



SUPPORTING PUBLIC EDUCATION AT THE HBS SPRING BOBCAT ROAD RACE

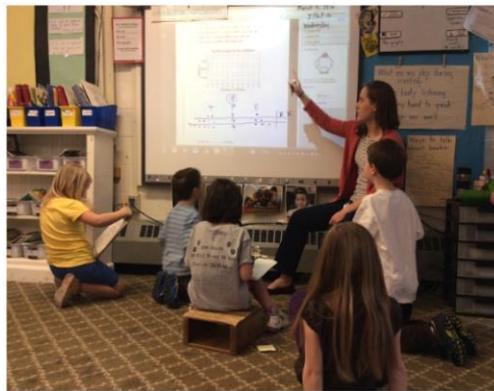
# BRUNSWICK SCHOOL DEPARTMENT Teacher Talk

Autumn 2016

This newsletter was created to communicate all the great teaching and learning practices happening in **Brunswick Public Schools**. The emphasis of this issue is how teachers collaborate to learn, develop and implement teaching strategies to support all our learners through **differentiation**.

**Differentiation** is not a new practice but a combination of strategies which support the best learning environment for the individual student and classroom community of learners.

Over the summer months and throughout the school year BSD teachers collaborate to research, brainstorm and develop tools which support teaching practices which nurture students' optimal learning potential. Read on to learn more about BSD teachers' efforts.



## Differentiating Math

First grade teacher **Keira Monahan** differentiates math visuals and instruction for her students.

The visual below demonstrates a Math Choose Board where students select their math work based on appropriate challenges and skill-level.



## Brunswick Junior High GRAMMAR- Pre-Test, Student Activities, and Resources

Over the summer **BJHS** teachers **Carl Handy** and **Peg Acheson** developed a comprehensive, beginning-of-year grammar pre-test which covers Grade 7 grammar and proof-reading skills. The pre-test supports the proficiency model of instruction when a teacher can compact the learning if a student proves that they already know the material.

Student activities and protocols for current and new grammar resources were created and grammar challenges created by last year's seventh graders were fine-tuned for use by this year's seventh graders.

These tools support all students but within this effort, these teachers created a communication document for parents that details differentiation strategies for students who receive talent development services.

**SUPPORT OUR BRUNSWICK SCHOOL MUSICIANS BY ATTENDING BRUNSWICK STUDENT ALL-TOWN BAND AND CHORUS CONCERTS**

April 11, 2017- All-Town Chorus

May 9, 2017-All Town Band

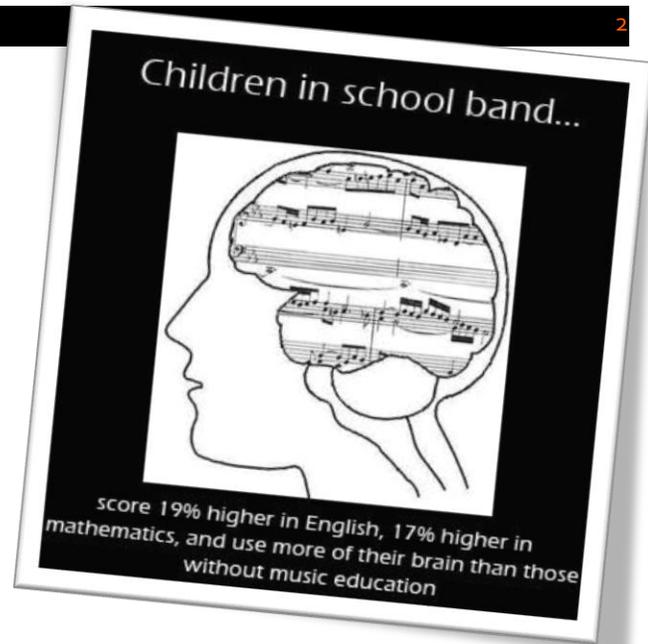
**“Great teachers consistently raise the ceiling of performance for each learner. At the same time, they raise the support system for each student.”**

Carol Tomlinson, *Fulfilling the Promise of the Differentiated Classroom*

Over the summer **Mike Scarpone, the Brunswick High School Band/Music**

teacher offers a “band buddies” program where high school mentors work one-on-one with a junior high or elementary band student once a week.

This opportunity uses differentiation strategies to build student and teacher relationships across grades and



encourages community in our school district.



**Coffin School First Grade and Multi-age**

teachers embed differentiation throughout their literacy lessons. Teachers differentiate for individual student needs as they observe and assess students' abilities in fluency, retelling, word awareness, and learned word study strategies and writing. Book selection is guided by reading abilities, student interests, and reading response journals. Students along with their teacher's guidance, design their own individual reading and writing goals and learn to assess and challenge themselves to grow as life-long learners.

**Words Their Way and Fourth Grade**

**Harriet Beecher Stowe School**

**Fourth grade teachers Lynn Yuodsnukis, Sarah Norton and Lea-Anne Thayer**

added on to a three year effort by Lynn Yuodsnukis to research, utilize, and assess the interconnection of phonological awareness, vocabulary, spelling, and reading stages of the *Words Their Way* approach to word study. These colleagues spent part of their summer creating resources with a developmental approach to word study which included word sorts for a variety of student needs, and student assessments. These assessments will guide learning compacting needs within their classrooms.



## JOYFUL COLLABORATION BRUNSWICK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

*Danielle LeBlanc, an eighth grade Literacy teacher at Brunswick Junior High School* contributed the following enthusiastic description of the collaboration with her colleagues and the team's support of student growth.

"I've been super lucky this year to have been teamed up (again) with some awesome co-teachers and specialists to attack differentiation with solid plans and data. **Pete Stevens** is offering loads of advice on pre-assessing for skillsets and designing true enrichment and extension activities beyond proficiency. And **Carly Cavallari** has been instrumental in helping me interpret the data to redirect our lessons to include modifications for everyone.

**It's been AWESOME. We are working on meeting students individualized needs ALL THE TIME. Differentiation is happening somehow in every lesson, every class, and every day.**

*Some inside baseball: through our pre-assessments on narrative reading and writing, and speaking and listening, we've uncovered some valuable and even surprising information about our students.*

*This summer **Cris Lavigne** spearheaded the designing of these assessments so that they appear to be normal, engaging, ELA lessons, but really provide us with so much data, so early in the year. The students don't know they are being "tested," but by the second week of school, I feel like I really KNOW my students. These assessments show us which skills students need to work on, and, excitingly, which they have already mastered, giving us a truer "starting line" for each learner.*

*Before gathering this data, I might have assumed that a student with an IEP would not need an extension (turns out that not true in every case) or that a TD identified student might not need review or re-teaching (also not always true). Data! It's so helpful!*

*Cris then had the awesome idea to take this data back to each student, to show them what skills they have already demonstrated proficiency or mastery in. I just finished up my conferences with students yesterday, and they went so well!*

*I loved being able to tell a student that not only had they proven that they were skilled, but that they had shown "mastery" in a particular standard and we could now move on to something more challenging. Students then set an individual standards-based writing goal for our next writing project, composing a personal narrative vignette. Really fun conversations all around."*

## LITERACY in MOTION

*Reading Support Team  
at Coffin School*

Teachers **Anne Havener, Lisa Martin, Larena Carten and Eugenie Knowles** researched and designed active literacy activities for kindergarten students as part of a summer grant. As a result they have a bank of activities involving skills such as phonemic segmentation, onset and rime, and letter identification, sounds and formation. This teacher team also created an alphabet book with motions to match each letter, large motor motion games using hula-hoops and sand trays for small motor muscle development and letter formation. This developmentally appropriate approach differentiates letter awareness and sounds differentiation for student growth.



This student shows her movement for "V" and "Volcano!"



## ***Region 10 Differentiates Academics and Performance Assessments to Develop Knowledge and Skills Needed to Love Your Work and Do It Well!***

Our mission at *Region Ten* is to help students acquire industry-identified professional skills so that students are ready to join the workforce or move on for further education in their fields of interest. State and national industry credentialing standards guide what we teach at Region Ten.

Students work in the classroom to learn material and then move to the shop to apply what they are learning. For many students, applying knowledge in the hands-on lab setting helps make sense of what they are studying. What they are learning is relevant, useful, and meaningful.

For students, working in the labs is also highly motivating. When applying the Bernoulli principle to adjust a motorcycle engine, estimating materials to place a lumber order, drawing on stages of development to problem solve a preschooler's behavior, or multiplying fractions to triple recipes for a crowd, applying what they are learning improves student understanding and retention.

Much of what we teach at Region Ten requires a different skill set than more traditional high school classes. Mechanical aptitude, good eye-hand coordination, independent problem solving skills, empathy, teamwork, strong communication skills, or discriminating taste buds can be critical for success at Region Ten! Even reading and writing skills are different. Technical reading requires precision rather than speed and the focus on precisely following steps in order is very different from the skills needed to enjoy a novel.

Students at *Region Ten* are earning credentials and certifications, are learning job-readiness skills, and may be simultaneously earning high school and college credits (for free!). Each year, more than half our students continue their education at two and four year colleges, technical schools, certificate programs, apprenticeships, or the military. Technical education meets student learning styles while preparing students for success after graduation.

**Coffin School First Grade Teachers Kalie Dunn, Ashley Martin and Brenda Shea** used grant money for summer work to continue their work to develop teaching tools to guide their students writing. These teachers worked together to create three writing rubrics which reflect four areas of assessment for narrative, information and opinion writing. They used their newly developed English Language Arts (ELA) *Understanding by Design* on Writing, Common Core Standards, and Writing Units of Study from *Lucy Calkins* writing program to guide their rubric. This rubric is useful for First Grade teachers to track a student's learning progression and will guide differentiation of writing instruction across the genres throughout the school year. Ultimately, student versions of these rubrics will foster students' ability to monitor their own learning and develop their own learning targets.

In addition, these teachers created a teacher/student feedback system which is user-friendly and nurtures independent writers. This system tracks student growth and guides a teachers' ability to form small groups within the classroom for "target teaching!"

The 'art' of  
**TEACHing...**

is the art of...

**ASSISTing  
DISCOVERY**



Mark Van Doren

**HARRIET BEECHER STOWE  
SCHOOL TEACHERS LOU  
SULLIVAN, MARC MAZZEROLLE,  
ANDREW KOSAK KRISTEN HUNTER,  
and HOLLY GREENE** worked over the

summer so they could "hit the ground running" when school started in September. Their work supports the fifth grade math program's ability to differentiate for students' needs and strengths and communicate the plan and its impact on students with the fifth grade parents/guardians.

As part of their work, this group of teachers collaborated to design a pre-assessments for math concepts, a pacing guide, lesson extensions and re-teaching strategies, replacement activities and reviewed wording on the chapter assessments and a letter which communicates this differentiated direction with parents/guardians.



# REAL School

Relevant | Experiential | Authentic | Learning

The **REAL School**, presently located on Mackworth Island is off to a great start this year. They are excited to be part of the **Brunswick School Department** and are looking forward to many years to come!

The **REAL School** shared its facilities with **Brunswick Junior High School** this fall. The entire BJHS sixth grade student community challenged themselves on the REAL School's ropes course. This was a perfect opportunity to share the beautiful outdoor school space on Mackworth Island with their Brunswick community.

Differentiation and meeting students where they are as learners is a true strength for the REAL School. Programming success depends on the staff's understanding and intention to differentiate for student strengths and needs. Differentiation is embedded in the everyday learning environment. **As is noted in its logo, education at the REAL School is *relevant, experiential, and authentic learning.***

*"Experiential learning stimulates original thinking and develops a wide range of thinking strategies and perceptual skills which are not called forth by books or lectures."*

*From Teaching for the Two-Sided Mind by Linda Williams*

Look for our next issue of BSD Teacher Talk in the winter months. BSD Teacher Talk Contact Person is Sharon McCormack (207)319-1950 Ext 4128  
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**Martin Mackey, Principal of the REAL School** noted the following happenings at the REAL School this fall.

We are starting a collaboration with the **Maine College of Art** and the Space gallery in Downtown Portland.

Many of our students are working with the **Animal Refuge League** to get animals ready for adoption.

Students built several houses for **Kestrels** on Mackworth Island fields and look forward to observing the birds as they start to inhabit the boxes.

A **SySTEM AmeriCorps Grant** supports **STEM** programming while support the participation of three **AmeriCorps** members as part of the REAL School staff.

The **Culinary** classroom is hard at work making food for all our students, and several guest chefs have worked with our students on special projects using resources from our student tended gardens on the island.

