

Core Values

IN FOCUS

Empower. Challenge. Grow.

CONNECTING PRACTICE TO OUR MISSION

Welcome to the inaugural edition of WCSD In Focus. The District is looking forward to using this periodic communication to provide our staff and community members with updates about work happening throughout the District. Strategic Planning continues to drive our decision making; we have our Core Values, Strategies, and Strategic Objectives which we believe will help us achieve our Mission. It is important for

CV5: The collaboration needed for meaningful change is built on honesty, trust and respect.

us to reflect on how the work we do connects to our Strategic Plan. WCSD In Focus will help everyone stay informed and become more aware of these connections. As you will see in the articles below, each can be linked to at least one of our five Core Values, each of which is highlighted in the gray inset box within the article. In the words of Henry Ford: "If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself."

Save-the Date!

The next Parent Workshop is scheduled for

Saturday, April 2.

Look in your email for information on how to sign-up to share your expertise with the community.

GRADE 7 HONORS CRITERIA

Recently, the Grade 7 Honors Program application and criteria for student acceptance were modified to reflect the revised Standards-Based Report Card implemented at the K-6 level. Standards of the revised Elementary Report Card are now aligned with the skills the District has

identified as necessary for students to thrive in a rigorous Honors program. The Grade 7 application includes teacher recommendation(s), via a

teacher rating sheet and application matrix, and a student essay to be completed in class. Application materials will be placed on the District website, and principals and teachers will receive application packets to distribute to their students before the start of the third quarter. Coordinators will make arrangements to meet with Grade 6 teachers to review the application process and answer any questions. Application deadline for students to submit an application to their teacher is April 1, 2016. Application deadline for teachers to submit completed applications to principal/coordinator is May 2, 2016.



EXPLORING TOOLS TO ASSIST OUR PRACTICE

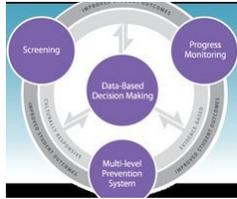
As teachers, we seek creative ways to support our students' learning. We plan differentiated lessons to ensure we are meeting the range of learners we teach. But what if teachers had access to data about each of their students within the first few days of school? A universal screener can assist a teacher with early detection of students who have specific skill deficits. The right tool can also provide guidance in determining which type of support best fits the individual's needs. To support our classroom teachers in this endeavor, the District is currently piloting i-Ready and Star 360. These are two examples of universal screeners for K-12. These adaptive diagnostic tools for reading and mathematics pinpoint student needs down to the sub-skill

CV3: Everyone can realize their potential and when they do, both they and the community thrive.

level and provide ongoing progress monitoring to track whether students are on target to achieve end-of-year goals. Data collected can be used to inform instruction, structure academic intervention services, and drive RtI. Fishkill Elementary School and Wappingers Junior High School are piloting the i-Ready K-12 diagnostic tool. All Fishkill Elementary classroom teachers and Wappingers Junior High School ELA and math teachers received professional development on how to use the i-Ready program. Students have started to use the program, and the next step is to gather feedback from the teachers. Also, Sheafe Road Elementary School and Van Wyck Junior High School are piloting a similar diagnostic tool, STAR 360. (Continued page 2)

EXPLORING TOOLS TO ASSIST OUR PRACTICE (CONT.)

All of the pilot teachers received professional development on best practices and had the opportunity to view reports from both programs. Students are currently taking the initial assessments. Representatives from the participating schools will provide feedback on the pros and cons they have experienced during the pilot for each program. Brief presentations/program updates will be made by school representatives during



scheduled meetings to keep all District administrators abreast of the pilot programs. In the spring, the schools will make a recommendation on which program best meets the needs of the students in the WCSD. This work is happening in tandem to the Data-Based Decision Making conversations taking place with District AIS and RtI Reading teachers from Myers Corners Elementary School along with Mr. Richard Zipp, Mrs. Karen

Smith, and Ms. Jessica Turner. Ultimately, the District, like the teachers, wants to provide teachers the most purposeful tools to allow them to make informed decisions about their students' overall growth. We want to move away from the "life-sentence" of receiving AIS and truly integrate progress monitoring to return students to their classroom learning environment with the skills they need to find success.

A VISION FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

WCSD is looking at how we deliver special education services to our students. Recently, the District welcomed the visiting team from Tri-State Consortium as part of the District's commitment to provide all students access to an appropriate curriculum that provides students "with the competencies and confidence" needed to be "responsible members of the community." Tri-State Consortium is a professional organization comprised of high-achieving public school districts from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, who have a common goal in mind:

CV.2: Embracing diversity in all its forms enriches the human experience.

continuous improvement. A team of teachers and administrators from member districts are invited to be 'critical friends' in a particular area of focus using the standards of the Tri-State model to benchmark a member districts' progress in advancing teaching and learning. The purpose of our recent visit was to help the Tri-State team attain a snapshot of the work that we are presently doing in preparation for the return visit next year. The Tri-State team will provide our District with a report that will be shared with all stakeholders.

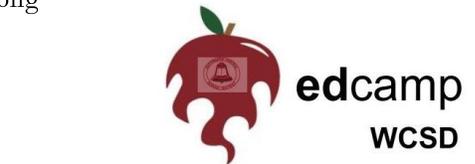
FACILITIES UPDATES

The District is committed to updating areas within the District as both time and resources allow. The Roy C. Ketcham press box project was sent to State Education on 12/9/15. The current State Education review time is 44 weeks. The John Jay dugout replacement is another example of this work. The State Education Facilities Planning Department requires that a handicap accessible path is provided to the bleachers and dugouts to meet the needs of all visitors. The plans have been updated and approved by the State. We have met with the District's Purchasing Department to place the advertising for bidders with a pre-bid date of 2/5/16, and a bid

opened on 2/11/16, with the Board of Education approval of the lowest responsible bidder on February 22, 2016.

Great big thanks to our WFW Custodians for a great job in the painting of the lobby and weight rooms at both John Jay and at Roy C. Ketcham. Special thanks to our Maintenance staff for the installation of the new rubber flooring in the weight room at John Jay. The Grounds Crew assisted with the movement of weights and the installation of poles and basketball hoops.

CV.4: The health and quality of a community are dependent on the responsible contributions of all its members.



EDCAMP IS COMING!

March 11 is set for the return of EdCamp, but what does that mean for you? We plan our instruction to meet the range of learners we teach. Differentiation is well-embedded in our work; yet, how often do we find ourselves reading an educational article or talking to another educator about how professional development opportunities are not differentiated? (e.g. no choice in the topic, no choice in who you work with and no plan for what you will do with the information after the PD) Those who were fortunate to participate in WCSD EdCamp last spring can attest that this is not your average PD. So what can you expect to experience on March 11? Collegial and collaborative conversations focused on what we are doing to make a difference for our students! Our staff has the unique opportunity to facilitate these dynamic conversations as well as contribute to the collaborative sharing of their real-world classroom experiences. What type of preparation is involved in being a facilitator? Your experience and

willingness to keep the conversation focused on the session topic. That's it! Over 600 staff members completed the District EdCamp survey indicating their topics of interest and areas of expertise they can share as a facilitator. The surveys have been reviewed, and the session boards are posted on the EdCamp website. EdCamp is truly a cutting-edge experience in education, and it is happening in our District! We look forward to the insight and forward-thinking to be shared on March 11. Check out the EdCamp site at: <http://tinyurl.com/h3kd6o2>