



REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY

STUDENT LEADERSHIP IN RAYMOND SCHOOLS

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Raymond High School is very fortunate to have a student leadership group who is very involved in improving school climate through PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions Supports) and APEX II drop out prevention program (Achievement in Prevention and Excellence).

During this past summer, a group of teachers, students and administrators traveled to Attitash Mountain Resort in Bartlett, N.H. to attend the PBIS conference on student behavior. The conference dealt with student behavior at the high school level. Multiple workshops were held on behavior interventions by teachers. Teachers were instructed by these speakers on how to react and redirect incorrect behavior of our students.

Hank Bohanan, of Loyola of Chicago, a renowned speaker on student behavior, was exceptionally meaningful. Mr. Bohanan used humor to explain to teachers how to diffuse confrontational situations between themselves and students by creating a win-win situation where both student and teacher gain mutual respect.

Three students from Raymond were nominated to the National Board of Student Leaders at this conference: Kaitlyn Edwards, Katelyn Brown and Mackenzie Sickel. They will represent Raymond and the state of New Hampshire at conferences concerning school climate.

The APEX II grant was instituted by the New Hampshire Department of Education. A three-year (2006 – 2008) dropout prevention grant that was extended to 2009, APEX demonstrated the promise of strategically combining three powerful school improvement strategies to reduce drop out rates and improve individual student success and overall school climate. These strategies are: 1. Positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS), a systemic data driven behavioral support and improvement process; 2. Rehabilitation, Empowerment, Natural supports, Education and Work (R.E.N.E.W.), an intensive individualized school to career service for the most at risk students, and; 3. Student leadership, including a student led needs assessment and action program where students work with P.B.I.S universal teams to assess and improve school climate, safety and learning.

SAVE THE DATE!

**RAYMOND SCHOOL DISTRICT
FIRST DELIBERATIVE SESSION**

**SATURDAY,
JANUARY 30, 2010**

New World Language Series

The World Language Teachers are pleased to announce the adoption of our new text book series *Buen Viaje* in Spanish and *Bon Voyage* in French. These textbooks are being used in all level 1, 2, and 3 language classes. The new textbooks are aligned with the National Standards and the New Hampshire Guidelines for World Language Learning. Students enrolled in Spanish and French will be able to meet the “five C’s” of world language education which include: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. *Buen Viaje* and *Bon Voyage* will teach our students vocabulary that is relevant to their lives in the modern era. Grammar is embedded within the context of the theme of each unit. Cultural information is presented throughout each unit.

The *Buen Viaje/Bon Voyage* series incorporates leveling indicators that help the classroom teacher differentiate the instruction to meet the needs of all students more effectively. Glencoe offers extensive multimedia resources to help diversify instruction and to engage students in the learning process. They reflect current best practices in education and are designed to work with a variety of scheduling options such as trimester, block or traditional schedules.

The Glencoe textbook series is designed to immerse the students into the language and culture both in written form and via the Internet. These textbooks have more online resources for both students and staff. Students can access chapter related activities online by visiting www.glencoe.com. They also have more resources for using technology in the classroom such as pre-designed SmartBoard activities that students really enjoy. The DVD series that accompanies the textbook will expose our students to the linguistic and cultural diversity that exist in the Spanish-speaking world.

Treasures Reading Program

Last year, the Raymond School District completed a demanding project to select the best reading program for the needs of our PreK-6 students. The top three PreK-6 reading series were thoroughly reviewed and critiqued by a team of our District’s teachers from each of the grades Pre-school through grade 6. The reading series chosen after several months of study was *Treasures* which is published by MacMillan/McGraw-Hill. The committee’s vote for the best selection for our use was overwhelmingly in favor of *Treasures*. The *Treasures* series, and its companion intervention program, *Triumphs*, are research-based with an extremely strong authorship team. Some of the key features of this program are:

- Explicit phonics instruction
- Leveled practice
- Differentiated Instruction
- Intervention program for students below grade level in reading and writing literacy
- Teach/review cycle

The intervention program contained within *Treasures* is aligned with the national movement known as Response to Intervention (RtI) and contains three tiers of instructional intervention. This will allow our teachers to address the diverse needs of all of their students with well-developed, easy-to-use instructional tools. The targeted instructional methods of the *Treasures/Triumphs* program are designed to provide corrective feedback and facilitate the teaching/learning process.

Teacher training with the *Treasures* program commenced with two ½ day sessions on August 25. Teachers of grades PreK-2 were trained in a morning session and teachers of grades 3-6 were trained in an afternoon session. The trainer spent the time showing all of the components of this reading series so that all of the teachers would have a grasp of how to begin using the materials. The MacMillan/McGraw-Hill Company will provide all of the professional development training that we require for the life of the product. So far, the support has been very good. We look forward to becoming familiar with all of the available components. We know that we have provided an excellent and enduring educational tool to our PreK-6 classrooms.

VIEW THE STRATEGIC PLAN, AS WELL AS MUCH OTHER INFORMATION, AT WWW.SAU33.COM!

STRATEGIC PLANNING IN RAYMOND SCHOOL DISTRICT

In September, the District's Strategic Planning Team met for the first annual review of the plan. The Strategic Team is made up of 24 people representing the schools, parents and community. At this work session, 12 strategic goals were discussed as to their level of operation and the action items assigned to each goal. Of the 11 strategic goals, 5 are now deemed to be operational, meaning they are in process, being progress monitored, and have become how we do our business in the areas addressed.

These operational goals are:

- Develop and implement a high quality professional development program;
- Consistent focus given to work on the mission of the District;
- Regularly communicate the District's news and success to the public;
- Re-evaluate and adjust how IEP meetings are scheduled;
- Make efficient use of our present facilities.

Five additional strategic goals were added to the Strategic Plan along with their respective action items:

- Our students will meet and exceed grade span expectations for science;
- Use standards-based grading in measuring student success;
- Develop and implement technological and educational resources for 21st Century Schools;
- Research and propose evaluation strategies and alternative compensation practices for staff based on new federal and state accountability regulations;
- Develop a district-wide preschool (age 4) program.

Six original strategic goals remain strategic for the district and now have additional action items to support the goals:

- Each student will meet or exceed grade level expectations in reading and math;
- The Raymond School District will provide time for staff to collaborate on key educational issues connected to student achievement and improvement;
- We will engage parents and community members in our students' learning activities;
- We will develop an effective internal and external communication process for sharing our mission and goals;
- The Raymond School District will hold assigned groups/individuals accountable for implementation of the mission and goals;
- Identify the best use of all human resources.

The Strategic Planning Team and the School Board also reaffirmed the School District Mission.

“The Mission of the Raymond School District is to develop successful and adaptable lifelong learners. With our community as partners, each student will be valued, encouraged and challenged by a rigorous and relevant program.”

Next annual review of the Raymond School District Strategic Plan will be held near the end of the current school year. The District's Strategic Plan has provided us with defined goals and actions to improve our student achievement and success.

Thank you to all the Strategic Planning Team members and the School Board for their work on this very important planning for the future of the District and our students.

Dr. Jean R. Richards,
Superintendent of Schools

Team of Teachers and Administrators to Examine Action Research

We are excited to share with you another exciting opportunity being developed this year to improve teaching and learning in the Raymond School District. A team of administrators and teachers is being constructed to learn about Action Research in education.

Action Research is a process where individuals or groups of teachers focus on their teaching and teaching practices in order to improve and refine their skills. Typically, teachers identify instructional approaches they are using and measure their impact on student learning through the use of different types of assessments. Action Research is a reflective process which allows teachers, over time, to determine which teaching strategies work best with which types of students. This information is critical to ensuring that we provide the very best quality instruction for all of our students here in Raymond.

Through our Action Research book study, our focus this year is to learn together about the power of reflection and the creative approaches that improve both teaching and learning. As we learn together about this process, we will engage our teachers in rich discussions about improving student learning for all. These discussions help to energize and motivate us as educators to continue to improve our teaching to impact learning for all of our students.

Chicago Math Project

A Standards-Based Series

During the 2008-2009 school year, a team of our middle school math teachers representing grades 6-8 spent several months reviewing and sampling math books and supporting materials from a variety of publishers. Over time, the team narrowed down the choices, with the goal of selecting the best possible standards-based series for our students. At the end of the research, the top choice of the group, by far, was the University of Chicago School Math Project (UCSMP) series, also known as Chicago Math. The Chicago Math series is outstanding in several areas. The lessons are centered on practical, real-world applications. The National Council of Teachers of Math (NCTM) standards, as well as the New Hampshire standards, are covered thoroughly within the program. This series is published by the same company (McGraw-Hill) as our K-5 Everyday Math series. Therefore, there is a solid connection between the two series. Skills learned in Everyday Math will be carried over into the Chicago Math series. Our students will notice that there is a strong correlation between both series and it is our belief that this connection will aide in the learning process. The first year will be a lot of hard work for teachers and students. The bar of accomplishment has been set higher than ever before, so without doubt there will be a learning curve for us, just as there was when we began with Everyday Math five years ago. Our students have experienced great success with Everyday Math, and we expect the same levels of success with Chicago Math.

Professional Development

On August 18, 2009, our math teachers took part in a ½ day training session with a national trainer from the McGraw-Hill Companies. The instruction was centered on how to use the materials and how to develop lessons within the Chicago Math philosophy. This philosophy includes the use of math games, math projects, and reading strategies. These provide differentiated opportunities for all students, and are designed to make math class more enjoyable and thought provoking. Another philosophical component that the group learned more about is the use of real world connections. Real world connections are important to understanding mathematics in our world. Students need contexts in which to fit mathematical ideas. They need to know why it is important to become competent in mathematical content and skills. The integration of the Chicago Math series will be monitored during 2009-2010 to make sure we are implementing it as faithfully as possible.

Instructional Technology

The Raymond School District has been working hard to become a true 21st Century style school district. We recognize the need for our students and teachers to have access to technology tools in their classrooms, yet it is sometimes a challenge to provide all that we know they should have in order to take part in today's digital world. Some of the technology purchases have come from our budget, but that can only take us part way to our goals. Much of our new technology equipment has come to us in the form of grants. We have utilized grants won from Title I, Title IID, Title V, IDEA, E-Rate, and the Walker Fund multiple times to purchase equipment and provide training to teachers. We will continue to explore these and other grant opportunities. In the past several years, many of our classrooms have been outfitted with interactive whiteboards, LCD projectors, and educational software. Many of our teachers have been trained in the use of the new equipment and software, and now we have a large cadre of teachers who are capable of training other teachers in the use of technology tools. One of our teachers is currently taking Technology Leadership training, through a Title IID grant. It is important that we keep finding ways to make our classrooms places where technology is integrated into daily activities. Our students will someday have jobs and careers that require technology knowledge and skills.

The District's Technology Committee has developed an action plan for the goals outlined below:

- Provide at least one up-to-date computer in every classroom: The state recommendation for student to computer ratio is 5 to 1. An immediate goal is to have at least one modern multi-media computer station available to students and teachers in each classroom to enable the use of network resources for everyone.
- Maintain the utilization of a central point for software and hardware approval and purchase: All software/hardware purchase requests will be sent through the technology office for approval.
- Provide one district-wide director and one full time technology support person at each of our three buildings.
- Connect all district buildings with fiber-optic cable for the sharing of network resources.
- Continue to integrate the use of technology throughout the curriculum as defined by NETS and NH ICT Literacy Standards.
- Provide a web-based automated school library system linked to the district website.
- Provide mobile computer labs for each academic department at RHS and in each grade at IHGMS, available for use by all teachers and all students.
- Encourage the use of Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS) and other opportunities for distance learning/virtual classroom in the district.
- Provide universal access to technology resources to all levels of education.
- Compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act: To receive Title I and E-Rate funding, each district must install and use Internet filtering to protect the interests of its students. The Raymond School District will continue to implement the proper monitoring procedures to meet this requirement.
- Establish a collaborative partnership with the community and volunteers to include continuing educational opportunities and technology communication tools.
- Increase the security, efficiency and productivity of the district network resources.
- Encourage community awareness and support for technology use throughout the district.
- Leverage district staff resources through use of volunteers for hardware and software support.

COMPETENCY ASSESSMENTS

This summer several high school teachers and administrators spent time writing course competency assessments. Course competencies and assessments are a New Hampshire Department of Education initiative that all New Hampshire high schools have been working on for the past several years. All course competencies at Raymond High School align to the New Hampshire State Standards or National Standards for those classes with no state standards.

Raymond High School course competencies are based on curriculum that students must understand when they complete the course. The assessment of course competencies is performance-based: we want students to show us what they know. Competencies and the assessments make the connections between the curriculum and the real world. Teachers have incorporated the school wide academic expectations in their course competencies, integrating relevant learning expectations and school wide rubrics from the school's mission statement.

Competency assessments are based on a standard of assessment for all students and this will lead Raymond High School to report student performance in relation to mastery of the subject. Raymond High School is working to continually refine, develop and implement a formal process to assess the achievement of all students against course standards that are agreed upon and communicated to students and parents.

Raymond School District
School District Newsletter
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