
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: MICHAEL GREEN
FROM: CARI A. THOMSON, PHD
SUBJECT: END OF YEAR SUMMARY
DATE: 6/24/2010

The Woodland School Board's first goal

The FIRST priority of our school system will be student learning. To this end it is our goal that every student will be taught by skilled, high-quality teachers who provide effective and high-quality instruction, and who are equipped with necessary tools and training. Elements of this goal will consider:

- * Effective hiring practices.*
- * Effective professional development, including expansion of support for National Board Certification of Teachers.*
- * Effective evaluation, mentorship, and other practices to assist employees.*
- * Ongoing evaluation of curriculum and technology tools.*

has been supported by the following actions at Woodland Middle School during the course of the 2009-2010 academic year.

In regards to effective hiring practices:

Woodland Middle School has collaborated with Woodland High School to provide students with the best teaching and learning opportunities. Positions that opened in mathematics and English were filled with existing, highly-qualified staff. With the help of Deb Kernan we were able to create an inclusive model of instruction in both math and English, which has already been implemented with our special service students and has proven to be effective as evidenced by student standardized scores, and affective behaviors.

In regards to professional development:

WMS spent a great deal of time of professional development time on Navigations. This was the first year of the grant's implementation and Kelly Sloniker did a nice job on Mondays of preparing the teacher and student materials and modeling lessons in advance of the student rollout. Kelly, LaJune Thorson, and I presented middle school transitions and forecasting at the spring navigation conference in Tacoma. We received feedback from staff and students and will be working in August to adjust curriculum and incorporate more on-line lessons.

The WMS mathematics department also spent time on developing a scope and sequence and pacing chart tied to the new standards for pre-algebra as well as creating a question bank by standard for common assessments. WHS and WMS algebra and geometry teachers also met and worked on common assessments and question banks. Teachers are looking forward to collaborating with Evergreen and Washougal next year.

Next year, we will have 4 teachers teaching algebra/geometry I and pre-algebra. This summer these folks will come together for curriculum and assessment work. The expectation is that they explore materials to make problems more student-relevant, develop common end of unit assessments, and develop a timeline of when they will be collaboratively scoring these on Mondays. Furthermore, the teachers of mathematics will be attending the Moodle training August 23-25 and developing a collaborative Moodle site for parents and students to access resources, examples, and extra practice or enrichment opportunities.

Holly Royle became Woodland Middle School's first National Board Certified teacher.

In regards to effective evaluation, mentorship, and other practices to assist employees:

Robin Uhlenkott did a nice job mentoring Emily Swett, our new teacher, this year. Emily did a great job as a first year teacher in social studies and publications.

The goal of effective instruction is always to continue to explore and improve practices. This is done through frequent informal and formal observations during the school year. Teachers set annual short-term and long-term goals and discuss their progress with colleagues and administration at specific points throughout the year. The richness and professional growth comes from the discussions.

Most WMS staff had to adjust teaching practices and curriculum to a shorter teaching window as our schedule changed this year. Department collaboration time on Mondays facilitated this goal by allowing groups to look at existing practices and take a critical look at what necessary for student growth and what was not.

In regards to ongoing evaluation of curriculum and technology tools:

WMS opened a LINUX lab for student drop-in use during the 2009-2010. This was helpful in the facilitation of Navigation 101 on-line lessons and interest surveys. It also gave staff another teaching area separate from the WMS/WHS library computer labs.

The math department implemented the APEX curriculum in our intervention and regular programs. This is a program that has been used at TEAM to facilitate and promote independent learning at a pace prescribed by individual student needs. We also used it experimentally with a student who had several behavioral issues in the regular mathematics class because of interactions with peers. This student was highly successful in the program and two weeks into summer, I am still getting reports on his progress (B level work) as he continues to study at home.

Next year we will be implementing video technology in our new “web publications” class. Paul Huddleston will be teaching this class and we envision a student-driven website, current athletic reports, and videos of life at WMS to support and encourage community involvement.

We had three teachers attend the MOODLE training last summer and implement this technology in their classrooms. This has been a useful resource for students and parents to use for examples and enrichment.

The Transporjans continue to do a fantastic job of representing Woodland Middle School and the district’s outstanding math and science students. The Lego Robotics program continue to expand and Highly Capable students from WIS got to experience the higher level problem solving skills that are necessary for this class. Besides programming a robot, each year the team is presented with a social/environmental issue in which they must find a viable solution to. This year it was the traffic pattern in Woodland. The students did such a great job they were asked to present to various community groups as well as present in front of all the teams at the state competition.

Additional Highlights of 2009-2010:

The implementation of CTE classes at WMS was highly successful. This year students forecasted for wood shop and future trades. Each student in wood shop learned how to use the various tools, learned Computer-Aided Design (CAD), and made projects of their choice. It was nice to see the differentiation of instruction around individual student projects rather than mandatory class projects (i.e. everyone make a spin top). Student projects included benches, book shelves, night stands, and even a pigeon house! Our office smells heavily of polyurethane at least twice a quarter.

Students in future trades had experiences in different areas of CTE, including metal shops, animal husbandry, aquaculture, and floral design. Mr. Vetter did a nice job of adjusting his practices based on the interests of the students in the class. For example, if students had interests in floral design, they got more floral design.

WMS used an opportunity time model second semester and evaluated it based on grades and student performance. Additionally, we began having students who were failing a core, double up on that core (i.e. failing math, you take two math classes). Students were given the best grade out of both classes. This was very successful. We are starting some students off with doubled up cores next year as an intervention and also because we have had some students request double cores! One student who wants to be a veterinarian asked if she could have two math and two science classes for next year because “Vets need a lot of math and science.” Her plan is to take 7th and 8th grade science simultaneously. She is an honor roll student who passed these classes during the 200-2010 school year. We have had two other students with similar requests.

Our counseling department at WMS continues to be a source of pride. Kelly Sloniker provided social skills groups to students this year in addition to teaching a targeted success class. Adam Scattergood sees individual students through the safe schools grant and also helped Kelly

facilitate transition groups for at-risk students new to WMS in the summer of 2009. Kelly and Adam will facilitate these again during the summer of 2010. Additionally, Strengthening Families and the Parenting Project (both family support and parenting groups), were well attended and the comments from attendees positive.

Debbie Shoup did a wonderful job of floating between all the various schools in the district, making sure health plans were done in an efficient and timely manner, and sitting on the WMS intervention team to problem-solve and provide student/parental supports. Debbie and Ashley Yoder, with the help of Steve Rippl, also put together an on-line format of the KNOW (HIV/AIDS) curriculum. Students accessed this through the science department.

Spring conferences were a great success this year as we incorporated scheduling for the 2010-2011 school year. Students worked in their Navigation groups to plan for high school and for 8th grade. Students and parents attending spring conferences were allowed to discuss classes with their advisors and enter their class choices into the computer system. 6th grade teachers at WIS also incorporated the forecasting forms into their conferences, aiding students and parents in choosing classes for middle school. Our attendance went from less than 10% to more than 85% in one year.

Art Fest was a great success thanks to Michael Smith for keeping the program alive. He went above and beyond to make this years' program out of sight.

Woodland Middle School wrestling also hosted the first Holiday Invite for wrestlers in the Greater Saint Helen's Middle School Athletic League. This was a fantastic event, which represented the Woodland community at its finest as it was ran by volunteers.

Looking Ahead to 2010-2011:

WMS will have several news opportunities for student learning next year. These include French, brain games, sociology, creative writing, and web-publications. Health will now be taught through the physical education department. Topics in health will include Project Success (prevention curriculum), the KNOW curriculum, and nutrition.

Middle school CTE programs have been a huge success. Apart from success classes, CTE classes had the highest numbers forecasted. Next year we will offer advanced woods, advanced metals, and two sections of floral design. A sincere thanks to Mary Ellen Vetter and Cheryl Nesbitt for working together to provide this opportunity for WMS students. Ms. Nesbitt offered to take Ms. Vetter's WHS PE class 1st semester so that Ms. Vetter could have two quarters of middle school floral.

The math department will undergo a great deal of professional development next year. We will be looking at how to effectively add an intermediate math course at the middle level and collaborating with Evergreen and Washougal to develop materials and assessments.

Student-led conferences will look a bit different at Woodland Middle School next year. 7th grade SLCs will be in the fall and 8th grade will be in the spring tied to WHS forecasting and scheduling.

WMS will also attempt to have a job fair or professional speakers from the community come so students can learn about careers of possible interest based on the Navigation curriculum.

Woodland Middle School will have two administrative interns next year, Jeff Nesbitt and Joe Bosch. Please join me in welcoming them.