

## **Willard SAC Meeting Notes for November 7, 2016 (Approved)**

**Present:** Liz Berk, Pat Fernandes, Katie Kerr, Kate Mullen, Rebecca Comjean, Carolyn Ferraioli, Anne Kilroy, and Rachael Morris.

**Absent:** Rudd Coffey

Approved minutes from October 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Liz Berk shared an idea about Screen time. There was a viewing of the movie *Screenagers* at CCHS. Discussion of the issue of screen time has been going on in the community. Liz shared that a few years back the whole district encouraged families to go TV free for a week. She thought that possibly the district could try to encourage a technology free day or period of time.

### **Classroom News:**

#### **Kindergarten** (presented by Rachael Morris)

- \* working on letter G
- \* had a super Halloween costume parade
- \* Native American unit beginning
- \* continuing to enjoy Fall and fall themed projects

#### **First Grade** (presented by Rachael Morris)

- \* Weather –began new updated FOSS Science unit on Weather
- \* Had a fun time at Halloween – all four First Grade classrooms mix up their classes and each group of children visits each of the four rooms where there is a different activity
- \* lots and lots of Reading – reading groups are going well and students are working hard
- \* learning about long vowel sounds and reviewing short vowels
- \* writing Small Moment stories

#### **Second Grade** (presented by Rachael Morris)

- \* Beginning new FOSS Science unit – Pebbles, Sand and Silt
- \* learning about Long Ago – Tuesday November 8<sup>th</sup> is Old Fashioned School Day students are invited to dress up like Long Ago and students will sit in desks, rise to speak and play old fashioned recess games Also, learning about the Alcott family getting ready for Orchard House field Trip week of November 14<sup>th</sup>
- \* Writing Small Moment Stories

#### **Grade 3** (presented by Katie Kerr)

The students just completed the unit 2 Math number stories. So far, they seem to be doing well and are very engaged with the EM4 curriculum. New unit- addition and subtraction patterns and rules

Science-*Water and Climate*. The students love the hands-on experiments and have been keeping and recording data in their science journals. The most recent experiment looked at water on a slope.

In Social Studies- Wampanoag Unit. Students enjoyed a visit from Black Snake Woman. She will be coming back next week as well.

Writing- Students are currently focusing on expository writing and elaboration/adding relevant detail. Students are doing well. Students will generate a final expository piece on the Wampanoags.

Reading- Students are placed in leveled reading groups and each group is reading different books (some are reading historical fictions, some realistic fiction). Next students will participate in close reading with three different picture books about water (which tie in nicely with our science unit).

#### **Grade 4** (presented by Katie Kerr)

The turtles arrived at the beginning of October and have been the talk of every 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom! They are certainly very cute- just about the size of a Snapple cap, if you hadn't heard! Students will vote on names and start turtle team jobs

**Science- field trip to Punkatasset Trail** in Concord. Each class will take a walk with Dr. Windmiller, the scientist who organizes the Blanding's Turtle project. Students will learn more about the turtle's natural habitat.

In **Math**, students have begun unit 2- multiplication and geometry.

**Writing** - Gregory Mone told 4<sup>th</sup> graders all about the steps he takes as a professional writer. Later, he visited classrooms. He asked students to help to edit one of the stories he had written when he was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade! He provided a lot of insight into the many steps of editing and revising written work.

**SCIENCE** – The current unit in 4<sup>th</sup> grade is Soil and Weathering. Students will be looking closely at soil and experimenting with weathering-both physical and chemical weathering. Students used white vinegar to simulate acid rain on four different rock samples.

**Reading** - In Reading, students in one class read *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*. To celebrate the end of the book, each reading group took on a fun end-of-book project and presented to the rest of the class. They had designer t-shirts, character interviews, and postcards from the story characters

#### **Grade 5** (presented by Katie Kerr)

Math- Unit 2- powers of 10, standard multiplication algorithm, now working on addition and subtraction with fractions and mixed numbers.

Writing- continuing with Brain Frames, how to take notes and decode text structure

As part of the Willard Authors' Fest, 5<sup>th</sup> grades participated in a presentation by author Mitlai Perkins. Her book, *Ricksaw Girl*, is being made into a movie.

Science- Students are working on the unit, Earth and the Sun- Working as scientists, students spent time outside in order to observe how their shadows change during the day.

Reading- continuing with Close Reading strategies

One classroom participated in a Global Read Aloud- reading a book, *PAX* by Sarah Pennypacker. They used technology to share their thoughts with readers around the world.

### **Art – Kristin Saunders** (presented by Kate Mullen)

Kindergartners, first and second graders are finishing up collage and moving on to paper sculptures.

Third, fourth and fifth graders are finishing up collage and then beginning painting-first with watercolors and then tempera paints.

All grade 5 work stays at school for the Art Retrospective. Other grade levels will be bringing collage portfolios home soon if they haven't already

### **Physical Education – Mike Germond** (presented by Kate Mullen)

In PE, Grade 3-5 students are finishing up fitness testing until Nov. 7th. Grades 4 and 5 will run the mile, and grade 3 will run the ½-mile. These students will then be moving onto a 3-week soccer unit.

Grades K-2 are in the midst of a 3-week introductory golf unit called the First Tee using equipment donated by Nashawtuc Country Club. Grade K- 2 students will take a one week break from this unit on Halloween week to play some chasing and fleeing games and resume golf the following week.

### **Music – Charlyn Bethell** (presented by Kate Mullen)

Bob Dylan, the great folksinger, protest singer, and poet is our composer of the month for November. He was just awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Students will be singing: Blowin' in the Wind and hearing Bob Dylan's music.

Kindergarten classes will be singing songs about food and playing drums. They will be hearing music by John Phillip Sousa and learning about tubas. They are also finishing Peter and the Wolf.

First Grade students will be learning to read rhythms with one or two sounds in a beat. They will be remembering songs about food and playing drums. They will also be working on the musical play, The Little Red Hen.

Second Graders have now learned three notes: So, Mi, and La. They will be singing, reading and writing music using those notes. They are getting ready to learn a new rhythm that has 4 sounds in one beat!

Third Graders should be starting recorders any day now! They will be doing a song from Afghanistan. The dance for this month is called Topsy.

Fourth Graders are learning a syncopated rhythm. They will be doing partner songs: Mango Walk and Sweet Potatoes and the round, COFFEE. They will dance to Zemir Atik.

Fifth Graders will be learning about chords in music in preparation for learning 12-bar blues. They are learning about British rock n roll bands, singing some rounds, and sight-singing some tunes. They will be dancing to Joe Clark Mixer.

### **Library – Erica Josselyn** (presented by Kate Mullen)

This month in library classes...

Kindergarteners are continuing to practice their listening skills and learn about fiction and nonfiction books.

First graders are learning about call numbers and library organization.

Second graders are starting a unit on parts of a book.

Third graders are learning about classification and nonfiction organization. (Yes, we still teach Dewey Decimals in library class.)

Fourth graders are finishing up their unit on Digital Citizenship. In this unit, they are learning about how to keep private information safe online, online manners, copyright issues, and how to respond to cyber bullies.

Fifth graders are working on two projects. They are well underway with their MCBA reading challenge. They have also completed their campaigns for library president. They will be filming short persuasive videos this month. Third, fourth and fifth graders will watch the videos and vote for this year's library president.

### **Willard News** –(presented by Pat Fernandes)

\* Pat shared information about Math Night for Parents. During this evening presentation, Laurie Penney shared all sorts of information about EM4: why the district moved to EM4 and the benefits and characteristics of the program. This event was very well attended with 52 parents attending.

\* November's Principals Coffee was also devoted to Math and the new EM4 curriculum about 10 parents attended.

\* Special Education Information Night for Willard Parents

Pat and the Willard SPED Team tried a new format this year deciding to hold the evening as a separate event from Back to School Night. This idea was that parents could come to Back to School Night and be able to attend the General Session in addition to the child's teacher's presentation. This event was jointly presented with SEPAC. The turnout was rather small with about 12 people in attendance. At the end of the presentation, parents had the opportunity to submit questions on an index card. Various members of the team responded to the questions.

\* Mindfulness Evening

This event was funded by PTG. It provided an opportunity for parents to learn a bit more about the mindfulness being done by the Willard School Community such as Mindful Mondays. Willard parent and former Willard SAC Member Kate Hennighausen initiated the idea for this event during a Willard SAC Meeting last year. Pat encouraged Kate to approach the PTG about the idea. Both Kate and Julee Vitello worked together to identify a speaker and coordinate the event.

\* Evacuation Drill

In keeping with standard practice, parents and students were not notified ahead of time about this event – in order to closely simulate a real event. Once the Evacuation Drill was announced, eleven buses brought students to Sanborn. Pat praised how well students responded to the Evacuation protocol. The entire drill was executed quite well by students and staff. Officer Scott was pleased with the drill as well.

\* Halloween

Pat shared that the Kindergarten parade is a fun tradition at Willard. Several lower grade classrooms also celebrated with craft activities.

\* Parent Teacher Conference Day was a very busy day at Willard. Feedback was positive.

\* Superintendent Search

The search begins in earnest this month. There are several opportunities for staff and community members to provide input.

#### \* Budget Planning

The FY '18 Budget includes funding for a K-5 Spanish program. For several years, parents have expressed interest in a foreign language program. A few years ago a district committee researched the idea and the research shows many advantages to having elementary school children learn a foreign language. Currently the Elementary Steering Committee is investigating how it will be implemented into the K-5 schedule.

#### \* Calendar

Calendar committee is meeting to try to come up with calendars for the next two years, if possible. Due to contract changes, it is now possible to start school before Labor Day. One difference in the 2017-2018 calendar that is being discussed will have the Friday before Labor Day as a vacation day. The hope is that the Calendar Committee will make a recommendation to the School Committee very soon, so that the School Committee might be able to vote in December on the 2017-2018 school calendar.

#### \* Hour of Code

Pat shared that the district is considering participating in the Hour of Code national initiative during the week of December 5<sup>th</sup>. Genoveva Matheus did a staff presentation and helped staff see that it was quite doable and not overwhelming to participate. BeeBots were used in Kindergarten last year. BeeBots are an example of a task that requires coding. Willard is exploring this idea as a faculty and trying to figure out how it will work at Willard. The faculty will participate in a survey offering input and feedback about participation options.

#### \* Review of School Improvement Plan

One of SAC's main goals is to develop the School Improvement Plan for the next year. SAC also monitors how the current School Improvement Plan is being implemented in the current year.

Pat initiated a review of Goal 1 of the School Improvement Plan.

#### Goal #1 is Language Arts

Pat shared that one way we meet this goal is to have Progress Meetings where teachers meet to discuss student progress. This year, due to early release Tuesdays, teachers meet on Tuesday afternoons for 2 hours each quarter.

Specific achievement levels of students are discussed and children who are struggling are identified so that they can be provided with intervention support through RTI. RTI helps provide children with short-term support. Literacy RTI happens in addition to regular classroom reading instruction. The lower grades have multiple levels of support – research shows the earlier you intervene the better chance of success. Staff members monitor the progress of all students using common assessments. The progress of students receiving RTI is monitored with a variety of assessments tools. The K-5 writing

program is the Lucy Calkins Writing Program. Teachers have the option to supplement using materials from the Empowering Writers Program.

Most teachers participated in a site-based training in the Lucy Calkins program when the program was first implemented. The LA Specialist supports staff, especially new staff, in the implementation of the writing program. Close Reading training has also been provided to teachers and all teachers have had many opportunities to become comfortable with Close Reading

Pat presented the results of the 2016 PARCC/MCAS testing at Willard.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rachael Morris