



EDUCATION

Coventry Board of Education 2014-2015 Annual Report

David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools



its goals and for the evaluation of the Superintendent.

The Coventry Board of Education is the governing and policy making body of the Coventry Public Schools. The Board derives its power from the Constitution and General Statutes of the State of Connecticut as well as from the State Board of Education and the Charter of the Town of Coventry. The Board of Education is responsible for establishing policy and educational goals that guide the school system toward the continuous improvement of the educational program for Coventry's children. The Board is also responsible for the ongoing evaluation of the school program against

The Board consists of seven elected members: Jennifer Beausoleil, Chairman; Mary Kortmann, Vice-Chairman; Mary Minor, Secretary; Eugene Marchand; William Oros; Denise Ryan; and Michael Sobol. The Board meets twice a month in the Administration Building conference room. Agendas and minutes of the meetings are posted on the Board of Education page of the district website www.coventrypublicschools.org.

The Board's Mission Statement and Goals provide direction and focus to the improvement work of the district. They are as follows:

- Mission Statement – The Coventry Public Schools will prepare every student for life, learning and work in the 21st century.
- Goals – 1) Identify, define, and measure the critical skills and attributes that are required for success and align systems to continuously improve student performance and achievement. 2) Maintain and promote a positive and respectful learning community. 3) Recruit, retain and develop high quality staff at every level.

Each year the Superintendent, as well as each Principal/Director, establishes a personal set of goals which align with the Board of Education main goals. In addition, goal achievement documents are developed in the spring verifying the year's accomplishments. Those documents and related details can be found on the district website.

Coventry Public Schools 2014-15 Noteworthy Accomplishments

Coventry High School; Joseph Blake, Principal



During the 2014-15 school year at Coventry High School (CHS) a variety of initiatives and programs helped support student learning and achievement. A primary focus was the New England Association of Schools (NEASC) self-study process; a two year process in which we review and analyze every aspect of our program to assess the alignment to the NEASC Accreditation Standards of Core Values and Beliefs, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Leadership, School Resources for Learning, and Community Resources for Learning. This self-study will prepare us for our May 2016 NEASC accreditation visitation and guide our future program development. In addition, we continued the implementation of the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) curriculum in math and English Language Arts to support student learning through relevant and rigorous performance based learning opportunities. This year we began the process of tracking our school-wide rubrics for Coventry High School's recently adopted 21st Century Academic, Social, and Civic Expectations. These rubrics will guide teaching and learning, ensuring our students develop the knowledge and skills to be college and career ready upon graduation. We once again expanded our collaboration with Eastern Connecticut State University to provide increased college intern support for our students and their learning. The one-to-one iPad initiative, which expanded to all ninth and tenth grade students, continues to allow our teachers to integrate technology into teaching and learning to increase information literacy for all students through access to digital content including primary and secondary source documents, interactive maps and textbooks, and to enhance rigor and relevance in the classroom through real world applications. Students continued to take advantage of the opportunity to earn college credits while taking classes at Coventry High School. Last year alone through the Early College Experience program students earned 334 credits at the University of Connecticut, and through the College Pathway Partnership students earned 454 credits at Manchester Community College. As a result of our Advanced Placement achievement and participation rate, we were ranked as a top high school in Connecticut in the Washington Post's annual High School Challenge, placing 11th in the state.

Capt. Nathan Hale School; Dena DeJulius, Principal



The Capt. Nathan Hale School (CNH) is committed to holding its programs and students to high standards. Academic achievement, character development, commitment to safety, and a sense of belonging and community are all high priorities at CNH. The CNH grade level teams meet weekly to discuss student progress and achievement, and we believe our parents and families play a key role in our students' and school success. Many accomplishments took place during the 2014-2015 school year from curricular advancements to fostering our positive school climate. The English Language Arts and Math Departments continued their curriculum work aligning instruction and assessments with the Connecticut Core Standards. Both departments have streamlined lessons to be sure all the standards are covered. Pacing guides have been created for consistency from classroom to classroom. Newly developed common formative assessments in science for grades 6, 7, and 8 were administered in September 2014 to gather baseline data regarding students' understanding of the science standards. The realignment of the science curriculum ensures that all standards are completed before the March administration of the Grade 8 Science Connecticut Mastery Test. In the fall of 2014, CNH participated in the GlobalEd2 Project, which is a 16-week educational research study conducted by the University of Connecticut in conjunction with the University of Illinois. Several grade 7 social studies classrooms participated in this international global affairs simulation through a closed intranet to exchange messages between "other nations" participating in the simulation. The GlobalEd2 program researches whether or not the simulation improves students' writing, and social studies and science skills. 2014-2015 marked year three of our school-wide enrichment program consisting of 12 class meetings during the year. The enrichment program offers opportunities to experience classes that are normally not part of the school day. These classes include: martial arts, digital music, scrapbooking, volleyball, math art and games, strategic board games, dance, yoga, multi-sports, and 3-D design. This year, all students read the book *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio for our One Book, One School selection. The book's themes of kindness, compassion and adolescent friendships were woven into our school culture through special presentations and monthly student recognitions. The Rachel's Story assembly was held in October along with a special parent and community presentation in the evening titled: Rachel's Challenge. Following many years without a student council, the CNH Student Council was reestablished for the 2014-2015 school year. Accomplishments included monthly school spirit initiatives, community service projects, as well as student leadership initiatives. Staff has had various opportunities to work on differentiated professional learning opportunities that are aligned with district goals through scheduled professional development days, early release days, vertical team meeting days and faculty meetings as well as through monthly Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) meetings. Collaborative work with regional educational consultants has been invaluable for our Math Department as well as our Science, Social Studies and Physical Education Departments who have worked on both curriculum revisions and integrating technology through our iPad initiative.

George H. Robertson School; Beth Giller, Principal



The importance of positive school culture guides programming and practices at the George Hersey Robertson School (GHR). In 2014-2015, we continued our positive behavioral support, Spike CARES (Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control) to promote positive behaviors throughout the school day. To further inspire school spirit, our PTO took on the task of promoting GHR Spirit Wear, adding Spirit Wear days to our monthly Spirit Days during the year. In addition to fostering positive behavior, we also seek to develop our students' independence. This year we adopted the Daily 5 framework, a reading structure intended to build students' stamina in reading while simultaneously fostering student independence. The components include Read to Self, Read to Someone, Listen to Reading, Write about Reading, and Word Work. Research supports that students read better and increase their comprehension when they read more. On average, third grade students read 40 books each, fourth grade students read 25, and fifth grade students read an average of 20 books this school year. We continue honing our skills in Writer's Workshop. A staff developer from Columbia University, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project worked with our staff throughout the year to refine their expertise in the implementation of Writer's Workshop. 2014-2015 was the first year that our elementary teachers received in-house professional development from a math consultant; work included sequencing and pacing of units aligned with Connecticut Core Standards (CCS), practicing instructional strategies needed for students' conceptual understanding of mathematical practices, and developing learning tasks and assessments. Assessments in all curricular areas were carefully evaluated to ensure the alignment to the rigor of the CCS in order to meet the needs of students and to prepare students for the challenges of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), the

standardized assessment adopted by the State of Connecticut. Staff members continued to share technology learning with colleagues, as our iPad use increased across all curricular areas; additionally, teachers received professional development in the use of technology to support inquiry lessons in social studies and science. GHR students have the opportunity to participate in many after school activities, included but not limited to: Homework Club, Mentoring, Camp Ventures, Art in the Afternoon, Multi-Sport, Ski Club, Hiking, and Chess Club. The endless energy of our GHR PTO Board members and parent volunteers resulted in the support of many programs this year, including student assemblies with author Melissa Stewart in March. The PTO also provided financial support to build teachers' classroom libraries, subsidize field trips, repair playground equipment, and fulfill teachers' wish lists. PTO sponsored Book Fairs, Ice Cream Socials, and Family BINGO continue to be the favorite evenings for many.

Coventry Grammar School; Marybeth Moyer, Principal



At the Coventry Grammar School we pride ourselves in fostering a welcoming and positive learning community. The teachers take pride in developing classroom atmospheres that build the foundational skills necessary for early learners. During the 2014-2015 school year our mission was to ensure that our students were given the strategies and support to fully maximize their potential through reading, writing and math instruction. Our focus in writing was supported through the partnership with Columbia University, Teachers College Reading & Writing Project. A staff developer worked with the teachers throughout the year to develop and strengthen the instructional components of Writer's Workshop. The year-end results indicated that our students made significant gains in writing! With ongoing professional development in math instruction throughout the year, the staff actively researched and developed interactive units that aligned with the Connecticut Core Standards. Teachers effectively shared these strategies and tools within their newly defined instructional blocks with strong and unified results. Our school's advocacy of early intervention was evident in each grade level as teachers and support staff provided instructional intervention or enrichment opportunities for all students, administered grade-level assessments and implemented progress monitoring practices. The infusion of technology through the use of interactive boards, sets of classroom iPads and a re-designed computer lab supported digital learning, research and the expansion of independent learning at every grade level! Our highly supportive PTO were strong partners in the planning of activities and opportunities for families within classrooms and in the school community. At the close of the school year, the Coventry Grammar School community celebrated their hard work and dedication to the value of the arts through the Annual Art's Festival as well as to our student's health and wellness through a school-wide field day event that was staffed by teachers and over 80 volunteers!

Facilities and Business; Dennis Stanavage, Director of Physical Plant and Facilities and Robert Carroll, Business Manager



The Business Office began the implementation of the VeriTime® Time and Attendance Management system. The pilot program converted the district secretarial staff from paper-based timesheets to an online electronic timesheet. In the future, the system will be expanded to cover all hourly school staff. VeriTime® was designed specifically for K-12 school districts. The application assists the district by improving accuracy and reduces labor costs through electronic time capture and management of employee classifications and labor contracts. The Business Office continues its efforts to digitize records in order to reduce paperwork. Newly hired employee's now submit forms, such as Form W-4, I-9, Direct Deposit and emergency contact information electronically. In the payroll department, we converted 99% of the staff to Direct Deposit and eliminated the paper direct deposit receipts in favor of a password protected email version. The Business Office also assisted in the successful application for, and the financial oversight of, several new grants awarded by the State Department of Education, including the Assessment Reduction grant, the Arts in Education grant, and the Connecticut Core Standards Professional Learning grant.



The Facilities Department took a lead role in the planning and installation of solar array panels at each of our four schools, as well as the Coventry Academy. The panels were installed in the fall and became fully operational at the end of April. During May and June, the five systems generated over 110,000 kWh, saving the district roughly \$11,000. It is estimated that over a 20 year period the district will have avoided over \$1.3M in electricity costs.

Educational Technology Department; Cathie Drury, Director.



During the 2014-2015 school year, the Coventry Public Schools Educational Technology Department continued to support and enhance student learning and achievement. With regards to computer workstations, we worked to migrate all PCs to Windows 8.1 operating system to ensure continued access to updated curricular resources. We also continued to work on enhancing our network infrastructure, which included upgrades that helped to increase network connection speeds and expanding the wireless capability at the schools to help support the expansion of the iPad initiative. This past year, tenth and eleventh graders were provided iPads for use in the classroom and to support their work. iPads have also been utilized at the K-5 level to support literacy and enhance learning. This year, we became a Google Apps for Education district, which provides access to a wide array of digital resources, complementing iPad integration and fostering a collaborative learning environment. The Educational Technology department worked to support this through providing targeted professional development and coaching. Members of the District Technology Team also developed a three year technology plan for the district, providing the roadmap of where we are moving for technology integration in the district. This includes aligning our curriculum with 21st century skills and technology competencies, as well as leveraging technology in a way that helps us collect and analyze data to ensure overall academic growth for all children. In addition, we also implemented Infosnap, an online registration process for parents and students. Infosnap works with PowerSchool and helps us to ensure our demographic information is accurate and updated. We also helped enhance security in our buildings through implementing a new door lock and Visitor Express system. Visitors to the schools who check in at the main office provide identification, are checked against a database, and provided time-expiring visitor ID badges, ensuring greater safety to all school buildings. We are very excited at the progress we have made thus far with regards to technology and look forward to continuing to expand our offerings and resources to help best serve the needs of the Coventry Public Schools learning community.

Department of Teaching and Learning; Michele Mullaly, Director



The focus of the Department of Teaching and Learning is on the development of an outstanding educational program to support all Coventry students in reaching high levels of achievement and in acquiring the knowledge and skills that will prepare them for life, learning, and work in the 21st century. We are proud of our students' many achievements, the instruction provided by our teachers, and the wide-breadth of educational programs and opportunities offered in our schools. Through the collaborative efforts of parents, students, schools, and the community, we have fostered an exemplary learning community which supports innovation and is committed to challenging all learners. In the 2014-2015 school year we continued the implementation of the Connecticut Core Standards into teaching and learning and the alignment of instruction and assessment practices to the standards. We continued to evaluate and revise our curriculum, particularly in the areas of mathematics, art, and music, utilizing Larry Ainsworth's Rigorous Curriculum Design Model which is constructed to connect standards, instruction, and assessment in unit design to promote the acquisition of 21st century skills and prepare students to be career and college-ready upon graduation. As our school system designs curriculum and instruction to promote continued high achievement especially in the core areas of literacy, mathematics, and science, we also identified the integration of 21st century skills into teaching and learning across the grade levels and in all subject areas as an area of focus in 2014-2015. To support achievement of these goals, we coordinated our professional development program to align to them, utilized them in developing our instructional budget proposal, aligned our teacher evaluation goals to them, and designed programs and initiatives in support of them. With the support of a Connecticut State Department of Education grant, we undertook a system-wide review of our assessments and assessment practices in order to make recommendations to modify, reduce, replace, or augment assessments. We developed a finalized set of recommendations and an action plan and will be implementing recommendations in the 2015-2016 school year. We continue to offer our students welcome and nurturing classroom environments in which our teachers encourage students to problem solve, think critically, collaborate with others, and utilize technology to research, create, and present meaningful student work for real-world audiences. We have high expectations for all students and strive to support positive school climates that engage all learners and prepare them for life, learning, and work in the 21st century!