

Rochester

School District Newsletter

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

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- Focus Monitoring
“Cultivating a
Culture of Collec-
tive Responsibility”
- The Times They
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- Everyday Mathe-
matics Parents
Nights
- Questions &
Comments:

RSDNewsletter@
rochesterschools.com

H1N1 UPDATE

~Mike Hopkins

For several weeks, NH has been among the states where the Centers for Disease Control is reporting widespread influenza-like illness. In addition, the NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is tracking school absences around the state. We know that absences due to flu-like symptoms are increasing and that health care providers’ offices are becoming much busier. In short, it is clear that the flu is in our communities, that it is spreading, and that more people will probably be affected before it peaks. Most cases of flu-like illnesses are now due to the H1N1 virus. We don’t know whether the usual, “seasonal” flu will arrive later in the fall/winter.

School administrators and nurses continue to be in close touch with the NH DHHS re appropriate policies regarding prevention and management of illness in our schools. Public health officials continue to stress the importance of personal hygiene, including frequent hand-washing, coughing into your sleeve, not sharing food or eating utensils, etc.

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FOCUS MONITORING “CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY”

~Sharon Pray

The Rochester School Department has been chosen by the Department of Education to participate in Focus Monitoring for the next two years. Many Rochester administrators, educational professionals, a parent, Spaulding HS students and a school board member have been working collaboratively with the Department of Education consultants to analyze data, review current practices and develop strategies to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Focused Monitoring is a point of convergence for the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA 2004) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), demonstrating that the two federal mandates can not only co-exist, but can work together to benefit all students. IDEA 2004 measures an individual student’s progress toward meeting his/her annual academic and/or functional IEP goals. NCLB measures the annual performance of all students in math and reading on a state assessment. Focused Monitoring measures the growth of students with disabilities in math and reading in comparison to their non-disabled peers.

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THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'

~Sally Riley

We often hear the youth of today being referred to as Digital Natives-that is "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, video games, and the Internet. John Prensky (2001), adolescent literacy researcher, contrasts "native speakers" with the rest of us who are Digital Immigrants. Like most immigrants we retain part of an "accent," that is our foot in the past. In Prensky's words, "the 'digital immigrant accent' can be seen in such things as turning to the Internet for information second rather than first, or in reading the manual for a program rather than thinking that the program itself will teach us."

As Prensky recognizes, students that are sitting in our schools today are "used to the instantaneity of hypertext, downloaded music, phones in their pockets, a library on their laptop, beamed messages and instant messaging."



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EVERYDAY MATHEMATICS PARENT NIGHTS

~ Mary Moriarty

November 30, 2009 - Chamberlain School 6:30 p.m.

December 1, 2009 - McClelland School 6:30 p.m.

Learn math the way your child does; attend an *Everyday Mathematics* Night Workshop on Algorithms Monday, November 30 at Chamberlain School 6:30 p.m. or Wednesday, December 2 at McClelland School 6:30 p.m. An *algorithm* is the step-by-step instructions for doing something. It is very similar to a recipe for making cookies. In mathematics, we use algorithms to add, subtract, multiply and divide. In the *Everyday Mathematics* program children learn a variety of algorithms to solve problems. These algorithms are different than the algorithms historically taught in schools. They encourage a deeper understanding of mathematics and higher-order thinking skills.

Jeannene Mason, *Everyday Mathematics* Consultant from *Education in Transition*, will be working with the Rochester Elementary Schools during the week of November 30. Mrs. Mason will be leading the *Everyday Mathematics* Parent Nights. An accomplished educator, Jeannene has worked with schools in forty-nine states and seven countries to use *Everyday Mathematics* in pursuit of better understanding, higher academic achievement and improved test scores in mathematics.

During the evening, Mrs. Mason will demonstrate for parents the following algorithms: *Partial-Sums, Column-Addition, Opposite-Change Rule, Trade-First Subtraction, Counting-Up, Left-to-Right Subtraction, The Same-Change Rule, Partial-Products, Modified Repeated Addition, Lattice Multiplication Method, Partial-Quotients and Column Division.*

We invite parents to join us at Chamberlain School on Monday, November 30 at 6:30 p.m. or McClelland School on Wednesday, December 2 at 6:30 p.m. If you would like more information, please contact Mary Moriarty, Curriculum Coordinator at 332 - 3678 extension 124. We hope to see you there!

H1N1 UPDATE, CONT.

There are currently no routine recommendations to close schools in NH because of illness or to keep healthy children home from school. However, it is important for children and staff who are sick to stay home from school, as well as from special events such as dances, birthday parties, family events and other public gatherings. Children should stay home unless seeking medical care until they have no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine. If any family members who are pregnant, have asthma or any other underlying health condition become sick with flu like symptoms, they are advised to contact a health care provider at the onset of these symptoms. *Our attendance data shows a 2% reduction in attendance comparing October 2008 and October 2009.*

Sick students will not be penalized for staying home. All of the principals in our school district will make sure that students have ample opportunity to make up missed work. Students do not need to provide a doctor's note to explain their absence, but we do ask that parents contact their children's school to let us know that they are out because of illness and to report whether they have flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, headache, body aches, sometimes vomiting and diarrhea).

NH DHHS encourages all students and staff to get both the seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccines, if possible. This is especially important for children with chronic illnesses such as asthma and other underlying health conditions, as well as for pregnant women. Unfortunately, vaccine supplies all over the country are limited due to manufacturing delays. We understand that many families have been frustrated by their inability to obtain vaccines for their children after being told how important it is. Vaccine availability in NH changes on a daily basis. Please contact your health care provider's office to find out if your child can be immunized there.

For more information: The NH DHHS has set up a special flu "hot-line" – just call 2-1-1 (8AM – 5PM) to talk to someone. There is also a lot of reliable information on the CDC and NH DHHS web-sites: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu and http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/DHHS_SITE/swineflu.htm. Please contact your family health care provider or school nurse if you have specific questions about your own children.

Thank you for working with us to keep everyone in our schools as healthy as possible during this flu season.



THE TIMES THEY ARE A- CHANGIN', CONT.

In this new world of multi-literate youth, we all need to take a step back and consider what really counts as reading? As educators we cannot narrow our thinking. You often hear that "kids don't remember concepts, even a couple of days after the test" or "kids seem to read the text, finish the assignment, but have no real idea of what they read" or "kids don't apply things they learned in new situations" or "kids today don't seem as articulate in their writing or speaking as kids of ten or fifteen years ago." Could part of the reason be that we have not engaged them in their "native language?"

Some activities that today's students are engaging in outside of school include: weblogs, wikis, digital images, digital video/digital storytelling, and podcasts. Maybe we should expand our thinking as to what not only counts as reading and writing, but also how schools can merge what students know about technology with what it means to read and write well. Maybe parents, educators, and the community need to recognize that "the times are a- changin'." Maybe we all need to recognize that students are a lot smarter than the standardize tests give them credit for. Maybe....



QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

School Board Members

Ward	Name	Ward	Name
AL	Anne Grassie	4A	Anthony Pastelis
1A	Peggy Parker	4B	Travis Allen
1B	Audrey Stevens	5A	Pamela Hubbard
2A	William Brennan	5B	Doris Gates
2B	Caroline McCarley	6A	Andrew Grassie
3A	*John Connelly	6B	Robert Watson
3B	Evelyn Logan	3A	*Julie Brown (effective Jan. 2010)

FOCUS MONITORING “CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY”, CONT.

Big Ideas:

- **Focusing on one or more Key Performance Indicator (KPI)** - In New Hampshire, the KPI for 2007-08 has been identified as “the achievement gap” between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.
- **Targeting resources for continuous improvement where most needed.**
- **Monitoring compliance of what is important and achievable for educational benefit.**

Focused Monitoring becomes the accountability and management system that supports measurable, continuous systemic improvement.

Essential Study Question:

What are the contributing factors to the achievement gap between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers, and how may this gap be narrowed?

The Rochester School Department has chosen to focus on Spaulding High School and how we may implement strategies and instructional practices to “narrow” the achievement gap between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. Our Goal for the next two years is to **“establish a culture within Spaulding High School that allows and supports dialogue and discussion among all staff that addresses student achievement”**. In an effort to achieve this goal, various committees have been established and are working to address various factors that contribute to the achievement gap.

“School systems must create a culture that places values on managing by results, rather than on managing by programs. It is essential that leaders work to establish a culture where results are carefully assessed and actions are taken based on these assessments.” Phil Schlechty, *Creating the Capacity to Sup-*

For more information about Focus Monitoring or if you would like to become involved, please contact Sharon Pray, Director of Student Services at 332-3678.