



Director's Digest

September 19, 2008

"The will to win is important. But the will to prepare is vital."

- Coach "Papa Joe" Paterno

Summer Projects Support Student Achievement

This past spring, as in year's past, we solicited curriculum and instructional initiatives from faculty and staff which would address a specific goal or identified need of the school. After an application and review process, we awarded five individuals/groups to lead focused projects.

All project leaders and team members presented their research, findings, and outcomes to all staff during orientation. They deserve tremendous credit for their individual and collective dedication throughout the summer to work on projects designed to directly improve the learning environment at the school!

The following is a summary of their summer work and outcomes:

"Grades 9-12 Integrated Academic/College Advising Curriculum" Committee: Mr. Elsner and Mrs. Droste

Two upper school staff including the high school guidance counselor and the Student Life advisor served on this committee. The goal of this project was to address many of the goals recently approved in the school's charter, the accountability plan and graduation portfolio requirements.

- ♦ The team developed a grade 9-12 advising curriculum focused on academic, college, and career success.
- ♦ Mr. Elsner developed the initial syllabus for both junior and senior advising.
- ♦ Mrs. Droste and Mr. Elsner divided the junior and senior advising curriculum and developed focused plans for each.
- ♦ Mrs. Droste reviewed, revised, and updated the existing Achievement Team resources for grades 9-10.
- ♦ The finished product includes:
 - Individual lessons plans for both juniors and seniors. Each grade has approximately 30 lessons.
 - A syllabus for both junior and senior advising
 - A student workbook for junior advising focusing on searching for colleges, college applications, and other topics related to post-secondary success (i.e. financial aid, resume, essay writing, etc.)
 - A workbook for senior advising focusing on college selection, completing college applications, financial aid, scholarships, graduation requirements and planning, and transition to college.
 - A reorganized and updated resource binder for achievement team students and advisors.

- Topics include study habits and skills, personal and social skill development, career and college orientation, team building exercises, and understanding academic status (transcripts, GPA, etc).
- ♦ Material will be posted on the school website for students and families in all grades to use.

"English/Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum Overhaul" Committee: Marianne Crowley and Lauren Hanson

Two upper school staff members including the ELA Department Chair and an ELA teacher served on this committee. This project involves several goals:

- ♦ Aligning the English/Language Arts (ELA) upper school curriculum to the new state frameworks.
- ♦ Eliminating gaps in the upper school ELA program.
- ♦ Establishing benchmarks for reading, writing, and grammar in grades 6-12.
- ♦ Developing ELA curriculum from the top down that supports the Advanced Placement (AP) Program.
- ♦ Providing concrete structure and guidance for English department teachers.
- ♦ Developing standards-based ELA assessments.

Products will include a notebook of benchmarks, standards-based assessments, teacher's guide, and suggested reading lists.

"Literacy Block-English/Language Arts (ELA) Houghton Mifflin Research" Committee: Jen Adams, Brenda Charlette, Teresa Peavey and Kate Fagan

Four lower school staff served on this committee. The goal was to gain complete understanding of how the Houghton Mifflin ELA program works within the classroom Literacy Block model.

Research included:

- ♦ Investigating the different components and supporting materials of the ELA program.
- ♦ Studying the scope/sequence of how each component is used during a Literacy Block.
- ♦ Integrating the components into the Literacy Block.
- ♦ Developing a plan for how the Literacy Block will be structured and managed.

The product is a written plan with ideas, suggestions, questions, and a classroom design for grade one ELA implementation of Literacy Blocks integrating the Houghton Mifflin program.



Summer Projects (continued)

“Project-based Learning” Committee: Erin O’Callahan, Karen Anderson, Linda Noiseux and Betsy Croteau

Four lower school staff members including a grade two teacher, a grade three teacher, the Title One teacher, and the lower school permanent substitute teacher served on the committee. The goal of this project is to research and pilot the use of project-based learning with students during 2008-2009.

- ◆ A “project-based learning method” is a comprehensive approach to instruction.
- ◆ Students participate in projects and practice an interdisciplinary array of skills from math, language arts, science and social studies.
- ◆ Research shows the efficacy of an authentic form of education that expects students to immerse themselves in a topic with meaningful demonstration of their acquisition of skills and knowledge.
- ◆ Participants visited schools that demonstrate the use of project-based learning and the effect it has on student learning.
- ◆ Members of the committee are currently reporting results back to the grade level teams.

“Instructional Toolkit for Teachers” Project: Keith Lavigne

The upper school computer science teacher worked on this project. The goal was to develop a collection of resources describing how and why teachers should integrate a variety of technologies into their classrooms and how they can engage students in creating and sharing knowledge.

- ◆ Information about the project is available at [Http://web.mac.com/klavigne95/Technology_Integration/Welcome.html](http://web.mac.com/klavigne95/Technology_Integration/Welcome.html)
- ◆ Descriptions, including lesson plans and framework links, are available for teachers to use podcasting, wiki projects, digital storytelling, and Inspiration software with students.
- ◆ The available resources can help students who have a variety of learning styles participate actively in learning.
- ◆ Descriptions, tutorials, lesson plans, and standards for a growing number of technologies will be added to the website throughout the year.
- ◆ Mr. Lavigne will help teachers integrate these or other technologies into their classrooms.

Keeping the Memory of September 11th Alive

Last week, we conducted a brief, yet meaningful ceremony to honor those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001 and to help support those families who were impacted by the tragedy.

The entire school gathered at the flagpole shortly after 8:30. We were joined by two of our parents, State Trooper John Conroy and North Attleboro Fire Lieutenant Brian Brousseau.

After my remarks which focused on the reason we were gathered; the importance of remembering and of lessons learned; and a request for all of us to practice random acts of kindness and support one another in memory of Michael McGinty, we held a moment of silence.

Trooper Conroy and Lieutenant Brousseau raised the flag, then lowered it to half staff. Then, as a school, we recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

As an aside, the students were extremely well-behaved, courteous, and respectful throughout the entire ceremony. Several teachers approached me after to indicate how impressed they were with the entire ceremony, including the awareness and respect shown by the students. Another strong example of the supportive and welcoming culture we have at FRCS!

Attention: FRCS Seeking Committee Members!

It’s that time of the year again. We’re looking for parents, students, and community members to serve on one of our committees. Many of you have already indicated an interest in serving. While for others, this is your opportunity to let me know.

The following committees are seeking participation this year:

Curriculum	Personnel
Technology	Enrollment
Facilities	Development

It is anticipated that committees or subcommittees will meet approximately once per month. Committees will develop specific goals and timelines for the year with respective board members or administrators reporting on each committee’s progress at the monthly board meeting. Often there are tasks or other work required outside of the monthly committee meeting. All committees will work on issues that are aligned with and positively impact our school’s goals.

This year, we are providing our committees with specific training on developing goals, objectives, and action plans. Through our partnership with Northeastern University, we will offer a hands-on workshop to assist our committees, so that all work is focused and driven by student achievement.

All committees will meet on Tuesday, October 14th @ 3:30 p.m. to work with our partners as a whole-school initiative. Committees will then meet to begin formulating specific plans. Although we would like all members to attend this kick-off meeting, interested participants who are not available that day should not hesitate to express an interest in serving on a committee.

Depending upon the number of requests for committee memberships, we will try to appoint you to your chosen committee. However, given a certain number of requests for a particular committee, we may need to limit the number of members. And, we are always encouraging new members to apply!

Please email me at MLogan@foxboroughrcs.org by Friday, October 3rd if you are interested.

- Mark Logan