

Willard SAC Meeting Minutes for December 7, 2015
(Prepared by Anne Kilroy)

Present: Pat Fernandes, Jeanne Connolly, Kate Mullen, Rebecca Comjean, Kate Hennighausen, Liz Berk, Katie Kerr and Anne Kilroy

Absent: Rudd Coffey

Classroom News:

Kindergarten (presented by Jeanne Connolly): In literacy, the students are continuing to work on letter sound correspondence using Telian and writing independently and completing sentence starters. In addition, they are working on recalling the beginning, middle, and end of books and identifying the author, illustrator, and main characters. In math, using the EM4 spiral curriculum, the students are working on decomposing numbers, identifying numbers, and counting with 1:1 correspondence. In health education, some classes are beginning the family unit; who is in your family, family traditions, and what your family likes to do together. Open Circle has included how to speak up, how to cooperate, negotiate, and turn taking. In science, the students are learning about the transition from fall to winter by observation of the Willard School tree and some classes are observing hermit crabs and learning about them using non-fiction books.

First Grade (presented by Jeanne Connolly): In literacy, the students are learning and practicing the short and long vowel sounds. They have finished the first round of narrative writing and have begun persuasive writing, beginning with encouraging Willard students to eat healthy snacks/lunches. They have almost finished learning all lower case letters. First grade is still working through their first math swap, with number sense and problem solving with addition and subtraction. In science, the topic is weather including learning about wind, clouds, water cycle, and temperature. Open Circle has covered self-advocacy, compliments, cooperation and gratitude. Special Projects have included thankfulness feathers, letters to veterans, family traditions, and one class made snowmen decorations for a nursing home.

Second Grade (presented by Jeanne Connolly): In math, second graders are working on finding patterns in skip counting, using addition strategies to solve subtraction problems, comparing 2 and 3 digit numbers using place value, and addition and subtraction facts 0-20. In social studies, they are learning about the Alcott and Duggan families who lived in Concord long ago. The science unit is Pebbles, Sand and Silt. Students sifted sedimentary rocks to understand composition according to size; separated sand and water into sand and silt; and are labeling and discussing the uses of various sized rocks; and observing the properties of minerals. In reading, students are learning about fiction, nonfiction, and plays and are developing comprehension and fluency. In writing, students are working on small moment personal narratives; practicing strategies to write beginnings that hook the reader; developing a strong sequence of events in the middle that include some description and dialogue; and always using CHIPS conventions. Health education includes Open Circle topics and Mindfulness, with gratitude and generosity themes.

Third Grade (presented by Katie Kerr): In reading, students are reading short novels, books that tie in with study of the Wampanoags, or using picture books for closer reading. In writing, students are finishing up an expository writing unit and will be writing final expository essays soon. In math, students are working on data analysis, specifically bar graphs, line plots, and pictographs. In science, three classes are completing astronomy units and Janice Shear's class is piloting the new Water and Climate unit. In social studies, students have been studying about the daily lives of the Wampanoags, with a focus on how the basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, and transportation) are met and on the importance of the land for survival.

Fourth Grade (presented by Katie Kerr): In literacy, fourth grade has recently launched nonfiction and spent an AP day in December developing lessons to address Common Core skills such as working with paired text, point of view, cause and effect and are now implementing those lessons. In math, students are currently in flexible math groups for multiplication and division. All students are split among five classrooms to better target student skills right at their level. Laurie Penney joins the grade 4 team for this unit and it will continue through MLK Day. In social studies, students are finishing up map skill work and will begin work on Ancient China in the next few weeks. The China Poet in Residence, Steven

Ratiner, is to join the classes starting the first week in January. The science unit is extreme weather.

Fifth Grade (presented by Katie Kerr): In math, students finished a multiplication and division unit, are beginning a fraction unit; adding and subtracting decimals with like and unlike denominators. In reading, students are working on close reading, reading short text to figure out an author's purpose and finding key details that support the author's main idea. In writing, classes are finishing a final narrative writing piece, and will be moving on to writing and responding to text. The science unit includes slow and fast changes in weathering, erosion, natural disasters and how they impact the Earth's crust.

Physical Education (presented by Kate Mullen): Third, fourth and fifth grades are just finishing up a 3-week soccer unit and will be starting a 2-week unit on rock climbing activities. Kindergarten, first and second grades are just finishing up a 2-week unit on parachute activities and games and then will be starting a 2-week unit on ball skills.

Library (presented by Kate Mullen): Kindergarten students are discussing the idea of a series and what it means when an author writes more than one book about the same characters. They have recently had holiday readers in to read Thanksgiving stories and Mrs. Fernandes read a story she purchased at the Book Fair for the library. First grade students have completed the unit on Fairy Tales with a fun bingo review game and are moving on to a unit on the Parts of a Book. Second grade students have completed the unit on reference materials and worked on a brief author's study of James Marshall. Third grade students are working on finding fiction and non-fiction in the library. Fourth grade students are continuing the unit on genres, including studying various forms of folklore, including legends, tall tales, mythology, and fables. This week, students are writing their own myths in class. Fifth graders are working on their Library President presentations on Google slides. Many students will be ready in the next week to present their chosen characters to the class and should be ready to vote for the Library President in the next few weeks.

Music (presented by Kate Mullen): Shared music this month for all grades is holiday music that will include selections from the Nutcracker and Sleigh Ride.

Kindergarten students are being introduced to the music of the Canadian performer and composer, Raffi. All classes enjoyed the play “Tikki Tikki Tembo”. First grades students are working on the play, “The Little Red Hen” and learning quarter notes and eighth notes. They are beginning to learn about rests in music. Second graders are working on the notes so, la, and mi and learning sixteenth notes as 4 sounds in one beat. Third graders are learning to play their recorders. Fourth graders are singing rounds and are trying to play some of the songs on recorders. Fifth graders are finishing learning about rock n roll. The fifth grade chorus is getting ready for the concert on Jan. 13th (7 pm) at the Fenn School for the town-wide Martin Luther King celebration.

Art (presented by Kate Mullen): Kindergarteners are working on drawing based on observation and imagination as well as narratives about their lives. First grade students are working on drawings from observation, imagination, and narratives about their lives as well as pop out drawings and zigzag books. Second grade students are working on a clay unit where the students make drawings of small moments and then create and glaze a clay relief tile of the moment. Third grade students are working with printmaking/clay by making stamps out of cardboard and styrofoam and then pressing them into clay to make tiles, followed by glazing. Fourth grade students are glazing clay city sculptures and then moving on to a painting unit. Fifth grade students are completing paintings that focus on color mixing, composition, and point of view that address a variety of topics.

Principal’s Report (presented by Pat Fernandes):

Willard News: This focus of month’s Mindfulness is generosity. The Mindful Monday message is led by a fifth grade student on Monday mornings. Many students and teachers participated in the annual Thankfulness writing initiative. Student writing is displayed on bulletin boards across from the gym and auditorium. Many students expressed thanks for veterans and military. A Veteran’s Assembly recently took place where students researched family members as far back as WW1 up to

those currently serving and brought photos to school for the assembly and posted them in the front foyer. Over the course of the year, all grade level teachers will participate in district discussions led by Science Curriculum Specialist and Director of Teaching and Learning. As part of this experience, teacher will discuss the Next Generation Science Standards and will evaluate programs and materials that meet these standards. The fifth grade chorus are busy preparing for the MLK Day concert.

District News: Pat reminded SAC members that the district is involved in a year long pilot of Everyday Math 4. At Willard, Laurie Penney, Willard Math Specialist, is coordinating the EM4 Pilot in kindergarten, second grade and fifth grade. Teachers have provided feedback about the program through their participation in one survey with a second survey due in February. A decision is to be made in February so that training can be organized and plans finalized. Kate Mullen reported on the Pilot in second grade. There are interesting activities and games for students, starting with large numbers making it challenging for students. Students appear to be more confident in handling large numbers and recognize more interesting ways to handle math. Katie Kerr reported on the Pilot in fifth grade. She stated that students are working with fractions, which requires critical thinking and explanation of their thinking. Every unit has a two-day open response component.

The Concord Public School Calendar has been finalized for 2016/2017 and a copy was circulated. The first day of school is August 31st, 2016 and the last day (provided no snow days) is June 13th 2017. The religious holidays have been removed from the calendar based on survey results.

The Concord Public School Committee is launching a wide search for a new Superintendent, starting January 2016.

2015 PARCC Presentation: Results were presented and discussed. Willard students achieved proficiency levels significantly above the state average on both the ELA and Math PARCC at each of the tested grade levels (3-5). A copy is available on the Willard website.

Adjournment:

The December meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM. The next Willard SAC meeting will be January 11 at 6:00 p.m.