

## Coventry Public Schools

Beth Giller, Principal  
George Hersey Robertson Intermediate School Goals  
2017-2018

### **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.**

- *Continue to analyze Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC) data to inform curricula realignment, instruction, and the development of formative and performance based assessments across Grades 3-5.*

Analysis of our SBAC data informs teachers Student Learning Objective Goal (SLO), curricular alignment, instructional pacing, and assessment needs. SBAC data analysis is not a one-time event; aggregate and student's individual scores are frequently referenced throughout the school year.

SBAC data is initially analyzed for overall areas of strengths and those areas in need of ongoing improvement. This year we identified the focus area as Brief Writes for teachers' goals. Brief Writes, an SBAC assessed area of writing, requires students to write an introduction, conclusion, or further elaborate on an existing piece of writing. This is very different than writing narrative, opinion, or informational essays in writer's workshop. Given that, we adjusted writing units and pacing to include time for explicit instruction and assessment of Brief Writes. Brief Write tasks were developed to assess students' progress throughout the year in all three genres.

The use of SBAC Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) continue to provide valuable data regarding students' progress and the need to adjust curricular tasks or assessments. This year, Literature IAB, Informational IAB, Math IABs and 2 Math Performance Tasks were administered to students in Grades 3-5 to gauge students' understanding of grade level standards.

Teachers analyze SBAC data of their current students to inform instruction, and that of their former students to reflect on their instruction. Teachers' reflections help to identify students' potential need for intervention and the extent to which close monitoring is needed during testing. Reflections and discussions have led to students identified for Intervention Referral Team meetings, intervention, and small group testing.

- *Refine the student goal setting process, not only to align with standards, but to encourage student reflection and articulation of their academic progress during student led conferences, Grades 3-5.*

Writing was the area of focus for student led conferences this year. Students wrote individualized goals aligned with standardized learning targets, to hone in on areas in need of improvement. Writing skills and strategies were identified using Lucy Calkins learning progressions and writing checklists. Students were required to identify specific evidence to support their goal, before they could transition to another. Articulation of this goal setting process and reflection of their progress became an integral part of the Student Led Conference in Grades 3- 5.

While SLC focused on writing, student goal setting has expanded to the academic areas of reading and mathematics. Expanding and refining goal setting in these academic areas will continue. To note, classes and students also write behavioral goals in support of fostering positive learning environments.

- *Expand and evaluate the use of research based (reading/math) interventions providing in-house training to expand the number and capacity of our interventionists who can effectively support our students to increase student achievement, Grades 3-5.*

Realizing the effectiveness of research based programs and the importance of providing the appropriate supports for our students as early as possible, the number of in-house interventionists was increased and quality training developed. Interventionists, special education teachers and para educators, were trained in Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI), Just Words, Visualizing and Verbalizing, ALEKs math, and Bridges math. Most recently, two certified staff members attended a week-long training in Orton-Gillingham.

Trained reading interventionists at GHR include four special education teachers, two reading teachers, and eight para-educators. Math interventionists at GHR include four special education teachers, math interventionist and four para-educators are trained in ALEKs math.

To ensure consistency in intervention practices as well as implementation with fidelity, structures have been established to include collaborative meetings between certified staff and non-certified staff to review lessons and student progress.

- *Implement the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in Grade 3, participate in assessment development for Grade 3, and revise the science curriculum for Grade 4 to adhere with the State of Connecticut implementation timeline.*

Grade 3 partially implemented NGSS this school year with the assistance of two NGSS interns from UConn. The interns prepared materials to support lesson implementation from three of the NGSS bundles. In addition, two of our Grade 3 teachers participated in the CREC Assessment Training, the next step to complete the Consortium's NGSS bundles (units). Additional collaboration time is required to prepare the remaining released bundles for instruction.

The state moved up the NGSS implementation timeline for Grades 4 and 5 mid-year. It is for this reason that two grade 4 and grade 5 teachers attended 5 days of CREC training in NGSS this winter. The state expects that bundles will be released soon. Collaboration time is needed for teachers to be well prepared for implementation for the 2018-2019 school year.

- *Support the expansion of the district's Pre K-12 autism program in its first year at GHR by working with internal and external stakeholders to provide optimal services for our students on the autism spectrum.*

The support of district administration and EASTCONN has been invaluable as we have our ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) room fully functional. The planning stages began last year as we identified appropriate space and resources to develop a successful program. Our ABA room currently has four individual work spaces with a separate room designed specifically for Occupational and Physical Therapies. There is currently one

special education teacher and 3.5 para educators assigned to the program. Following recommendations from EASTCONN, we have cross trained para-educators for the students' benefit. Staff has been well trained in creating visual supports, writing and implementing Discreet Trial Interventions (DTI) lessons, and graphing students' DTI data to facilitate data analysis to inform future programming. Students' program books are well- developed, with appropriate behavioral protocols in place. The ABA teacher reviews students' lesson data on a weekly basis with ongoing fidelity checks with the consultant. Roles and responsibilities of all staff members are delineated, yet flexible, as we continue to learn from experience.

Collaborative meetings between administration and ABA teacher have resulted in timely adjustments as needed. Overall program planning is carefully monitored to support students in their transition from one grade level to the next. The ABA teacher holds weekly team meetings with the ABA program staff with established agendas to ensure consistency among all staff members. The ABA program at GHR has become fully functional this school year. Additional resources, such as protocols, templates, and communication tools, will continue to be refined to ensure our ongoing success.

- *Evaluate the efficacy of the transition to English Language Arts (ELA)/ Social Studies (SS) integration in Grade 5, with preliminary exploration of the same transition in Grade 4 in 2018-2019.*

Social Studies (SS) integration into English Language Arts (ELA) instruction in Grade 5 is ongoing. Coaching days with our district K-12 ELA Specialist focused on this integration, cross- referencing ELA and SS standards within each unit. Potential resources were identified for social studies topics. Unit implementation informs subsequent unit development, so revisions deemed necessary from experience were made as needed.

One of our grade 5 teachers received a Teaching Grant Award from the Connecticut Reading Association (CRA) for \$ 750 to purchase materials to assist with the integration of SS and ELA. This supplemental funding allowed the purchase of many additional resources at varied reading levels. As teachers have developed their expertise in integrated lesson and unit planning, they have deepened their understanding in providing the appropriate supports to ensure the success of all students. Results will be closely monitored as we continue with this as a pilot over the 2018-2019 school year.

Given the change in NGSS implementation in Grade 4 to 2018-2019, and our experience with Grade 5 ELA/SS integration, we will defer ELA/SS integration in Grade 4, and re-evaluate for possible implementation during the 2019-2020 school year.

- *Work collaboratively with CGS and CNH staff and administration to coordinate Instructional Rounds Process to build continuity and understanding between grade levels and stronger vertical alignment in our reading and mathematics curriculum.*

Instructional Rounds is a valuable tool to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills and develop a culture of collaboration. Grade 5 teachers from GHR observed Grade 6 teachers at CNH on February 8, and vice versa on March 28. While teachers benefit from observation, the biggest benefit of Instructional Rounds is the discourse that takes place among teachers after the observations. This collaboration resulted in shared strategies

and resources, self-reflection, and increased awareness about the importance of deepening understanding of standards and expectations from one grade level to the next.

ELA Instructional Rounds between CGS and GHR grades 2 & 3 occurred November 27 and February 27. The focus was *Effective Questioning for Instruction and Assessment* to review the rigor of questioning used in everyday instruction. The level and rigor of questioning will help support our students' improvement on standardized tests in third grade.

In addition, Grades 4 & 5 also participated in Instructional Rounds in-house, observing with the same focus as the Grades 2 & 3 Instructional Rounds. Teachers noted the vertical articulation in instruction, the commonality of using consistent question stems, and the varied forms of informal assessments available.

- *Explore opportunities for students to enrich their learning based on talents and interests.*

We continue to seek enrichment opportunities for all of our students with varied interests and talents.

CEP continues to provide enriching experiences for our high ability students. Eleven Grade 3 students were screened for CEP this year revealing ability through independent projects. The focus for Grades 4 & 5 CEP respectively is science inquiry on water with a Future Problem Solvers introduction and 3D printer/engineering design project and FPS. New this year, for our Grade 5 students was the Salmon River Project. The program involved incubating Atlantic salmon eggs in a chilled aquarium tank. Students took a field trip to stock the Connecticut River in May.

UConn Engineering Ambassadors conducted lessons in all Grade 3 classes this year, as well as in our Grade 5 CEP class this year. In addition, our Dash & Dot coding robots engage students in coding when time allows in Library Media.

GHR continues to benefit from Captain Nathan Hale's Teachers of Critical Language grant as part of their Chinese teacher's community outreach. Li Chunping visits GHR each Thursday morning, teaching children the Chinese language and culture.

Talented musicians were selected for the CMEA Elementary Honors Choir and Band this year. In addition, Grade 5 students volunteer to serenade peers during lunch for *Eat to the Beat*, and others promote band to fourth grade students during Grade 4 lunch.

This year 15 talented artists had their artwork displayed at the Arts Center East, a regional arts center in Vernon. Many students participated in the Road Safety Content and the Artwork display at Booth and Dimock.

Students are encouraged to enter into the *CHET Dream Big* contest to win CHET certificates. Two students won \$500 CHET certificates and were recognized June 1 at the Connecticut Science Center. For the third year in a row, GHR was awarded a \$ 500 cash award for entering the highest number of participants in Tolland County.

### **SMART Goals:**

Students in grades 4 - 5 will increase their RIT score by 11 and 10 RIT points respectively in MAP Mathematics strand Numbers and Operations strand as evidenced by the Spring 2018 MAP assessment.

*June administration. Data/information will be provided to the Superintendent to share with the Board of Education as soon as possible.*

Pacing, sequencing, and learning tasks were closely monitored to ensure all standards covered, and revisited if necessary, prior to SBAC and MAP. The Mathematic Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) were administered, providing teachers with valuable information on challenging question types and students' misconceptions.

Students in grades 3 will increase their RIT score by 13 RIT points in MAP Mathematics strand Operations and Algebraic Thinking strand as evidenced by the Spring 2018 MAP assessment.

*June administration. Data/information will be provided to the Superintendent to share with the Board of Education as soon as possible.*

Students in grades 3- 5 will increase their reading comprehension by three levels as evidenced by the Spring 2018 administration of the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) in Literature.

*June administration. Data/information will be provided to the Superintendent to share with the Board of Education as soon as possible.*

Students in grades 3-5 will increase their writing scores on SBAC aligned Brief Writes as measured by the SBAC Brief Write Rubric.

SBAC Brief Write tasks requires students to write an introduction, conclusion, or further elaborate on an existing piece of writing. To note, these writing tasks are very different from the essays developed during Writer's Workshop. Brief Writes are scored with the SBAC 2 point rubric. Figure 1 contains a depiction of the Brief Write Rubric for an Opinion Introduction Grades 3 – 5. For the purposes of providing specific feedback to students in areas in need of improvement, and to better inform instruction, students' in-house Brief Write tasks were scored with half- point scores: 0, .5, 1, 1.5 and 2.

Score	Description
2	<p>The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishes an adequate opinion that reflects the body of writing as a whole</li> <li>• provides adequate information to frame the opinion about the topic to put it into context</li> <li>• does more than list reasons to support opinion—not formulaic</li> <li>• connects smoothly to the body paragraph</li> </ul>
1	<p>The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides a partial or limited opinion</li> <li>• provides an opinion that partially reflects the body of writing as a whole</li> <li>• may provide limited and/or extraneous information to frame the opinion about the topic to put it into context</li> <li>• may just list supporting reasons—formulaic</li> <li>• provides a limited and/or awkward connection to the body paragraph</li> </ul>
0	<p>The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides no opinion or provides an opinion that is not appropriate based on the body of writing as a whole</li> <li>• provides irrelevant or no information to frame to opinion about the topic to put it into context</li> <li>• provides no connection to the body paragraph</li> </ul>

*Figure 1. SBAC Brief Write Rubric Target 6a Opinion (Organization – Introduction)*

Narrative, opinion and informational pre and post brief writes were administered from September to April. Table 1 reflects the percentage of students’ scores that increased by either 0, .5, 1, 1.5 or 2 points from the pre assessment in September to the post assessment in April. Thirteen percent of those students in Grades 3 - 5, who did not increase scores in the data reflected below, scored a two on the pre assessment.

In review of all data within genres and across genres, all students did reflect growth in their writing this year. Both Grades 3 and 4 began the year with narrative writing, then moved to informational and subsequently opinion writing. Grade 5 began the year with informational writing, moved to narrative, and then to opinion writing. It is evident in close analysis of the data, that students can transfer skills and strategies learned from informational to opinion writing when taught in succession. The transfer of skills was not as evident in Grade 5 as narrative writing was taught in between the two expository units.

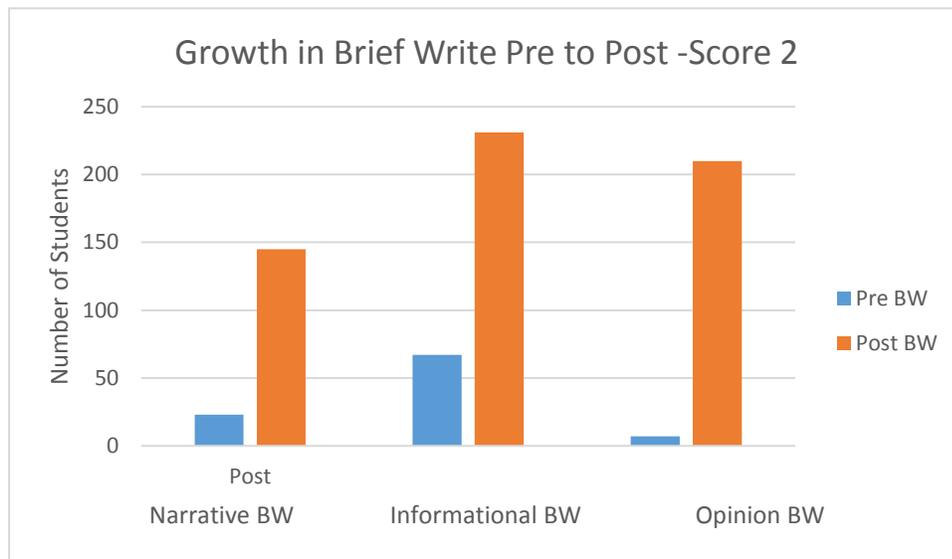
Table 1

*Brief Write Growth in Points: Percentage of Students in Grades 3 – 5 by Growth*

Brief Write Growth in Points in Percentages					
Score 0 - 2					
	0	0.5	1	1.5	2
3	11%	13%	34%	25%	13%
4	11%	20%	40%	24%	4%
5	13%	26%	37%	20%	2%

Of significance, 13% of our Grade 3 students grew by 2 points and 59% of the Grade 3 students grew 1 – 1.5 points. Four percent of our Grade 4 students grew by 2 points and 64% reflected growth of 1 – 1.5 points on the Brief Write tasks from fall to spring. Two percent of our Grade 5 students grew by 2 points from pre to post and 57% of Grade 5 students grew by 1-1.5 points.

Figure 2 below reflects the increase in the number of students who improved their writing to a score 2 throughout the duration of each writing unit, narrative, informational, and opinion writing. Teachers’ Student Learning Objectives (SLO) Goals focused on Brief Writes this year, as it is a very different type of writing than essay writing. Teachers in Grades 3 – 5 write differentiated goals, setting rigorous expectations for students’ growth depending on their pre-assessment data. Students’ transfer of skills between writer’s workshop and brief writes is inconsistent. Instructional strategies and practices to further support the transfer of skills will be embedded as we refine units and instruction.



*Figure 2. Number of Students Who Scored a two on Pre and Post Brief Writes from September to April.*

### **Whole School Indicator:**

100% of students in Grades 3-5 will be leaders of their own learning as demonstrated by the development of individually written goals aligned with standardized learning targets as evidenced by student and staff data points.

Given year two in our book study of *Leaders of Their Own Learning*, teachers have a deeper understanding of how to write student friendly learning targets aligned with standards. Teachers post learning targets in each subject area (reading, writing, math, science, social studies, art, PE, music). Students write goals to achieve the learning target.

While student goal setting in writing was consistent across Grades 3 – 5 for Student Led Conferences, goal writing in other content areas varies depending on the grade level and subject area. Goal setting may occur by unit, by strategy, weekly, or daily depending on the content and subject matter. Students record and reflect on their goals in a myriad of ways as well; in notebooks, on goal and/or reflection sheets, on assessments. There isn't any one way to promote successful goal setting; this is at the discretion of the instructor and what works best for him or her and his or her students.

## **2. Maintain and promote a positive and respectful learning community.**

- *Work collaboratively with CGS administration and PSSS Director to explore appropriate social-emotional learning and restorative practices to promote students' overall well-being and readiness to learn.*

Students overall social and emotional well-being continues to be an area of concern as educators are faced with increasingly difficult scenarios and behaviors that impact a child's readiness to learn. Along with district colleagues, I attended a series of three workshops October 24, November 28, and January 18 titled, *Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities*.

Given the wealth of materials and resources provided to us through this workshop series, it is evident that both adult and student explicit instruction is needed. It is for this reason, that at our November faculty meeting, we presented *Brain Research Supporting Title I Students & Executive Functioning Skills (EFS)* bringing staff through scenarios involving students, identifying EFS, and the appropriate strategies to support students given the lapse in EFS. This will continue to be an area of focus as we move forward as staff seeks additional information and training on supported social-emotional learning.

In collaboration, current social-emotional supports were identified for Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III. Examples of Tier I supports include Morning Meeting, Second Step Lessons, Positive Behavioral Supports (CARES, Kindness Cards and recognition in Principal's Forum), Job Corp, Intervention Referral Team Support, Mentor Texts, Firm, fair, kind, consistent teaching and positive relationships with all students. Examples of Tier II supports include, but are not limited to mentoring, targeted social skills groups, behavior contracts, sensory support (*How Does My Engine Run*), parent meetings with administration and related services staff, and examples of Tier III supports include , but are not limited to counseling with school psychologist, Functional Behavior Assessments, Planning and Placement Team Meetings, inter-agency services, morning meeting with related services, including Wiggle Wednesday with occupational therapist.

Reading the text, *10 Steps to Create a Trauma Informed School*, along with collaborative meetings with colleagues, will further inform our work in social-emotional learning as we move into the 2018-2019 school year.

- *Collaborate with district administrative colleagues to schedule presentations to inform parents on contemporary topics relative to school and district initiatives.*

GHR sponsored three presentations this year for our parents. Author Suzy Kline treated students and parents alike with an engaging presentation and sharing of her writing process. Suzy writes the *Horrible Harry* and *Song Lee* series. According to Suzy, one word can be the seed for a great book, and it is for this reason she carries a small notebook wherever she goes. She is ready to record her ‘seed’ at any time. All the students left wanting a small notebook!

Coventry Public Schools Technology department prepared an informative presentation titled, *Technology Tips for Parents in a Digital World*, for parents in April. The presentation highlighted considerations for use of technology by kids: privacy, visibility, and parental controls. More specifically, an overview of how information may be collected on children (privacy), recommendations to parents to keep devices in highly visible places, and an overview of parental controls recommended for any child.

Math Night continues to be a family favorite at GHR. Held in March this year, students and their families engaged in math games to promote fact fluency and conceptual development.

- *Collaborate with Food Service Director to increase students’ opportunities to promote a healthy school environment.*

Food Advisory Student Team (FAST) is back at GHR. Our FAST includes thirteen grade 5 students who taste test new menu options and provide their feedback as to whether they should become new menu items. In addition, I am happy to report that we are supporting our local Coventry Food Pantry, by having a Share Table in our cafeteria. Rather than wasting uneaten fruit, milk, or packaged items, students can recycle their food via the Share Table. Students from Coventry’s 18-21 program pick up the food and deliver it to the Food Pantry weekly.

Our district Wellness Committee ran a Wellness Challenge across the district for our students to engage in healthy habits during the month of March. Students aimed to complete at least seven of the ten daily goals. Students who completed at least 25 days for the month entered into a drawing. One lucky winner was chosen per school.

Healthy snacks are a top recommendation for any classroom celebration. In addition, thanks to our Parent Teacher Organization, I am happy to report we now have two water bottle filling stations at GHR. This promotes the healthy habit of drinking water throughout the day.

### **Parent Feedback Goal**

90% or higher of our GHR parent community will be scheduled for student led conferences and rate the experience as positive as evidenced by data collected from a Parent Survey.

Student Led Conferences were an overwhelming success at GHR this year for students in Grades 3-5 as evidenced by the following:

- 100% of our students were scheduled for Student Led Conferences
- 100 % of our students led a Student Led Conference.
- 100 % of our students' parents who took a survey rating the experience as positive.

#### Survey Results (N = 299)

*My child was prepared for the conference:*

91.0 % Strongly Agree

8.7 % Agree

100 % of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their child was prepared for the conference.

*My child shared his or her writing goals with me.*

93.0% Strongly Agree

7 % Agree

100 % of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their child shared their writing goals

*My child was able to describe the steps they took toward their writing goals.*

84.3 % Strongly Agree

13.7 % Agree

100 % of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their child was able to describe the steps they took toward their writing goals.

### **3. Recruit, retain and develop high quality staff at every level.**

- *Provide structures for collaboration and professional learning to further develop the capacity of our staff in the curricular revisions, assessment, and highly effective instructional strategies in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics.*

Structures in place provide opportunities for coaching with our K-12 ELA and Math Specialists for collaboration and discourse about teaching and learning. Written curriculum is reviewed and revised as needed to ensure standards are covered, assessments aligned, and planned instruction included highly effective instructional strategies. In ELA, time was devoted to calibrate teachers' scoring of Brief Write tasks and to revising writing units include time for explicit instruction for Brief Writes. Student Work Protocols were completed for Brief Writes and on-demand writing prompts. In addition, additional SBAC aligned assessment tasks were developed. In Grade 5, our ELA Specialist supported the team through the integration of social students into ELA. This required a cross-walk between CCS ELA standards and the Social Studies Framework.

An area of focus in Mathematics continues to be the pacing of lessons and units to ensure coverage of all material prior to spring standardized assessments. Despite our weather challenges this year, pacing and instruction remained on target. Student work

protocols were completed after IAB administration to identify students' areas of strength and challenges. IABs questions are closely reviewed and those most challenging replicated for additional practice across grade levels.

Updated Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) training occurred during faculty meetings early in the year to ensure understanding of the protocols for consistent administration across Grades 3 -5.

- *Continue to provide monthly technology coaching opportunities to ensure meaningful integration of technology to increase student engagement and enrichment opportunities.*

Structures are in place for our district technology coach to meet with grade level teams to support collaboration for integrating technology into instruction. Collaboration across Grades 3 – 5 included the following:

- Grade 3 - STEM Support for 3D Printing related to Motion and Forces (3D Printed Inclined Planes)
- Grade 4 - Google Sites Coaching and Support for students created websites and research (Biomes AND Southwest U. S. States)
- Grade 4 - Google Docs Coaching and Support for Collaboration on writing, editing and revising in Google Docs
- Grade 4 - Special Education - Virtual Reality trips to the zoo and a roller coaster - Samsung VR
- Grade 5 - Google Sites Coaching and Support for Science (Upcoming in May)
- Grade 5 - Science Grant writing assistance
- Staff
  - Alpine Coaching and Support Training
  - PowerSchool and PowerTeacherPro Coaching and Support Training
  - Student Led Conference - Google calendar support and training
  - Kyocera Copier - support and training for new copiers and functions
  - ABA Room - support and coaching with new Promethean Activpanel Board
  - 3D Printing coaching and support training for select staff, CEP teacher Media Specialist
  - Digital Signage Training and Support for Media Specialist
  - Support for student teacher interns (video editing and submission)
  - Positive Behaviors video in association with grade 5 students and pupil services staff (Upcoming in May)
- Parents - Presentation at PTO meeting regarding student use of technology in a digital world

