

Curriculum Matters...

Transformative Work by the Faculty and Students of SAU 21



SCIENCE

As science teachers, we have shared responsibility for teaching reading and writing, as laid out in the **Common Core**. This was the special focus of our meeting on April 5, 2013, the SAU-wide common early release. We shared the effective strategies we currently use when doing direct instruction with reading and/or writing such as annotation, close reading, different note-taking techniques, ways in which students can set up concluding paragraphs in lab write-ups,

interactive notebooks, use of drawings/images, summaries, etc. Science teachers have historically coached for substantive writing using evidence from research, text-based materials and results of laboratory experiments. Additionally, reading strategies that enable students to learn from technical pieces are equally important. Students learn to follow examples given in the form of graphs, tables, diagrams, and also by using the multi-media evidence presented in the form of interactive models, video and podcasts to complete their understanding.

The **Next Generation Science Standards** have now been formalized (<http://www.nextgenscience.org>) and NH Science Teachers are weighing in on them. According to Paul Leather, Deputy Commissioner, “the NH State Board is not taking up the NxG Science Standards just yet”. NECAP Science is slotted to continue indefinitely. Whether it changes will depend on the participating states. As you may be aware, RI has already adopted NxG Science. There will be discussions soon regionally on this issue. “Competencies for Science with the Performance Assessments will look at the current Curriculum Frameworks, the NRC Standards, the NxG Standards, and any others that make sense.”

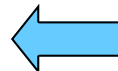
Our science teachers are continuing their work on engaging science students through inquiry and sharing best practices such as engineering challenges and project-based learning. They will continue to focus on the Common Core learning objectives and problem-solving skills. Below is an early analysis of some of the Common goals of these sets of standards.

Intersection of Next Generation Science Standards & Common Core State Standards

SCIENCE
 S1. Ask questions & define Problems
 S3. Plan & carry out investigations
 S4. Analyze & interpret data



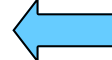
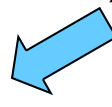
SCIENCE & MATH
 S2. Develop & use models
 S5. Use mathematics & computational thinking
 M5. Model with mathematics



MATH
 M1. Make sense of problems & persevere in solving them
 M6. Attend to precision
 M7. Look for & make use of structure
 M8. Look for & express regularity in repeated reasoning



All Areas
 E2. Build strong content knowledge
 E4. Comprehend as well as critique
 E5. Value evidence
 M2. Reason abstractly & quantitatively
 M3. Construct viable argument & critique reasoning of others
 M5. Use appropriate tools strategically
 S7. Engage in argument from evidence
 S6. Construct explanations & design solutions
 S8. Obtain, evaluate & communicate information



ELA
 E1. Demonstrate independence
 E3. Respond to the varying demands of audience, talk, purpose, & discipline
 E7. Come to understand other perspectives & cultures

Members of the music team have continued to work on finding common ground across SAU 21. Our first step was to find common standards for each grade level that can be assessed district-wide. These standards were selected from the NH State Music Proficiency Standards. At the end of grade 4, we feel that students should be able to:

- Sing in groups, blending vocal timbres, matching dynamic levels, and responding to the cues of a conductor;
- Perform on pitch, in rhythm, with appropriate dynamics and timbre, and maintain a steady tempo;
- Create and arrange short songs and instrumental pieces within specified guidelines;
- Read a variety of rhythmic symbols in a variety of time signatures;
- Use a system (syllables, numbers, or letters) to read simple pitch notation in the treble clef;
- Identify the sounds of different instruments and voices;
- Identify by genre or style aural examples of music from various historical periods and cultures;
- Demonstrate audience behavior appropriate for the context and style of music performed

Our next step will be to develop a common assessment for each of these standards, and as a group assess our students' work. We discovered that one obstacle to overcome is the development of a common rubric for assessing student work, as rubrics vary quite widely from grade to grade, and from school to school. It is our hope that we can find an appropriate balance for both instruction and assessment of these common standards.

In addition, Tony Cyrus recently attended a workshop on the National Core Arts standards, which are being developed by a number of national organizations, including the National Association for Music Education. The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards is still developing and researching these common standards, and is attempting to align them with international standards as well as the Common Core Standards in Math and Language Arts. The Arts Standards, which address dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts, are based on four artistic processes:

- Creating
- Performing/Presenting/Producing
- Responding
- Connecting



While Winnacunnet's music department standards already follow similar lines, it will be interesting to see how we can continue to align standards both across grade levels and between school buildings in order to give all students a common ground and goals to work towards. We will be spending some of our vertical team time in the future on looking at these standards, and how we can best assess students' achievement of the standards.



Art

The Arts Vertical Team is close to completing its curriculum document through the leadership of Jill Berry. Next year Stacy Bellen of Hampton Falls is taking on the leader's role. The curriculum includes the consideration of new standards being developed at the National level and clearly demonstrates the important roles that the arts encourage in our students' overall prowess and determination for research, problem solving, evidence-based decisions, written communications, and the use of mathematics in terms of proportion and scale.



MUSIC

The writing of the new standards continues to progress. A preliminary invitational review was completed in April; NCCAS will be issuing a call for public review of new, substantive portions of the standards on June 30. Interested individuals should visit the coalition's website at nccas.wikispaces.com or the NCCAS Facebook page at facebook.com/NationalCoalitionForCoreArtsStandards to learn how they can participate in the review process, and for other information about the project.



Physical Education teachers in SAU 21 have been focusing on Common Core this year in order for students to have “real world” experiences focusing on literacy and math standards that can be employed throughout students’ physical education experiences. Journaling with their physical education classes is one way that PE teachers at WHS have addressed Common Core. Students keep a journal and use it every day that they have PE class. They record their activity levels, what they have been doing for activity and answer questions pertaining to the unit of study. At the middle school levels we have all been exploring journaling with our students and teaching them how to interpret and read their fitness test results. In the elementary settings, students are using their math skills to calculate how far they have jumped or what their total score is in a partner activity. This can be expanded to include how they have changed or improved over time. Since students are at many different levels of performance, percentage change and charting can be used in communicating these changes to others. There are also classes that follow the Cooperative Learning Model and use literacy and math skills in order to complete tasks in class. In Physical Education classes in SAU 21 we attempt to give students experiences that they will encounter in real life when it comes to Common Core. We also realize the value of students’ setting their fitness goals and tracking their progress over time. The research shows that individuals who set goals and track them over time are more successful in any career.

The team leaders worked closely with team members to help develop a new proposal for the PEP grant which was submitted on April 12th, 2013. This is a highly competitive national grant, but also assists us in reviewing and setting curriculum targets for more effective programming at all of our schools. Our chief area of improvement was targeted on personal fitness monitoring and increasing the capacity of our programs to employ greater opportunities for personal fitness. The use of the **FitnessGram** software would be critical to a k-12 effort and two of our schools are in process to developing their programs with this software. It also provides the ongoing view of fitness and health goal setting and planning to be used with the journaling experiences mentioned above. Technology access in PE will also be a critical component as students need access to the web and writing resources.

Health Educators integrate Common Core into every aspect of their teaching. Students must continually analyze, interpret and synthesize information they gather through their research. Various Health topics within the curriculum have vocabulary that is reinforced to increase understanding. Students also work on expressive language through role-playing and negotiation skills. Math skills are integrated in a variety of ways including analyzing the media reports and looking at various roles such as parenting, career planning, etc.

Physical Education and Health play an important role in the Common Core curriculum. We provide real life experiences for students every day to use their literacy and math skills, which helps students to transfer their learning outside of the classroom.





World Languages



The WHS World Language Department hosted the 4th annual Culture Matters event for the entire student body. With this annual event, we continue to broaden our framework for students and teachers regarding global awareness and education, meeting 21st century learning objectives—including the use of interdisciplinary themes and going beyond ‘school walls’ for learning. We also view this performance as the first step toward altering the culture of school dances. It will raise student awareness of more appropriate dance types in a way that shows them how much fun these other types can be.

As part of the SAU 21 World Language Vertical Team, our goal over the last couple of years has been to collaborate across grades and schools to strengthen the study of language and culture. Beginning this year, WHS invited the 8th graders from all sending schools to join us for this annual event as another link to interest all students in language and culture study.

The World Language Vertical Team teachers continue to strive for greater student success in language and culture studies. Their collaborations are reaping benefits as our K-8 schools work to improve student access to learning Spanish at earlier grade levels and schedules are being adjusted to permit greater depth and immersion for older students. The ongoing discussions about student needs and achievements are helping all teachers to better align expectations and build greater opportunities for student learning.

What does it mean to be a literate person? According to the CCCS, a literate person:

1. Demonstrates independence
2. Builds strong content knowledge
3. Responds to varying demands of audience – task, purpose, and discipline
4. Comprehends as well as critiques
5. Values evidence
6. Uses technology and digital media strategically and capably
7. Understands other perspectives and cultures

Those qualities are skills and/or traits that should be emphasized, worked on and celebrated in every science classroom through content reading, discussions, questioning, experimenting, writing, etc.

"Dance Around The World" is a program like no other in existence. Cultural Explosion has presented this program at different venues from corporate events, to school events, to political events. With age groups ranging from pre-school children to Senior Citizens. It brings together 3 key elements that can be adjusted to the specific audience's needs, wants & maturity level. This program is such a great success due to its flexibility, it's diversity and it's blend of education, culture, history, dance & audience participation." www.culturalexpllosion.com
2013 – Cultural Explosion Dance Company



2012 – The Exiles (Irish Music)



2011 Japanese Taiko Drumming & Workshop



2010 – Inca Son (Andean Music) and Randy Armstrong (World /West African drumming)



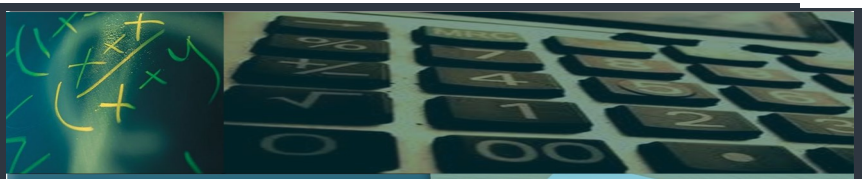
Social Studies



The Social Studies Vertical Team met on April 5th with some of the SAU 21 Elementary teachers during the April early release to discuss their efforts relative to the Common Core Standards. The team has examined the Standards addressed within the Social Studies curriculum and emphasized mainly within Language Arts.

The team created a series of evaluations that result in both student and teacher records of Common Core standards for a particular unit. They plan to refine them and develop a recording system with teachers as they are implemented and feedback is given regarding their use. This collaborative work assists in teachers aligning expectations levels for student performance and developing a deeper understanding of the student learning objectives inherent to the new standards.

Curriculum Matters is a communication tool for SAU 21 teachers, parents, and community members. It provides a mechanism for the Vertical Curriculum Teams to share their efforts to build a coordinated curriculum that enhances the learning opportunities and performance of all students. Please learn with us as we embark on these efforts and look for opportunities that align across disciplines. We encourage our larger community to follow some of the [web links](#) to see how our work is influenced and to help students understand how to do their very best in their learning and achievements. Please direct any questions or suggestions to the SAU 21 office at 926-8992 x105. We appreciate your input as we learn together.



MATH



The Math Vertical Team has completed the rubric for Performance Pathways that the high school teachers will have access to as our eighth graders transition to Winnacunnet, and we will be putting in data about the mid-term and final exam grades. This will enable us to share more information beyond the NECAP and NWEA scores that most of our districts use. The rubric is currently focused on the “Habits of Mind” that help students to be more successful in mathematics learning.

Our next step as a vertical team is to use the input from our SAU-wide in-service meeting to provide opportunities for teachers in the SAU to do the following during the summer and into next year:

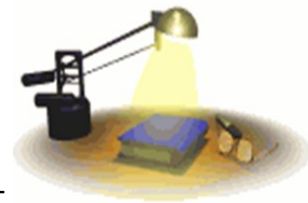
- Discuss ways to facilitate number sense at the lower grades and assess its efficacy.
- Identify some of the ways that we can extend mathematics learning to students and help them to continue to make progress beyond the normal school year.
- Use some of our collaborative time to assist grade level teams across the SAU to revise different units especially number sense, in support of Common Core State Standards learning.
- Look at ways that we can continue to do math challenges together, as students and as teachers to emphasize the continuous learning that enriches us!

Mathematics is the science and language of patterns. The 24 Tournament organized by the SAU21 Math Team encourages students to look for patterns to make the value 24 using mathematical operations appropriate to each grade level. The competition has evolved as an effective means of reaching a broad spectrum of students within a community with the message that “Math is fun and that I can learn and improve my math skills.” Seabrook Middle School is hosting our first **24 Tournament** on May 30th at 10 am. Six students from Seabrook, North Hampton, Hampton Falls, and South Hampton will be representing their schools! **The tournament provides students with opportunities to practice and to build a foundation of computational fluency in an engaging and fun way.** Thanks to Dan Glover (Mathematics at Seabrook Middle School) for organizing the event.





What's Hot? *An ongoing feature from Carol Dugan (Reading Specialist at the Barnard School in South Hampton)*



Here's one way to begin a close reading (International Reading Association, Lapp, 2012). First, students will attempt an initial reading of a text passage on their own. From informal assessment, you can then design instruction to include whole group, small group or individual instruction. You can use companion tiered text sets and multiple resources, as well as existing routines such as shared reading, guided reading, and partner collaborations to scaffold students as they build bases of information and make increasingly deeper text inferences.

The English/Language Arts (ELA) Vertical Team has been meeting throughout the year. They have discussed the article "Nine Ways the Common Core Will Change Classroom Practice" and the book "Pathways to the Common Core—Accelerating Achievement" by Lucy Calkins. Sample questions at their meetings involved concerns about "How the shift of CC Standards impact their curriculum", "How teachers are approaching the CC Standards in their classrooms" and "How do teachers assess the shifts of the CC Standards".

pK-5 Elementary Teams Begin

This year we have brought all of our elementary teams together during two early release days. The schools and teachers are gaining awareness and building their understanding of the shifts needed to fully implement the Common Core Standards. The teams discussed better ways of coming together to share their challenges, successes and learning along the way. Finding longer blocks of time will be a challenge, but teams are also exploring electronic mechanisms, such as the Team Room in My Learning Plan and Edmodo.

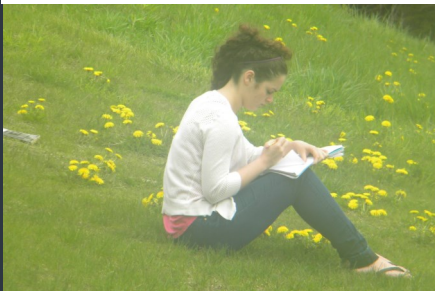
The 2nd grade team focused on aligning their math assessments to the Common Core. They talked about the assessments they currently use to assess math skills (Everyday Math unit assessments and NHS interview term 1/2/3).



They thought it would be convening and productive to build a shared math problem solving prompt to give to all second graders in the SAU and learn from the results.

The 5th grade team discussed technology enriched lessons and how technology could assist their continued collaboration throughout the year. They discussed students' keyboarding skills and whether specific typing instruction was needed. They discussed "sustained silent reading" and how that was being incorporated into classrooms at the elementary level. The team encouraged each member to bring successful lessons, helpful tech tools, read-a-louds, picture books, and resourceful websites to share.

Elementary Teams also discussed speakers that would assist in grounding conversations and how over time we might move to whole day efforts that would support both school-specific teaming and full SAU collaboration. We are hopeful that as we move forward we can work together for dynamic team events and growth that bolsters our students' learning!



Students "Inspired by Spring" writing class at North Hampton

As part of the North Hampton 8th grade writing experience, students have a chance to write three different written pieces inspired by the seasons of fall, winter and spring. During each of the seasons, students are required to observe the season, both in science and language arts class, by creating sensory charts, natural observations, sketches, phrases, photographs... They then use these in class to work on different writing techniques and to create a variety of genres: poetry, personal narrative, essay, short story, fairy tale, myth... They love these three writing pieces because they have an element of choice, creativity and time outside. We even went on a long winter walk with cameras! They are great from the teacher's point of view because the natural world inspires language and connects students to the habit of careful observation, and this is what great writers, and scientists, do!



Reading / literacy

What's Hot? What's Not? ...in Literacy Education

What's hot?

Stamina: students must read more pages for CCSS high-stakes assessments. The emphasis will be on comparative analysis of longer texts in multiple genres.

what's not?

Reading short selections with responses held to a literal level.

What's hot?

Using **informational/nonfiction texts/“disciplinary texts”** (in history, social studies, science and technology) at least as much as fiction because of students’ needs for: college and career readiness, knowledge, tools to effect change in their communities and beyond, and their personal interests. (Neil K. Duke, University of Michigan) The Common Core dictates that by fourth grade, public school students devote half of their reading time in class to informational texts — including historical documents and scientific tracts. This percentage increases to 70 percent of the 12th grade curriculum.

Some educators suggest using narrative nonfiction as a bridge from fiction to nonfiction. Narrative nonfiction is writing that tells a factual story but also conveys factual information in vivid, effective ways.

what's not?

Using fiction for most instruction, except for classic fiction.

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Seacoast Effective Educator Development System

~SEEDS for the Future of Teaching and Learning~

The NH Department of Education (NH DoE) released the Phase II report of the Task Force on Effective Teaching this past year. School Districts across New Hampshire are revising their Supervision and Evaluation Master Plans to meet these standards which become effective on July 1, 2013. Leaders across the state appreciate that effective teachers are created by providing every teacher a rich professional supportive environment with collaborative opportunities and a clear understanding of how effective teachers are measured.

Teacher evaluations should not be treated as a pass/fail assessment but should provide teachers a framework to prepare and measure the impact of their teaching practices while providing a common understanding of effective teaching and enhance professional practices of educators so as to positively impact student learning.

The quality of the teacher in the classroom is the most important factor in a student's academic success. Since January, a committee of administrators, teachers and SEA representatives, led by Mark Deblois (Principal, Lincoln Akerman School), has been meeting to discuss the **SAU21 Supervision Master Plan** and what is most productive in raising the effectiveness and growth of our teachers. The team was joined by additional teachers and school board members to participate in a discussion on “Rethinking Teacher Supervision and Evaluation” led by author Kim Marshall. The team will continue to articulate the vision and design of a new Master Plan through this summer and fall. The current plan expires in June, 2014 and the revised plan will meet the design standards set by the NH DoE. The new plan should include a continuum of support from induction through career-long professional development to strengthen the skills and abilities of our teachers. We recognize that teachers can achieve greater success if provided opportunities for collaboration and professional growth. Please see <http://www.education.nh.gov/teaching/> for the complete Task Force report and stay tuned for more information on the developing SAU21 Master Plan in the fall, 2013 edition of Curriculum Matters!

