



# EDUCATION



## David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools



The Board is also responsible for the ongoing evaluation of the school program against 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 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](http://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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 2013-14 Noteworthy Accomplishments**

#### **Coventry High School; Michele Mullaly, Principal**



During the 2013-2014 school year at Coventry High School (CHS) a variety of initiatives and programs helped support student learning and achievement. A primary endeavor was the continued implementation of the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) curriculum in math and English Language Arts as well as the development and alignment of performance based assessments to support student learning. In addition, faculty developed school-wide rubrics for Coventry High School's recently adopted 21st Century Academic, Social, and Civic Expectations and have begun to use those in instruction and for assessment. These rubrics will guide teaching and learning, ensuring our students develop the knowledge and skills to be college and career ready upon graduation. The expansion of our academic program with the addition of Human Immunity and Disease, AP World History, an additional ECE Spanish, AP Computer Science, Entrepreneurship, and Environmental Building Design supports the development of our students 21st century skills as well. We continued to develop our partnerships with area colleges and universities last year, collaborating with the University of Connecticut NEAG School of Education to participate in its IDEA grant to support the school in implementing the iPad initiative. We expanded our collaboration with Eastern Connecticut State University to provide more college intern support for our students and their learning. The one-to-one iPad initiative for all tenth graders allowed 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. Coventry students excelled in the arts last year as well. The Coventry High School band represented the high school and community in the Washington D. C. Memorial Day Parade and performed "Black Rainbow," a piece commissioned and composed for CHS. 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 393 credits at the University of Connecticut, and through the College Pathway Partnership students earned 389 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 8<sup>th</sup> in the state. This recognition provides evidence of the processes and initiatives that have led to high student achievement at Coventry High School.

**Capt. Nathan Hale School;** Dena DeJulius, Principal



The Capt. Nathan Hale School (CNH) prides itself with promoting a positive school culture that fosters individual interests and abilities. Many accomplishments took place during the 2013-2014 school year from curricular advancements to fostering our positive school climate. CNH English Language Arts and mathematics curricula work has focused on developing and refining all units of instruction including performance tasks in which students work with technology to develop a final product that demonstrates proficiency in the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS). These benchmarks are designed to monitor progress in specific reading, writing, and math strands as defined in the CCS. The science department created newly aligned comprehensive science assessments for grades 6, 7, 8 that will be utilized to gather data about areas/topics needing additional instruction as well as areas of strength for our students. The 2014-2015 school year will introduce a grade 7 Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) class that will be taught as part of our Related Arts quarterly rotation. Our school-wide Positive Behavioral & Intervention Support System known as SHINE began its second year of implementation and will continue next year with some modifications. Utilizing the CNH SHINE theme, 87% of the student enrollment has been individually recognized at least one time for their personal commitment to the core values identified in the behavior matrix of SHINE. Similarly, 98% of the student enrollment has been recognized with school-wide positive behavioral supports such as the monthly school-wide enrichment block and the quarterly pep rally for their commitment to the core values identified in the behavior matrix of SHINE. In April we held a school-wide Career Day which featured 41 presenters from diverse backgrounds. Students were able to attend 11 different career presentations throughout the day. Ongoing and differentiated learning opportunities have been available for all staff through staff development days, which covered many topics including individual teacher goals as they pertain to the new teacher evaluation instrument, utilizing digital resources to support student learning through teacher training on use of iPads, which has been ongoing specifically with our Social Studies and Science (STEM class) departments. The use of Edmodo, Google docs, SMART Notebook, and Easy Bib continue to be integrated in many classrooms 6-8. CNH participated in several collaborative partnerships with local universities, such as the University of Connecticut, University of Hartford Hartt School of Music, and Eastern Connecticut State University, to support student teacher internships and student teacher placements.

**George H. Robertson School;** Beth Giller, Principal



Meeting the social, emotional, behavioral and academic needs of all of our students is the priority at the George Hersey Robertson School (GHR). In 2013-2014, we continued our behavioral support, Spike CARES program (Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control) to promote positive behavior. Two assemblies this year focused on positive behaviors and reinforced strategies for students to self-advocate for their well-being. In addition, faculty, parents and students collaborated on a school mission statement and student motto. Students voted on the motto: CARES rests within me to be the best I can be- With Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control, We can ALL reach our goals! Students had the opportunity to participate in school spirit days throughout the year. Many afterschool activities were offered for GHR students, including, but not limited to, Art in the Afternoon, Homework Club, Expanding Horizons, Multi-Sport, Chess Club, Ski Club, Walking Club and History Club. A number of state, district and school initiatives drove our programming at George H. Robertson School in 2013-2014. In this school year, instruction was based on the newly revised curriculum aligned with Connecticut Core Standards (CCS). Reading, writing, and mathematics took on a new dimension as the focus became depth of teaching and learning. Our priority focus area at GHR was the implementation of Writer's Workshop. Writer's Workshop begins with a mini-lesson in which a writing skill and strategy is explicitly taught. Students then independently practice the strategies for writing they have learned in writing workshop. Rather than focusing on one genre of writing, students developed their written expression in narrative, opinion, and informational writing. A staff developer from Columbia University, Teachers College Reading & Writing Project worked with our staff throughout the year to develop their expertise in the implementation of Witer's Workshop. The use of performance assessments was expanded to engage students in authentic rigorous work aligned with the standards. The purpose is twofold; to inform teachers' instruction to meet the needs of their students and to prepare students for the rigor of the Smarter

Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), the standardized assessment adopted by the state of Connecticut. SBAC, a computerized test assessing reading, writing, listening, and mathematics, was administered to students in grades 3-5 at GHR in the spring. Staff and students at GHR were excited with the opportunity to introduce iPads into instruction. Staff members involved with the Coventry district's Technology Committee shared their learning with colleagues bringing Edmodo, Nearpod, Educreations, and QRcodes into the classroom. Teacher and student collaboration, both imperative as we prepare our students to be college and career ready, increased with the availability of this technology. The GHR PTO continued to be a great support for our learning community. PTO Board members and volunteers worked tirelessly to financially support many areas including field trips, technology, reading incentives, and athletics. Book Fairs, Ice Cream Socials, and Family BINGO night continue to be the favorite evenings for many.

**Coventry Grammar School; Marybeth Moyer, Principal**



At the Coventry Grammar School (CGS) we pride ourselves in fostering an atmosphere of collaboration and community. The teachers take pride in developing classroom communities that build the foundational skills necessary for early learners. During the 2013-2014 school year our mission was to ensure that our students were given the strategies and support to fully maximize their potential through reading and writing instruction. This mission was accomplished with the support of the staff at CGS, as well as through the partnerships that had been forged with our families. The entire teaching staff actively participated in staff development throughout the year that targeted literacy and mathematical instruction through the alignment and development of the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS). 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 administered grade-level assessments, implemented progress monitoring practices and provided instructional intervention or enrichment opportunities for all students. Another priority was to foster our partnership with the Coventry community in our continued effort to address early childhood initiatives and community programming. Our PTO took an active role supporting this partnership by planning activities and opportunities for families to be involved in the 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 development of the students' health and wellness through a school-wide field day event that was staffed by teachers and over 60 parent volunteers!

**Pupil and Staff Support Services; Barbara Trinks, Director**



The Pupil and Staff Support Services (PSSS) Department remains committed to the shared vision and goals established by the Board of Education, the Superintendent and our administrative team. Members of our department support initiatives in each building and throughout the district. Special education and related services staff continue to collaborate with their peers district-wide to allow each student to make measurable progress across all areas of development. The specific strategies we use are defined by the varied needs of our students and their families. A continued focus on program development and refinement allows our department to meet the identified needs of our students from preschool through age 21. At the preschool level, participation by PSSS staff allowed the Preschool Feasibility Committee to produce a detailed report of needs. Across the district, our Board Certified Behavior Analyst has allowed us to increase our use of appropriate techniques to support all students, including students with autism. High school programming this year focused on students requiring instruction within an alternative setting, allowing eight students to obtain their high school diploma and eleven students to continue to make good progress toward graduation. In addition to the Transition Planning done with all high school students with disabilities, our ABLE 18-21 Program provided daily community based programming for six students aged 18-21. Additionally, collaboration with our redesigned Technology Department has allowed the PSSS Department to increase staff and student use of both instructional and assistive technology tools. As in the past, beyond these key initiatives, the PSSS staff support the learning communities in each building through Safe School Climate initiatives. The members of the PSSS Department, including special education teachers, related services staff, our Challenge and Enrichment Teacher, school counselors, nurses, para-educators, and clerical and other support staff, remain a resource across the district, supporting improved outcomes district-wide for all students.

**Facilities and Business;** Paul Noel, Director of Physical Plant and Facilities and Robert Carroll, Business Manager



The Facilities Department has taken a lead role in identifying and implementing security enhancements in the schools in an effort to make them safer and more secure places to teach, learn and participate in community activities. Through a grant, we installed new classroom locks throughout the district with the capability of locking from inside the classroom and installed new exterior doors at select locations to enhance safety. Together with town agencies, we conducted a comprehensive assessment of all district schools using the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities NCEF Safe School Facilities Checklist, a document created by nationally recognized school facility and safety experts. We also invited our risk management team from our insurance carrier, CIRMA, to do an assessment of our facilities. This assessment went beyond infrastructure and is helping us find direction regarding operations, staff training and support as we adapt to the changing social environment. We changed all exterior building and parking lot lighting to LED. We held our high school graduation ceremony at the newly lighted Larry A. Pietrantonio Athletic Field Complex. We installed supplemental emergency lighting in the high school to address generator lag concerns and began providing custodial services to town buildings. The Facilities Department participated in an Office of Civil Rights (OCR) survey, including the development of a corresponding Voluntary Corrective Action Plan (VCAP) to correct identified deficiencies. In addition, several small renovations took place to better align the buildings with the district's changing needs. Among the modifications were the development of new computer rooms to facilitate the commitment to technology in the schools.



The Business Office implemented the Aesop® Substitute Placement & Absence Management system for all district employees. Aesop® services PK-12 school districts across the country. The application allows staff members to record an absence via numerous electronic access points and the system automatically calls and schedules substitutes when required. The Business Office assisted the district's Technology Department in the successful application for, and the financial oversight of, a \$242,000 grant awarded by the State Department of Education for Technology improvements related to the Connecticut Core Standards initiative. A portion of the funds awarded supported further development of the tablet initiative, which included expanding the Wi-Fi network to the G.H. Robertson and Coventry Grammar Schools. The district was also fortunate to receive a grant award from the State of Connecticut for security improvements at all of our schools. Exterior classroom doors at the G. H. Robertson School were replaced, and new classroom door locks were installed at each school.

**Educational Technology Department;** Carla Kennedy, Director



During the 2013-2014 school year, the Coventry Public Schools Educational Technology Department supported a variety of initiatives and programs to enhance student learning and achievement. A primary endeavor was to examine the technology infrastructure for the purpose of designing a robust network architecture to uphold the mission of the district. By creating a detailed inventory of district assets and monitoring network traffic, the department made recommendations to perform critical system upgrades, gain operational efficiencies and enhancements to move the district towards further cost savings, and feature upgrades for our security and telephone systems. The detailed inventory provided necessary information needed to bring all current teacher computers to a level that can be used for the next three years, with no fear that the operating system will reach the end-of-life. All computer hardware purchases in district will now target a 3-5 year replacement program. The district utilizes the model of rotating the inventory every three years to keep all labs current. The second endeavor of the Educational Technology department was to decide on a professional development model for enhancing technology integration utilizing the iPads in our classrooms. The Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition (SAMR) model offers a method of showing how computer technology might impact teaching and learning. It also shows a progression that adopters of educational technology often follow as they progress through teaching and learning with technology. As one moves along the continuum, computer technology becomes more important in the classrooms. By working with key members in the district, we developed presentations to highlight our work of advancing programs and practices for students to use technology to acquire skills, collaborate, think critically, and problem solve creatively utilizing iPads. Included in this movement is our collaboration with the University of Connecticut. By collaborating with Dr. Jae-Eun Joo, Associate Professor in Residence, Director of Neag Online Programs and UConn Senior Mr. Jake Sippel, a technology and communications major, we worked closely together to develop summer training sessions to ensure our staff had several professional development opportunities to be prepared to implement iPads into their classrooms. The department also supported the district-wide Connecticut Core Standards initiative and building 21st century skills by

implementing a Student IT Assistant program at Coventry High School. The program provides authentic applications of learning to a real-world audience. We extended this opportunity to ten Student IT Assistants throughout the year. In addition, three Coventry High School seniors proudly shared their IT Help Desk experiences at the Connecticut Education Network Member Conference at the Connecticut Convention Center in May. Experts in the field were pleased to hear about these exceptional learning experiences. In addition, the district applied for and received State of Connecticut grant funding to assist in acquiring additional technology resources to prepare our schools for the national computerized, Smarter Balanced Assessment. This enabled the team to set up additional computer labs and complete the installation of wireless access district-wide. We connected with families in multiple ways, including creating an anonymous technology tip line on our district home-page that provides the community with a forum to express informal feedback regarding our initiatives and provide evidence of the effectiveness of programs and strategies. In addition, the department supported families by collaborating with administration to implement parent and student iPad workshops during summer sessions and Open Houses. We also supported families with children in grades 1-6 and new families to the district with orientation workshops to successfully navigate our student information system, PowerSchool. The members of the Educational Technology department continue to serve as a resource across the district to staff, students, and parents.

