedback to the students, pushing their thinking on this problem.
- Erin LeBris collaborated with Weston Historical Society members Sharon Gilbert, Karen Giannitti, and Neil Horner this school year to integrate local history into the social studies curriculum. In January, Sharon Gilbert and Karen Giannitti met with students in the American Studies classes to share a "traveling exhibit" of artifacts and items pertaining to Weston's history during the late 19th century-early 20th century time period. Students listened to a brief overview of the history of Weston and were able to pose questions to the

local historians. Students viewed the artifacts and photographs while discussing the insights that these selected items gave them about the town of Weston during the historical time period from the 1860s-early 1900s. This lesson was designed by Erin LeBris and Sharon Gilbert and focused on the historical changes taking place in Weston during this time period and how our town's history compared to the changes occurring in the United States. Mrs. LeBris is also working with the Historical Society to establish a permanent student volunteer docent position(s) for the upcoming school year.

- Department members continued to create, revise, implement, and reflect upon common performance-based assessments that incorporate the department-created 21st century design standards. Additionally, student rubrics were created to accompany PBAs.
- Our seventh grade team completed their revisions and testing for validity of the PADI performance-based assessment on Weston's population dilemma.
- WHS teachers worked with their colleagues in the science department to begin designing interdisciplinary assessments on a variety of topics.
- Numerous performance-based assessments and course wide rubrics were revised.
- The process of entering the scope and sequence for alignment in the electronic curriculum mapping software, Atlas Rubicon, was begun and nearly completed.
- Grades 6-12 social studies teachers continue to observe colleagues throughout the school year.
- Teachers at each course level have collaborated in unit planning. This was greatly assisted by scheduling consideration from the WHS administration.
- As a result of research conducted through guidance on student interest we re-introduced AP Microeconomics.
- The department delivered two new courses and each ran successfully.
- Both Personal Finance and Business Concepts were taught by Brad Holderbach, a new Social Studies Department member.
- A member of our sixth grade team successfully transitioned to teaching our eighth grade.
- The American Studies teachers maximized the use of their common planning to align their major assessments with the corresponding English course.
- Three department members will be attending AP College Board training this summer at Taft.
- 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 included in all standard level courses.
- Two department members were invited by The College Board to attend the Advanced Placement United States History reading in June, 2014.
- 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.
- WHS Model United Nations will be going to its first conference this May at Trumbull High School. The students in the Model UN are excited and have begun research on their topics of child soldiers, North Korea, and the conflicts between Sudan and South Sudan. Model UN club members will be devoting themselves to creating position papers, learning all aspects of the topic, investigating the views of the nations they represent at the conference, and writing draft resolutions to be introduced to their specific committees. It will be a busy six weeks of preparation, but the students are ready and know the work will be worth it when they can confidently speak as delegates in May.
- World Studies students hosted an Enlightenment School Fair in their classrooms. Students had to research one of the Age of Enlightenment's great thinkers, scientists, philosophers, or

inventors, and learn about that person's discoveries and contributions to modern thought/science. Based on that research, the World Studies students then had to design a school based upon their thinker's ideas and work. Students had to be creative and made many connections applying the principles of the Enlightenment to their newly created schools. To see how their school would be received, the students had to create a brochure and try to attract potential students to enroll at their Enlightenment educational institution. Many thanks to our Library staff, Mrs. Snaith and Mrs. Garone, for collaborating with the World Studies teachers to ensure this was a meaningful learning experience for our students.

- Tenth grade Modern World Studies students in Mr. Jorge's classes heard about life in modern day China from Michael Crutchfield. Mr. Crutchfield spent a year in China teaching English to Chinese college students. His presentation focused on the Chinese concept of "Face", how Chinese education compares to American schools, and challenges the Chinese leadership and people are wrestling with today. The students asked Mr. Crutchfield many questions about his time living and working overseas.
- Bill Moeder participated as an AP consultant for a Harris Interactive analysis of the APGOV redesign, which is scheduled to rollout during 2015-2016 school year. This involved an online discussion with thirty other AP instructors across the country on the new redesign and our thoughts and input on it. Additionally, Mr. Moeder served as an AP consultant for the National Math & Science Initiative that involved instructing inner city students.
- Department members have orchestrated field trips designed to create unique experiences for students including: Fairfield Historical Society (American Studies), FDR Presidential Library (APUSH), and Weston Center and University of Connecticut (Sociology).
- The Mock Trial Teams from Weston High School, consisting of 36 students and led by Mr. Brad Holderbach had a very successful year. The Weston teams diligently prepared for the regional event in Stamford, in which all of the teams won at least one round. The Weston Red team was able to win all of its trials throughout regionals, quarterfinals and semifinals to advance to the state finals at the Supreme Court in Hartford, CT on February 26th, 2014.

III. Challenges and Needs

- Additional training opportunities in inquiry-based teaching and problem-based learning will be needed to support teachers as they implement the new social studies state framework.
- Professional development time will continue to be needed to revise those courses that will be rewritten this year to align with the new Connecticut Social Studies Framework.
- There is a need for additional support of special education students in the American Government course.

IV. 2014-2015 Goals

- Implementation of two interdisciplinary performance-based assessments around the PADI model. These will include a science/social studies and an English/social studies performance-based assessment.
- Full implementation of the tenth grade writing portfolio.
- All social studies courses will be brought into alignment with the new Connecticut Social Studies Framework and the National Council for Social Studies C3 framework.
- 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.

WORLD LANGUAGE, GRADES K-12

I. 2013-2014 Goals

- Research and make recommendations to the Board of Education for the re-introduction of the Spanish program in grades kindergarten and one.
- 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, performance-based assessments and common assessments.
- Bring all world language teachers on board with AIM units in curriculum.
- Update grades 5-8 Spanish curriculum to avoid repetition.
- Update AP French curriculum to bring up-to-date with revised AP Exam.
- Ensure that department understands the importance of mastery objectives and how to write them to help confirm smooth transition to AIM units.
- Implement new textbook in sixth grade French course.

II. Accomplishments

- Information on elementary Spanish programs was collected from area school districts and presented to the Board of Education Curriculum Committee. A site visit to the New Canaan Public Schools further informed our review. With the recent approval of Weston's budget, we are planning for the reintroduction of the program in the primary grades with a new delivery model that consists of more frequent, shorter class meetings, which is anticipated to meet the developmental needs of our youngest learners as they learn Spanish.
- AIM units were implemented in all schools in many levels of Spanish and French at WMS and WHS.
- Performance-based assessments continue to be implemented and revised in all world language classes, grades K-12.
- World language students at WMS and WHS 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.
- Approximately 70 WHS Spanish 4 and 5 Honors, and Spanish 1 students participated in the National Spanish Exam. Students earned gold, silver, bronze medals, and honorable mentions based on their high scores.
- Spanish 6 and Spanish 6 AP students participated in a field trip to The Ridgefield Playhouse to see the Hispanic Ballet featuring Latin American music and dance, and Spanish flamenco and folklore.
- Students from Spanish 5 Honors Skyped with a group of students from Nicaragua to talk about a variety of topics.
- New Descubre 1 textbooks were purchased and implemented into the Spanish 1 and 2 curricula.
- New AP Spanish curriculum was piloted to reflect revised AP Spanish Language and Culture exam.

III. Challenges and Needs

- As a result of the recent budget process, the 30 student computers in the WHS Language Lab will be replaced with new thin clients to address a need to upgrade its computers.

- All world language teachers are in need of content specific professional development. There is teacher interest/desire to attend workshops, conferences, and SHARE meetings with colleagues.
- There is a need to revise curriculum at all levels as part of the curriculum renewal process.
- Collaboration time for teachers K-12 will greatly facilitate this curriculum work, especially for WMS and WHS teachers.

IV. 2014-2015 Goals

- Redesign and implement the elementary Spanish curriculum for the re-introduction of Spanish in Kindergarten and grade one.
- Use Spanish student survey results to create an action plan to increase upperclassmen student interest and enrollment in higher level Spanish courses.
- Use common planning time to continue the design of performance-based assessments and AIM units/assessments.
- Host the spring 2015 World Languages SHARE meeting in the WHS Library with colleagues from all districts in Fairfield County.
- Begin the formal curriculum renewal process for world language.
- Explore trips abroad based on student interest to Spain and France.

MUSIC AND ART, GRADES K-12

I. 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 and music and integrating 21st century skills in all performance-based assessments.
- 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 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.

II. Accomplishments

Curriculum, Technology, and Instruction

- The K-12 music and visual arts teachers participated in professional development that examined the new draft National Core Arts Standards and added comments to the standards via the Wiki page.
- The K-12 music and visual arts teachers reviewed “response” as one of the artistic processes and determined general traits, process, and planning components for effective instruction in this core artistic process.
- A review of the current K-12 Music and Art AIM units showed well developed lessons with sequential materials, progress in the infusion of 21st century skills, and the refinement of rubrics and measurement tools used in these units.
- All fifth grade and eighth grade students were assessed on general knowledge and skills in music by taking a formal Music Knowledge and Skills assessment. The results will be reviewed by the K-12 department and teachers will look for trends in the data.
- The eighth grade band and chorus worked with a professional composer and lyricist to compose an original piece for band and chorus that was performed at the WMS Band concert in May.
- Two new High School Visual Arts curricula were outlined for next year: A new Digital Publications course was designed that will incorporate elements of media design and digital publication including WHS yearbook and the Advanced Contemporary Media Design was updated to include new technology and processes.
- WIS music teachers collaborated on a beginning improvisation unit that was implemented in fifth grade Band and fifth grade General Music. Liz Morris and Koryn Soboleski presented a

workshop on beginning improvisation at the Connecticut Music Educators Conference in Cromwell that highlighted this work.

- Erik Paul and Social Studies teacher Erin LeBris combined efforts to bring members of the American Studies course a lecture entitled “Slave Songs to Spirituals.” Students participated in the singing on work songs, viewed videos, and listened to recordings of work and recreational songs sung on plantations. In addition, students explored the influence of this music on Spirituals and modern day blues, jazz, and rock and roll genres.
- The WHS Visual Arts teachers have collaborated in creating student portfolios for students’ art work in grades 9-12. Next year, the process will be expanded so that within 2-3 years, all students who take art at WHS will be represented. These portfolios will help students and teachers analyze progress throughout their high school art classes.
- A new online resource, Quaver Music, was piloted in the K-5 music classrooms. This digital tool provides a comprehensive digital resource that aligns with the district elementary music curriculum. The plan is to purchase Quaver music for next year.
- Four WHS art teachers have now completed the AP Studio Art Summer Workshop. This allows any art teacher at WHS to teach AP Studio Art, but also supports student learning by improving the extra help all teachers can provide for our advanced art students.
- The eighth grade Music Technology course utilized a new online resource, Inside Music with Noteflight, which provides students with the ability to review lessons and complete work at home in a flipped classroom setting.
- A fourth grade Beginning Strings Enrichment program was successful at WIS.
- K-12 music and art teachers took part in a variety of professional development activities that aligns with the curriculum. Teachers participated in a museum visit to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Connecticut Music Educators’ Association conference, and AIM planning workshops. They reviewed the new National Core Arts Standards and developed a better understanding of the new arts framework.
- A need for an advanced chamber music opportunity for Symphonic Orchestra students at WHS was recognized and “The Low End String Experience” was formed. Bass and Cello students meet weekly to play music from Baroque to Ragtime.
- The installation of higher lumens projectors in four of the high school art rooms was completed. Teachers and students are now able to use the projectors for presentations and displays, with and without the iPad mini remotes. Special thanks to the Weston Education Foundation and the Weston Gun Club for funding.

All State/Regional Musicians/Honors

- Weston Public Schools’ Music Department was recognized as one of the 2014 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 or excellent rating. The beginning jazz band and WMS jazz lab band received a second place honor and a rating of excellent. The WMS chamber singers won the award for “Best Overall” Middle School Choir.
- One WHS band student (Ross Cohen) was selected by process of audition to participate in the Connecticut All-State Festival.
- Eight WMS choral students (Nathan Strauss, Matthew Figliola, Robert Constantine, Emma Rogers, Jane Burdett, Sophie Lang, Caiti Levin, Chloe Shrader) and five WMS band students (Dan Curtis, Ethan Klotz, Oliver Zych, Jane Paknia and Arianna Imperiali) were selected by

process of audition to participate in the Western Regional Middle School Concert Festival. Liz Morris and Jeff Holmes served as the festival chairs.

- Four WIS and four WMS students were selected to participate in the Connecticut All-State Elementary Honors Chorus.
- 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, *Twelfth Night* and *Carousel*, 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, *Seussical Jr.*, was performed at WHS and benefitted from the talents of student artists, musicians, actors, costume designers, and technical theatre personnel.
- One successful musical production with Show Stoppers, *The Best Little Theater in Town*, was performed at WIS and benefitted from the talents of students.
- The WHS Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble, and the Westport Community Band combined in concert to present a "Salute to America's Veterans" on November 16. Three thousand dollars was raised and donated to Purple Heart Homes, a national organization dedicated to providing personalized housing solutions for service-connected disabled veterans and their families.
- Over 300 Chorus students in grades 4-12 performed at the all-district choir festival *ChoirFest* on April 30.
- The WHS chamber chorus performed at the world language ceremony. This year's selections were performed in Latin and French.
- 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 13.
- The WMS eighth grade orchestra participated in the Music for Youth Orchestra Exchange with the Haven String Quartet and students from High Horizon's and Multi-Cultural Magnet schools in Bridgeport. A concert featuring all student musicians and the quartet was held at WHS on April 9.
- A WMS and WHS marching band was formed for students to participate in the Memorial Day Parade on May 26.
- All WIS students performed patriotic music at a Veteran's Day assembly and multicultural holiday music at a winter sing along in December.
- WIS grade three music and art festival was held on April 8 and 9. 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 7. All fourth and fifth grade students displayed artwork.
- A class of HES second 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.
- Meaghan Wylie, senior, received an Honorable Mention Award at the CT Scholastic Art Awards. Halie Saferstein, Elena Valteris, and Adele Kaczmarek also had work accepted into this juried exhibition.

- Thirty-eight WHS art students exhibited work in the joint Weston High School – Staples High School art show at Silvermine Art Center in the fall of 2013. Dacia Gross was awarded an Honorable Mention for her watercolor painting.
- Hunter Young was the recipient of the CAS Visual Arts Award this year for WHS.
- Daniel Bogaev and James Willis received an honorable mention in the CSPAN StudentCam Documentary competition this year and will be honored on May 6.
- Juliette Sandak, Mary Katherine Connors, Luca Kupper, Dacia Gross, and Ryan Trepp showed art work at the NCC Art Gallery Regional High School Art Invitational in March, 2014.
- Helena Low was selected to provide a framed drawing for the WHS permanent art collection through the generosity of the WHS PTO.
- The WHS Art with a Heart club adopted an elephant in Kenya and raised over \$250 in fundraising this year.
- Weston High School art teacher Kate O’Keefe’s painting “Craving” was accepted into the art show, *Poetry and the art of Eating*, at gallery north in Long Island, NY.

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.
- Student computers in all K-5 music and art classrooms would support the implementation of the curriculum.
- Art and music teachers are interested in continuing to identify high-quality professional development in their content areas to support their professional growth.
- There are a variety of courses being offered in B9 at the high school that require very different materials and storage needs. It would be beneficial to review the space to make appropriate changes that would deliver a more effective use of the space.
- Trojan TV was a challenge to continue after losing a very productive group of students.
- The software in WHS B-6 computer lab needs to be upgraded. However, the lab has been rewired to improve the reliability of these machines for classroom instruction. The efficiency of the computers in the B-6 lab will be reviewed during the 2014-2015 school year to determine if any hardware upgrades are needed to support curricular needs.
- At WMS, the Music Technology class will need to run new software, so the amount of memory in these computers will be increased. The computers in this lab are scheduled to be replaced the following year.

IV. 2014-2015 Goals

- Align the district arts curriculum with the new National Core Arts Standards.
- Continue the process of research and development in the curriculum renewal cycle for the K-12 art and music standards-based curricula.
- Begin to use the electronic mapping tool, Atlas Rubicon, to map curriculum and courses.
- Continue refining common assessments and rubrics in art & music.
- Continue collaboration between departments on teaching 21st century thinking skills and developing effective performance assessments.
- Find collaborative planning time for all building level departments to meet and discuss updated methodologies, review scope and sequence, and vertical alignment.

- 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.
- Continue to review scheduling K-12 and determine the most effective way to schedule classes and courses to ensure all students are able to participate in the arts programs that they desire.
- Create a plan with the IT department to secure the appropriate technology, both hardware and software, to support the arts courses that we offer.
- Establish a comprehensive Visual and Performing Arts department that includes the theatre arts.
- Update the curriculum for the Introduction to Drama course at WHS and identify a qualify instructor.

HEALTH/PHYSICAL EDUCATION, GRADES K-12 FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE, GRADES 6-8

I. 2013-2014 Goals

- Establish consistent department meeting times.
- Implement the integrated Family and Consumer Science (FaCS) and Health curriculum for sixth grade.
- Study the reconfiguration of FaCS facilities to better meet curricular needs of students.
- Connect K-12 curriculum with AIM initiative in all disciplines.
- Monitor implementation of new assessments in physical education.
- Provide professional development for health teachers in sexual education and nutrition.
- Conduct formal documentation of Adaptive Health Program.
- Develop local operating procedures for Project Adventure courses.
- To install shed for Project Adventure course storage.

II. Accomplishments

- Returned to holding monthly department meetings focusing on curriculum.
- Successfully implemented and documented sixth grade FaCS and Health curricula.
- Planned and implemented adjustment to Health and FaCS seventh and eighth grade curricula.
- Successfully implemented curricular adjustments to fifth grade health curriculum.
- Documented Adaptive Health program WIS and WHS.
- Developed a Pool Safety Plan aligned with new State laws.
- Completed training for coaching certification in swimming for all WMS physical education teachers.
- Developed operating procedures for Project Adventure courses.
- The Project Adventure shed was delivered and installed.
- Completed the startup of Unified Sports Team.

III. Challenges and Needs

- Block out time to implement instructional coaching with fidelity.
- The design process to update and reconfigure the FaCS facilities has begun.
- There is a goal to better balance the class size levels throughout the sections of Health and Physical Education courses at the WMS and WHS.

IV. 2014-2015 Goals

- Begin curriculum renewal process in health with attention to aligning with the school counseling lessons.
- Continue focus on AIM unit development in grades K-12.
- Schedule weekly blocks of CIL coaching time for each school.
- Monitor the updated Pool Safety Plan and refine as needed.
- Develop a recording and storing system for students' physical fitness data district wide.

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, GRADES 6-12

I. 2013-2014 Goals

- Build enrollment in technology courses at WHS, particularly addressing female enrollment.
- Carefully monitor the physical set-up of WMS classrooms with the development of the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) curriculum.
- Add an additional module, *Energy and the Environment*, to the WMS PLTW program.

II. Accomplishments

- PLTW has been implemented at WMS, with some legacy projects enriching the suggested PLTW curriculum. The sixth grade curriculum includes portions of the *Design and Modeling* module. The seventh grade completes *Design and Modeling*, and includes *Green Architecture*. The eighth grade curriculum includes *Automation and Robotics* and *Energy and the Environment*.
- Enrollments in Technology courses at WHS continues to grow. All four courses are projected to run during the 2014-2015 school year (*Introduction to Engineering Design*, *Computer Integrating Manufacturing*, *Principles of Engineering*, and *Civil Engineering & Architecture*).
- As part of a promotion by the manufacturer, we acquired three MakerBot 3D rapid prototyping machines, two at WMS and one at WHS with minimal expenditure of Weston funds.
- Courses at WHS continue to integrate the rapid-prototyping machines and router.
- Ms. Moosbrugger has been soliciting funding for a laser engraver, a device which would allow students to design and manufacture many high-quality custom-designed products.
- Enrollment in the PLTW courses increased from 51 in the 2011-2012 school year to 75 in the 2012-2013 school year and held steady at 73 for the 2013-2014 school year.
- A plan has been designed and agreed upon to address ventilation issues associated with aerosol spraying, involving moving equipment from the middle school to the high school.
- A plan to further address coding within the PLTW WMS sequence has been developed, which will be implemented in the 2014-2015 school year, so that all students will have exposure to programming.

III. Challenges and Needs

- As students progress through the PLTW courses and cohort size continues its upward trajectory, staffing in the PLTW courses at WHS will need to be examined. Our 1.0 FTE can only accommodate five sections, which does not allow all courses to be offered each year with appropriate section sizes.
- One of the PLTW classrooms at the WMS is a general purpose classroom. While awaiting more dramatic renovations as part of a building project, current furniture, infrastructure, and storage provisions should be reviewed and addressed in the interim. A meeting with an architect is scheduled to review the facilities needs of the WMS PLTW program.

IV. Goals 2014-2015

- Implement a coding unit in the sixth grade PLTW module.
- Purchase and implement VEX kits to replace the Fischertechnics kits at WHS.
- Continue to monitor the 8/9 transition in technology, particularly for female students.
- Ensure that aerosol spraying booth is moved from WMS to WHS prior to next school year in order for curricular experiences to be implemented without the need for modification.
- Explore possibility of creating Robotics clubs at the middle and high school levels.

BUSINESS EDUCATION, GRADES 9-12

I. 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.

II. Accomplishments

- WHS business courses were updated to foster greater connections between our business programs and economics courses in social studies, which has fostered the development of cross-curricular experiences.
- Requests for entrance to business courses has grown this year.
- Performance-based assessments have been developed to add greater variety to the experience of students enrolled in the course.
- The WMS FaCS curriculum was updated to include lessons in personal finance to assure that students have a common experience.

III. Challenges and Needs

- Efforts to increase enrollment in the Business Education have yielded positive results, but continued work is required to generate interest in the program.

IV. Goals 2014-2015

- To continue to explore ways to link business courses to entrepreneurial and economic courses in social studies to foster the development of cross-curricular experiences.

SCHOOL COUNSELING, GRADES K-12

I. 2013-2014 Goals

- Complete year three of SRBI training which addresses Tier 3 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. Reviewing the possibility of tapping in to those resources.
- Finalize and implement as well as collect data on the Student Success Plans.
- Utilize budget resources for drug and alcohol services and professional development training for staff.
- Revitalize the Career Counseling Center at the WHS.
- Monitor Student Success Plan implementation.

II. Accomplishments

- Year three training in Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with a team from each school was completed. This is the final year of training and the focus was mostly on Tier 3 interventions, with emphasis on Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA's) and Behavior Intervention plans. All of the schools in the district have embraced the PBIS program and we have seen a successful implementation across the district. The goal will be to continue the momentum of the program now that the training phase has been completed.
- We have begun reviewing area districts to look at the programming they provide for students with emotional and truancy issues and there has been encouragement from area districts in looking at possibly sharing services or developing a regional program.
- Significant progress has been made at both WMS and WHS with the Student Success Plans and direct implementation with students.
- Budget resources for drug and alcohol services were utilized for professional development and student and parent presentations. The staff had a presentation from the Governor's Coalition on what current drugs students are using, in what formats, as well as discussion on trends. Assemblies were held this spring for students on brain development and drug use. Weston's Family University program this year offered parents and students panels on risky behaviors. There were also several presentations on the results of the drug and alcohol surveys offered. Some of this budget was also utilized for individual student needs as planned.
- The College and Career Center was revitalized to provide a more accessible and professional appearance where students and parents can receive assistance and information regarding the college process.

III. Challenges and Needs

- We are seeing an increase in the prevalence of students with emotional difficulties at the middle and high schools, particularly students with anxiety and/or depressive symptoms and/or truancy issues.
- We are experiencing difficulty in providing tutorial support for students with attendance issues.
- Continued support for students with drug or alcohol concerns at WHS remains a focus area.
- We are seeing an increased number of students at the elementary level with mental health concerns.

IV. 2014-2015 Goals

- Continue to maintain the creativity and enthusiasm in the PBIS program so that it remains a part of the culture at each school and assists in decreasing bullying behavior.
- Work with area districts to develop alternative programming at the high school level for students with emotional and/or truancy concerns.
- Communicate with staff and parents information about the Student Success Plans.
- Continue professional development and student education programs on drug and alcohol usage. Provide consultation for families in need of assistance with this issue.
- Begin the renewal process for the school counseling curriculum.

PROJECT CHALLENGE, GRADES 3-8

Data for the Project Challenge
Screening Process for 2013-2014

Grade	# of new students reviewed based screening process	# of parent referrals	Total students reviewed 2013-2014	Total identified	% of grade level
3	17	2	19	12	4%
4	12	3	15	7	7%
5	11	2	13	17	8%
6	15	2	17	22	12%
7	6	3	9	23	11%
8	8	0	8	15	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 equations, problem solving skills, and an individual project 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.
- Odyssey of the Mind returned to the district after years of absence. It was open to the entire student body and 89 students participated across grades 3-5.

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, Math Counts, Robotics, 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 National Geographic Geography Bee.

Curricular Units

Weston Intermediate School

- *Board Game Design:* Students explore the relationships between rules and order and fairness by exploring the rules of a variety of games and designing their own boards.
- *Design: Bridge Building:* Students explore the elements of form and function in design in many different areas of our life and world.
- *Photography:* Students explore the principals of photography, apply those principals to their own photographs, and create a theme around which to build a portfolio.

- *Videography*: Students explore the use of silent, moving visual images to tell a story while learning how to create scripts and story boards, as well as how to use editing software to create their own video project.

Weston Middle School

- *National History Day: Rights and Responsibilities-Student exploration of theme (grades 6-8)*: Students compare the relationship of a historical time to their own lives, helping them better understand the world.
- *Public Policy-(grades 6-8)*: Students explore how to become involved in their community in order to solve local problems, gain an understanding of how public policy is developed, and learn how to participate effectively to bring about change.
- *Civil Rights Movement-(grades 6-7)*: Students explore how American citizens, through specific events and tactics, fought for the ideals of justice and equality.
- *News Documentaries: Environmental and Health Problems (grade 8)*: Students participate in a project-based learning experience by identifying a problem worthy of investigation related to health and/or the environment, conducting research on the issue to evaluate solutions to the problem, which then culminates in a short documentary highlighting the important findings and implications for action .

Affective Curriculum

- The affective curriculum model that has been employed is grounded in the Responsive Classroom approach. Both Project Challenge teachers have been certified through 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 (e.g. “Take a Break, Loss of Privilege, and You Broke You Fix It).
- 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 in which to take academic risks. School counselors continue to be a part of the affective curriculum. Topics that were addressed were in the areas of life skills on social interaction, listening skills, conflict management strategies, collaborative problem solving skills, Socratic seminar, and self-advocacy skills. In addition, group work and collaboration was emphasized to further develop the social skills necessary in the 21st Century. 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. At WMS the affective curriculum also included case studies of eminent people and how they viewed themselves and how they were viewed by others.

Evidence of Effective Partnerships with Parents and the General Education Staff

- Opportunities to collaborate with the general education staff continued to be increased this year. Experts in a variety of fields were brought in to the classrooms to accentuate the curriculum. In addition, parents were very involved in supporting and assisting in the competition-based 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, research project exhibitions, in addition to the sharing of completed student projects such as videos. Classes at WMS were invited to view Mock Trial scrimmages.

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Curriculum Renewal Cycle

Year 1 and 2
Research and Development

- *Align curriculum with frameworks and standards*
- *Review literature, research, best practices*
- *Develop units*
- *Identify materials and resources*
- *Determine PD needs*
- *Year 2 PD preparation*
 - *Data driven*
 - *Research proven practices*
 - *New technology*
 - *Student needs*

Year 3
Implementation

Put curriculum into practice

Ongoing Professional Development

Year 4
Monitoring

How are we doing?

Is it in place?

Year 5
Evaluation

Assess success +/-

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Curriculum Revision Plan

Revision Year 2012	Revision Year 2013	Revision Year 2014	Revision Year 2015
K-12 Math & Business			
	K-5 Social Studies		
		6-12 Social Studies 6-12 English K-12 Visual Arts/Music	
			K-5 Language Arts K-12 Physical Ed. & Health K-12 Guidance K-12 World Language

Revision Year 2016	Revision Year 2017	Revision Year 2018	Revision Year 2019
K-12 Math & Business			
K-5 Social Studies			
6-12 Social Studies 6-12 English K-12 Visual Arts/Music			
K-5 Language Arts 6-12 Physical Ed. & Health K-12 Guidance K-12 World Language			
K-12 Science & PLTW 3-8 Project Challenge			