

HOPKINTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Harold Martin School (PK-3) • Maple Street School (4-6)

Principal

Bill Carozza, wcarozza@hopkintonschools.org

Assistant Principal

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September 29, 2016

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

The big picture goal for the year is "Unify". Our target is to unify curriculum, instruction, assessment, mission and vision throughout our elementary schools. It doesn't mean that everything we do is the same. We aspire to maintain each school's identity and history but we want our approach to PLCs, Data Teams, RTI, Behavior Management, and Special Education to be consistent. Our curriculum also has to become more visible and uniform throughout the grades.

Here are some specific positive developments, some concerns, and a couple of areas we're working on:

Positive Developments

The most positive development thus far has been the new faculty we have brought into the family. We have hired teachers with strong expertise in the classroom, within special education, and also in our unified arts. I am most encouraged by the work of our new Assistant Principal Amy Doyle who brings recent classroom experience, a great work ethic, and a strong set of values to the job. It has been fun for me partnering with such an effective administrator.

Teacher leadership is very important to our success. Last week we had our first PLC Steering Committee which brought together leaders from throughout the elementary grades, fashioned from a similar group we had at HMS. We

also held our first Data Team meetings led by PLCs. It is encouraging to see that our procedures are becoming consistent.

Another hallmark of our change this year has been the development of our Student Support Centers (SSC). Each school has a separate SSC, manned by a trained Instructional Assistant and led by our new Behavior Specialist, Joe Mantano. While Maple Street had a strong functioning SSC for many years, this was a new concept at HMS. It has been embraced by the staff at HMS and both SSCs have allowed our more complex students to process their issues effectively while allowing classrooms to continue with the business of learning.

I've received positive feedback from the faculty about communication partly from our weekly *Sunday Blast* staff newsletter which I publish every Sunday afternoon as well as our consistent staff meetings. In fact, the first staff meeting of the month, on the first Tuesday, begins with both schools together and then the second half of the meeting will feature new and innovative professional development for our IAs organized by Amy Doyle. The two buildings have separate staff meetings on the third Tuesday of the month.

I'm also excited about the development of the arts at MSS. Band and chorus started this week with very strong numbers: 4th grade band has 52, the 5th and 6th grade band is 75, and Chorus is at 60. I attended part of the Chorus rehearsal this morning and I was so impressed with the level of commitment from the students and frankly, how well they are singing already. I know the Performing Arts Club already has a record amount of kids signed up as well.

CONCERNS

I am concerned about the HMS facility, a theme you have heard before. Now that the enrollment projections predict four classrooms per grade for many years, beginning with this year's kindergarten class, we will truly be at full capacity next year, with our math and small group room being turned into a classroom. Our special education space is very cramped now and we continue to have inadequate space for parent meetings with a tiny conference room attached to the library with very little privacy. Our four reading teachers

are still working in a non-ventilated space that was never designed for people but to hold supplies and fuse boxes. The main office is very small and not particularly friendly to visitors and music and art often have to share a room. It is in our nature to be accommodating and thankful for what we have, but even our good intentions may not be good enough for long.

WORKING ON

The "one Principal, one Assistant Principal across two buildings" concept is working but as you might expect, the orchestration of this notion is tricky. Our goal is that each building is covered with an administrator nearly all of the time but there are some logistics we are working through:

- I need to ensure that all meetings that need an administrator are covered appropriately. Thanks to the work of our office managers, this is working fine thus far.
- We want to keep Bill and Amy's time in each building relatively equal.
- Bill and Amy need enough time together to plan and communicate. There are so many nuances to each school given the diversity of faculty, students, and parents, that the administrators must have a handle on the details.

With the advent of my new role, I am also organizing a new Parent Advisory Group (PAG) that will help me understand the concerns, hopes, and dreams of Hopkinton parents for their elementary schools. The group will meet monthly with logistics and details to be worked out soon.

I continue to be honored to work in our school district and certainly challenged by the new role.

Thank you.

Bill Carozza, Principal

HOPKINTON MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL

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Christopher M. Kelley, Principal
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To: Mr. Chamberlin and the Hopkinton School Board
From: Christopher Kelley
Date: October 4, 2016
Re: Principal's Report

The beginning of school is always exciting as the school comes to life again. After a summer working in an empty building, I always look forward to the end of August when fall sports begin and teachers return to the building to check on their classrooms and to prep for the opening of school. I also enjoy our Salute to Seventh Graders. This year's weather was excellent. It's a great opportunity for the administration and seventh grade staff to get to know the students prior to the start of school. It is a wonderful tradition. Our sports programs are well underway and it has been fun to watch our athletes compete this fall. Most exciting has been the addition of our Varsity Football program. Outside of the sports arena you can bet that the music and drama departments are busy planning for this year's musical. The name of the show has not yet been publicized, so stay tuned!

Several Positives:

Over the summer our Director of Facilities, Mr. David Barnard, and the custodial staff were very busy cleaning and prepping the building so it was ready to go for the start of school. Their hard work is greatly appreciated.

We had a very successful opening of school. On the first day with staff, I asked them to participate in a collaborative activity called the Marshmallow Challenge. This was a fun and educational way to reinforce key concepts of practice, collaboration and challenging the process while building the tallest structure possible with the following items:

- 20 – sticks of uncooked spaghetti
- 1 – yard masking tape
- 1 – yard string (scissors for cutting the string)
- 1 – marshmallow

At the conclusion of the activity we spoke about how to work with all students during a collaborative activity so that everyone could be a contributor to the process. I wanted our teachers to be challenged by this process but have fun at the same time. After the activity was completed as a faculty, we answered and discussed several questions that addressed team leadership, inclusiveness, engagement, and celebrating small wins. As our teachers do more with group and collaborative projects in class, I felt it was important to run an activity like this.

To close the first day back with staff, I shared with the faculty an experience that I had this summer that reminded me of the power of words and belief in students' abilities. Over the summer, I was an assistant coach for a travel softball team in Concord. I had a player who really struggled at the plate most of the season. I simply kept telling her that I believed in her and her ability to hit the ball every time she stepped up to the plate. This doesn't sound like much or very interesting. However, after returning from our family vacation in August, I received a hand made thank you note in the mail from this player, which she thanked me for believing in her and for giving her confidence. I reflected on this quite a bit because I thought this was what a coach and teacher should do for every student. If a coach or teacher can't believe in their athletes or students, then what is our purpose? What is the meaning of "why" in what we do for children and teenagers?

I started to think about how I could turn this into a teaching moment for the staff. I started to research videos, specifically TED Talks, which were about the importance of working and believing in kids. I came across a TED Talk that featured Rita Peirson. Rita was an educator for forty years and the title of her presentation was "Every Kid Needs A Champion". In her talk, Ms. Peirson talks about the power of one person's belief in a child's ability and potential. It was a great way



to end the day and to ask the question of the faculty, "Who's champion are they going to be this year?" I took the time to remind the staff about former students who demonstrated grit and perseverance in completing their graduation requirements and earning their diploma. These were students who attended high school for an additional semester of school, students who truly wanted to earn their diploma. I told the staff that if it wasn't for their hard work, their belief in a student's ability and potential, then these students may not have ever felt comfortable enough or driven enough to complete high school. I challenged them to continue being a champion for all children. Ms. Peirson's story is inspirational and thought provoking. I would encourage the School Board to watch the same video.

Things We Are Concerned/Thinking About:

One of the things I am thinking about when planning for next year are the staffing needs for the 2017-2018 school year. As our school continues to experience growth in student population we will need to be thinking about how that will affect our school. For example, having a seventh grade class with eighty-nine students means class sizes are larger. Do we look at moving to having our middle school students rotate through five different Unified Arts classes (music, art, PLTW, wood, family and consumer science) similar to what we have done in the past? This would allow us to have Unified Art class sizes of a more manageable size and for all middle school students to experience each UA twice while in middle school.

An area of concern is connected to the size of our student population in the middle and high school. This year we have 272 students in the high school. Next year we will have 291 students in the high school. This will force us to rethink our current bell schedule that we will need to go back to two high school breaks and two lunches so that we can avoid over crowding in the café during break and lunch. I am concerned about how this will also effect our Academic Advisory period. The Administration is currently collecting data on how the Academic Advisory is being utilized to help with the decision making process.

Items We Are Or Will Be Working On:

I have started to draft a memo that will address the NEASC Visiting Committee Report. The NEASC Visiting Committee Report is a comprehensive report that addresses many educational topics related to our school. The memo will be presented at the School Board meeting in November and will summarize the process, address some of the more important commendations and recommendations, and reflect on how the report impacts me as the Principal of Hopkinton Middle High School.

We have several building goals that we will be working on over the next two years. Included with each goal are action steps. These action steps may be adjusted as time progresses to fit needs that arise during the process. The building goals are:

Goal A: By June of 2018 Hopkinton Middle High School will create school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement for all 21st Century Learning Expectations included in the academic, social and civic competencies.

Objective: By June of 2019, Hopkinton Middle High School staff will have implemented the use of school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement for all 21st Century Learning Expectations included in the academic, social and civic competencies.

Action Steps:

1. Admin. Council will create and design drafts of the analytical rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement for all 21st Century Learning Expectations included in the academic, social and civic competencies. (Examples of rubrics are being reviewed by Admin. Council in preparation to begin the design process)
2. Present the analytical rubrics to the staff for review and collect feedback regarding the rubrics before implementation.
3. Revise the rubrics, as needed, based on faculty feedback.
4. Finalize and approve the analytical rubrics with the staff.

- 5. Implement the rubrics during the 2018-2019 school year.

Goal B: By June of 2018 Hopkinton Middle High School will create a formal process to communicate student achievement of the 21st Century Learning Expectations. (e.g. Report Cards)

Objective: By June of 2019, Hopkinton Middle High School staff will have implemented a formal process to communicate student progress in achieving the 21st Century Learning Expectations.

Action Steps:

1. The Reporting Committee will create a formal process to assess individual student progress in achieving the 21st Century Learning Expectations.
2. Present the process to the staff for review and collect feedback regarding the process presented.
3. Revise the process, as needed, based on faculty feedback.
4. Finalize and approve the process with the staff.
5. Implement the process during the 2018-2019 school year.

Goal C: To ensure best education practices are being utilized in the general classroom to support the goals of the Individualized Education Plan and 504 Plans.

Objective: To increase the independence of those students who are identified and receiving Special Education Services to ensure academic success.

Action Steps:

1. By September 2016 the Administration will meet with the Building Coordinator, the Director of Student Services and the Director of Guidance to discuss how students can become more independent through the use of the accommodations that are written into a student's individualized education plan. (Completed)
2. Train the instructional and teaching staff to support student independence through traditional and nontraditional means that help to support the goals of a student's Individualized Education Plan. (Plan for October faculty meeting with plans for follow up discussions in November)

Goal D: To analyze and review the current grading scale for Hopkinton Middle & High School.

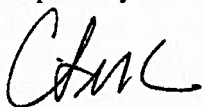
Objective: By the start of the 2018 – 2019 school year, Hopkinton Middle High School staff will have implemented a new grading practice.

Action Steps:

1. Form a Reporting Committee that will meet on a monthly basis to analyze and review our current grading practices. (Committee is formed; planning is underway to set the first meeting)
2. Research alternate approaches to grading.

Finally, each department is working to develop and revise curriculum. The first professional development day of the year was successful and productive. I look forward to the results of this work. This work is essential for our building and District, as it will allow us to know exactly what we want our student to know and able to do.

Respectfully Submitted,



Christopher Kelley
Principal, HMHS