

Coventry Board of Education 2015-2016 Annual Report

David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools



The Coventry Board of Education is the governing and policy making body of the Coventry Public Schools. The Board derives its power from the Constitution and General Statutes of the State of Connecticut as well as from the State Board of Education and the Charter of the Town of Coventry. The Board of Education is responsible for establishing policy and educational goals that guide the school system toward the continuous improvement of the educational program for Coventry's children. The Board is also responsible for the ongoing evaluation of the school program against its goals and for the evaluation of the Superintendent.

The Board consists of seven elected members: William Oros, Chairman; Jennifer Beausoleil, Vice-Chairman; Mike Sobol, Secretary; Michael Griswold; Frank Infante; Mary Kortmann; and Eugene Marchand. The Board meets twice a month in the Administration Building conference room. Agendas and minutes of the meetings are posted on the Board of Education page of the district website www.coventrypublicschools.org.

The Board's Mission Statement and Goals provide direction and focus to the improvement work of the district. They are as follows:

- Mission Statement – The Coventry Public Schools will prepare every student for life, learning and work in the 21st century.
- Goals – 1) Identify, define, and measure the critical skills and attributes that are required for success and align systems to continuously improve student performance and achievement. 2) Maintain and promote a positive and respectful learning community. 3) Recruit, retain and develop high quality staff at every level.

Each year the Superintendent, as well as each Principal/Director, establishes a personal set of goals which align with the Board of Education main goals. In addition, goal achievement documents are developed in the spring verifying the year's accomplishments. Those documents and related details can be found on the district website.

Coventry Public Schools 2015-16 Noteworthy Accomplishments

Coventry High School; Joseph Blake, Principal



During the 2015-16 school year at Coventry High School (CHS), a variety of initiatives and programs helped support student learning and achievement. A primary focus was our second year of the two year New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) self-study process in which we reviewed and analyzed every aspect of our program to assess the alignment to the NEASC Accreditation Standards of Core Values and Beliefs, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Leadership, School Resources for Learning, and Community Resources for Learning. This self-study prepared us for our NEASC accreditation visitation which occurred

May 1-4 of this year. The visit was a very successful collaborative effort between staff, administration, Board of Education members, students and parents. The commendations and recommendations that emerged from this report will guide our future program development. In addition, we continued the implementation of the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) curriculum in math and English Language Arts to support student learning through relevant and rigorous performance based learning opportunities. We also adjusted our curriculum in Mathematics and English to adjust content and skills to the newly redesigned SAT which was given for the first time on March 3rd of this year. In 2015-2016 with cooperation from the School of Education and Professional Studies at ECSU, we created a Master's Degree internship for pre-professionals in education. Placements occurred in September 2016. ECSU undergraduate and Psychology interns continue to be engaged with at-risk students as observers, and student teachers. In 2015-16 we became a partner school with the Neag School of Education at UCONN. Placements have already been made for September 2016. The one-to-one iPad initiative was expanded to include all students at Coventry High School and professional development time was allocated to train teachers on effective use of iPads in instruction and assessment. Students continued to take advantage of the opportunity to earn college credits while taking classes at Coventry High School. Last year alone, through the Early College Experience program, students earned 363 credits at the University of Connecticut, and through the College Pathway Partnership students earned 428 credits at Manchester Community College. As a result of our Advanced Placement achievement and participation rate, we were ranked as a top high school in Connecticut in the Washington Post's annual High School Challenge, placing 16th in the state. Our Athletic program had a very successful year, including 14 state tournament appearances, a state finals appearance for Boys' Soccer and a Class S State Championship for Girls' Volleyball.

Capt. Nathan Hale School; Dena DeJulius, Principal



Capt. Nathan Hale School (CNH) is a middle school community that prides itself on providing students with strong academic programming that integrates current technology trends in education and that fosters student engagement and supports their growth for success in high school, college and future career paths. Academic achievement, character development, a commitment to safety, and a sense of belonging are all high priorities at CNH. The English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics departments continued their curriculum work aligning instruction and assessments with the Connecticut Core Standards. The data gathered from the administration of benchmark assessments aligned with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) has proven to be a valuable teaching tool as well

as a great indicator of growth for our students. Both departments have streamlined lessons to be sure all the necessary grade level standards are covered. Pacing guides were revisited across grade levels to be sure that enough time was spent on priority standards and that all material was covered prior to students taking the SBAC. Content area planning time and professional development days were used to complete Student Work Protocols in order to analyze our student work and readjust both our lessons and assessments accordingly. The Social Studies department worked all year writing new curricula aligned with the recently released K-12 Social Studies Frameworks. In addition, the department worked closely with an EASTCONN consultant several days during 2015-2016 to be sure their revised curriculum meets all necessary inquiry based learning opportunities and best approaches for technology integration. The CNH Student Council supports and promotes a positive school culture that includes promoting school wide events that enhance student learning, school spirit and a stronger sense of community for the middle school as a whole. The CNH Student Council had numerous accomplishments this year including monthly school spirit initiatives, community service projects, as well as student leadership initiatives. This year's 26 council members led the way for our annual Pajama Day in December where over \$900 and 200 toys were collected and donated to Connecticut Children's Medical Center. We continue to showcase our students' work throughout the school year. During the November 2015 Parent-Teacher conferences, Grade 8 teachers prepared a work portfolio for 57 students focusing on a combined ELA/Social Studies focus on first person narrative writing. At our March 9, 2016 PTO Meeting, we featured the Grade 6 Social Studies Virtual Egyptian Museum Projects. We had about 110 students and parents in attendance! Student work included a compare and contrast family tree diagram integrating a historical fiction book as well as the integration of technology using the iPad and the Aurasma App. On Saturday, March 12, we had an *End of Winter Carnival* showcasing many of our students' talents. In addition to students having a venue to create and sell their own crafts, their work in a variety of classes was showcased including World Language, Family & Consumer Science, Math and Science.

George H. Robertson School; Beth Giller, Principal



Meeting the social, emotional, behavioral and academic needs of all of our students is the priority at George Hersey Robertson Intermediate School (GHR). In 2015-2016 we added an additional component to our existing positive behavioral support system to be Spike CARES (Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy and Self –Control) about Kindness. Using the mentor text, *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson, students recognized one another for their '*Acts of Kindness*' with hopes that every kind act begets another. The areas of focus for GHR this year

included mathematics, reading, writing, and instructional team structure and collaboration. Mathematics was a priority area of focus in which teachers worked to ensure appropriate sequencing and pacing, the use of effective instructional strategies to develop students' conceptual understanding of mathematical practices, and the development of learning tasks and assessments directly aligned with grade level standards. Reflex Math, an on-line math fact fluency program, was used to further develop students' fact fluency so students could focus their efforts on the application of skills rather than becoming stymied by facts. We continued to build our culture of reading by honing our implementation of the Daily 5 Framework – Read to Self, Read to Someone, Listen to Reading, Write about Reading, and Wordwork. Research supports the need for students to practice reading. Students' reading ability and vocabulary knowledge expand the more they read. A staff developer from Columbia University, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, continues to guide us through the shifts in writing. As instructors of mathematics, reading, writing, and content areas, our elementary teachers worked in collaboration with one another to identify students' areas of strengths and challenges and determine the most effective instructional strategies to promote student achievement. Student use of iPads is fully integrated in lessons throughout all instructional areas. GHR students have the opportunity to participate in afterschool activities: Homework Club, Mentoring, Camp Ventures, Art in the Afternoon, Multi-Sport, Ski Club, Hiking, and Chess Club. New this year was our GHR Musical, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, performed by 5th grade students. Also new this year was *Exercise for Life*, a morning exercise class for students. We have worked to promote wellness to our students, families, and staff members with

Wellness Challenges and Newsletters. Finally, the GHR PTO continued to be a great support for our learning community. PTO Board members and volunteers worked tirelessly to financially support many areas including field trips, reading incentives, school spirit, and of special interest, a 3D printer.

Coventry Grammar School; Marybeth Moyer, Principal



At Coventry Grammar School we pride ourselves in fostering a nurturing and supportive learning community that aligns instruction to the Connecticut Core Standards. During the 2015-2016 school year, our mission was to ensure that our students were given the strategies and support to fully maximize their learning potential through reading, writing and math instruction. Our instructional focus in reading and writing was strengthened through our continuous review of data and the increased use of authentic performance assessments, which incorporated the 21st century skills of collaboration, communication and critical and creative thinking. This goal was supported in partnership with school and district reading and math specialists and on-site training from Teachers College Reading & Writing Project. The year-end results indicated that our students made significant gains in both reading and writing! With a district focus on math instruction, professional development was offered throughout the year. Classroom teachers actively developed interactive units that aligned with the Connecticut Core Standards, effectively demonstrated strategies and tools within their defined instructional blocks with strong and unified results. Our school's advocacy of early intervention was evident in each grade level as teachers and support staff provided instructional intervention or enrichment opportunities for all students, administered grade-level assessments and implemented progress monitoring practices. The infusion of technology through the use of interactive boards, sets of classroom iPads and computer lab instruction supported digital learning, research and the expansion of independent learning. As we embraced new science standards with the theme "*STEAM through the Seasons*" (science, technology, engineering, art and math) engaging hands-on lessons were introduced by our challenge and enrichment instructors at all grade levels. To support this initiative, our active PTO supported the construction of an outdoor pavilion which created an ideal learning environment for hands-on lessons. At the close of the school year, the CGS community celebrated their dedication to the collaboration of the arts through the annual art show and tours of the newly planted butterfly garden.



The Business Office; Robert Carroll, Director of Finance and Operations

The Business Office expanded the implementation of the Time and Attendance Management system to the custodial and maintenance staff. In the future, the system will be expanded to cover all hourly school staff. The application assists the district by improving payroll accuracy and reduces labor costs through electronic time capture and management of employee classifications and labor contracts. The Business Office continues its efforts to operate more efficiently with an emphasis on reducing paperwork. The hiring process has been completely automated with the Frontline Recruiting and Hiring software platform. Also, much like the Direct Deposit process for payroll, we have begun transitioning Accounts Payable Vendors to ACH payment. This reduces the need for check stock and postage, while at the same time improving accuracy and timeliness of payment. The Business Office also assisted in the successful application for, and the financial oversight of several new grants awarded by various State Agencies, including the Technology Infrastructure grant, the Intertown Capital Equipment (ICE) grant, the Smart Start Early Education grant, and an Electric Vehicle/EV Charging Station grant.



Physical Plant and Facilities; William Trudelle, Director

The Facilities Department has continued to implement a preventive maintenance program along with inventorying equipment. This will allow us to track equipment information for end-of-life estimations in order to properly budget for Capital Improvement Projects (CIP). In collaboration with the IT Department, we have upgraded the district's cameras, as well as FOB system to continue security enhancements to make Coventry Public Schools a more secure environment to teach and learn. We have worked together with town agencies and the School Building Energy Efficiency Committee on the Natural Gas Conversion Project, as well as specs for the Energy Efficiency Project. Coventry Public Schools had a greatly anticipated opening of our newest facility, the Hale Early Education Center. The Facilities Department, working with our engineer and construction teams, was able to help open the doors with a fully operational and staffed preschool at our Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School and Coventry High School Complex. In conjunction with that project, we also completed the playground adjacent to the facility. At the high school/middle school complex, the fire pump water tank was brought up to code as well as the neutralization tank at Coventry High School. Working with the Fire Marshal, we have addressed areas of potential concern including fire doors, training, monthly inspections, etc. We continue work on the school's Indoor Air-Quality Plan (IAP) that includes annual cleaning of the HVAC system and Green Cleaning. We have taken the information compiled by our risk management team from our insurance carrier, CIRMA, to reorganize our staff development and deploy the

appropriate training in areas that need improvement. All of these initiatives continue to ensure Coventry Public Schools remain a healthy environment for our students and staff to thrive and grow in.

Educational Technology Department; Cathie Drury, Director



During the 2015-2016 school year, the Coventry Public Schools Educational Technology Department continued to support and enhance student learning and achievement. We built on the work of previous years to expand and enhance our network infrastructure which included modifications that helped to increase network connection speeds and expand the wireless capability at the schools. We entered Year 3 of our District iPad initiative, expanding to complete the 1-to-1 program at the high school. iPads have also been utilized at the K-5 level to support literacy and enhance learning. The Educational Technology department worked to support continued meaningful integration of technology through providing targeted and differentiated technology professional development and coaching. Building on the work of members of the District Technology Team, 2015-2016 marked year 1 in the implementation of our 3 year District Technology Plan. This plan provides the roadmap of where we are moving for technology integration in the district. Year 1 included a focus on integration of Digital Citizenship skills, enhanced professional development opportunities and review of inventory to ensure compliance with the recommended 5 year obsolescence plan. As a department, we also worked this year to integrate different systems so as to increase efficiencies. The Technology Department partnered with the Business Department on computer based kiosks for hourly employees and worked with the Director of Pupil and Staff Support Services to integrate IEP Direct with our student information system (PowerSchool). We expanded our use of the Visitor Express system and badged doors to the Hale Early Education Center as well. In the high school, we expanded our student tech team to 14 students who worked to provide technology support and assistance to students and staff. Lastly, at the end of the school year we launched our new Coventry Public Schools website. We are very excited at the progress we have made thus far with regards to technology and look forward to continuing to expand our offerings and resources to help best serve the needs of the Coventry Public Schools' learning community.

Department of Teaching and Learning; Michele Mullaly, Director

The focus of the Department of Teaching and Learning is on the development of an outstanding educational program to support all Coventry students in reaching high levels of achievement and in acquiring the knowledge and skills that will prepare them for life, learning, and work in the 21st century. We are proud of our students' many achievements, the instruction provided by our teachers, and the wide-breadth of educational programs and opportunities offered in our schools. Through the collaborative efforts of parents, students, schools, and the community, we have fostered an exemplary learning community which supports innovation and is committed to challenging all learners. In the 2015-2016 school year, we continued to evaluate and revise our curriculum, particularly in the area of social studies, utilizing the new Connecticut Elementary and Social Studies Frameworks and Larry Ainsworth's Rigorous Curriculum Design Model which is constructed to connect standards, instruction, and assessment in unit design to promote the acquisition of 21st century skills and prepare students to be career and college ready upon graduation. As our school system designs curriculum and instruction to promote continued high achievement, especially in the core areas of literacy, mathematics, and science, we also integrated the 21st century skills and Coventry Public Schools Technology Competencies related to digital citizenship into teaching and learning across the grade levels and in all subject areas as an area of focus in 2015-2016. To support achievement of these goals, we coordinated our professional development program to align to them, utilized them in developing our instructional budget proposal, and designed programs and initiatives in support of them. With the support of a Connecticut State Department of Education Grant, we implemented year one of our action steps from the Assessment Reduction Grant designed to support our recommendations to modify, reduce, replace, or augment assessments. As a result, we have eliminated a number of assessments, modified our assessments to align well with the Connecticut Core Standards and all content standards. As part of this initiative, we have developed processes and protocols to ensure that teachers are able to work collaboratively to examine assessment data and student work and continue to receive training in the best practices in the use of research based instructional strategies to customize teaching based on the review of assessments and student work. We continue to offer our students welcome and nurturing classroom environments in which our teachers encourage students to problem solve, think critically, collaborate with others, and utilize technology to research, create, and present meaningful student work for real-world audiences. We have high expectations for all students and strive to support positive school climates that engage all learners and prepare them for life, learning, and work in the 21st century!

