

The ABC's of Winter from OCI

aka "MOST" of what happened in December, January, and part of February from the Office of Curriculum and Instruction



Advisory Council – We have had three meetings since my last update: November was business as usual; December was a resource share that I hope your representatives attached to an email for you; and January was back to business but with a sense of wondering what our next steps will be. At the January meeting, we provided the group with an update on how the budget freeze will impact AC. We were thinking probably one more full meeting, but in meeting with AC Leadership Thursday, we have the following recommendation:

February 27th – ADARR to complete a data dig of NECAP results; CSI to begin plans for Tiered PD for April regarding standards-based systems, CCSS, and Smarter Balanced next steps; PDaTE to review the 3-12 feedback on taking the Smarter Balanced Assessment (Agendas will be available 2/24.)

March 20th – ONLY CSI will meet

April 17th – NO MEETING

May 15th – Final AC Meeting for RSU #23 – Saco, Dayton, OOB

Our current focus is on SBA and CCSS, and the AC Leadership team is committed to providing our teachers and administrators with the utmost support. I want to extend my thanks to the many of you who served on AC throughout the RSU tenure. We feel this is an appropriate balance of fiscal responsibility and moving forward our teaching and learning initiatives.

Apple Talks/MLTI Offerings – The Apple Talks I alluded to last memo are tabled for now...HOWEVER, many SMS teachers just experienced a worthwhile afternoon with Lindsay Carnes, Apple professional and iBooks Author trainer. We are in the process of bringing more Apple people to our middle schools to support MLTI work. If you are a MLTI teacher and have a specific need, it is very easy to send in a proposal. Let me know how I can help! Pat Evans, thank you for bringing iBooks Author to our attention and for facilitating the PD that afternoon at SMS!

C3 Framework – The SS 6-12 co-chairs and I have been studying the C3 Framework – College, Career, and Civic Life for Social Studies Standards – and discussing how best to share this information with our History teachers. This is a “guide for enhancing the rigor of K-12 civics, economics, geography, and history.”

The Maine Council of Social Studies is offering some very affordable PD opportunities as well. If you are interested in attending the March 13th Dine and Discuss but have not received information, please let me know. I see the C3 Framework discussions as an opportunity to celebrate what we are doing well in our field and to fine tune inquiry-based discussions as well. A link to the Framework is provided at the OCI website: www.abcsoftheoci.weebly.com/c3-ss-framework.html

CCSS – We held two informational nights – one on January 21st and the other this past Tuesday, February 4th. Between the two sessions, we welcomed approximately 35 parents, concerned citizens, board members, administrators, and teachers. Thank you to those of you who attended!!! Superintendent Phillips shared an overview of the history behind standards-based reform; Barbara Fletcher and Gwyneth Nicholson shared examples of how the shifts to instruction have occurred in the classrooms of RSU #23; and I introduced attendees to the Smarter Balanced Assessment. One of my takeaways from the two sessions is that attendees seemed to want us to land on one side or the other in support of common core. I am hopeful that concerned citizens walked away understanding this law.

CK Burns Artwork – Our District Art Teachers do a beautiful job adding to the aesthetics of central office each month! Thanks to Loranger, Dayton, Young, and SMS for the past gallery shows. CK Burns' student artwork is currently on display...stop by and see for yourself.

Dine and Discuss(ions) –

A. Our second RSU #23 Dine & Discuss was Thursday, November 21st. Again, what a great group attended! Thank you to Barbara, Sandy, Cathy, Mary-Elise, Leah, Eileen, and Supt. Phillips for the great discussions on “Clarity, Criteria, and Cognitive Empathy.”

B. Our Reading Teacher Leaders are hosting a FABULOUS event with Kathy Collins on Monday, March 10th from 4:00-6:00 at People's Choice. This event is FREE to RSU 23 teachers. Please spread the word to your teaching friends around the area; the cost for out-of-district attendees is \$20. See attachment for more information. We currently have 67 registrants – very exciting!

easyCBM – Winter testing season is upon us.....the window is open until March 15th. This is for all first through fifth grade students in Saco and Dayton and 8th grade students at SMS. If I can be of any help in using the data, please do not hesitate to contact me. This is the final year we will be purchasing easyCBM. ADARR will discuss how best to make this transition. ALSO, the number of Progress Monitoring resources via EasyCBM is quite impressive. If you have not taken time during an RTI meeting or PLT discussion to review these resources, please do not let the opportunity pass.

ELA CDT – K-5 Literacy PD on December 11th was a great success. Thank you to our dedicated CDT and R/TL representatives for all your hard work! Kathy Collins met with both K-2 and 3-5, but feedback for the focused mini-workshops and grade-level discussions was exemplary – “It is always helpful getting activities we can use.” “This session was very helpful and engaging.” In my last report out, I mistakenly said the February was an ELA day...our final ELA day as RSU #23 will be in April.

- Thank you for the great ways many of you are WOW-ing your students!
- ELA CDT will not be meeting in February; next meeting is March 6th.

EL Staff/Cultural Proficiency - Kathy Spencer sent our participants the following email, and I definitely think it deserves sharing here:

I want to thank you so much for signing up for our three afternoons of thinking and talking and taking next steps on the journey to cultural proficiency. It's never a smooth journey.

I found the conversations to be hopeful and energizing. I appreciated your preparation and your depth of thinking. I found the last class to be challenging for me; I had never focused just on cultural proficiency for six hours, the total of our sessions, and I found myself to be increasingly committed to this thinking - and spurred on by your interest and careful and respectful thinking. That last class ended abruptly - simply, I was sorry to be ending the connection we were beginning to have as a learning community.

I wish you a strong 2014 - and one filled with meaningful work and time for yourself and those around you. Sincerely, Kathy

I truly hope to have more opportunities for others to participate in RBT classes. Thank you, EL Staff (Jen, Jen, Michelle, and Travy) for making this happen!

Federal Accountability/NCLB Report Card – One of the many projects I'm trying to wrap up this coming week is what was previously referred to as our NCLB Report Card. It is now referred to as the Federal Accountability Report due to the waiver Maine recently received. The waiver redefines proficiency numbers since the original NCLB expected 100% proficiency by the end of 2013-2014. I hope to have the appropriate documents uploaded to the website soon.

Literacy in Action – On Wednesday I had the great opportunity to facilitate discussions among our literacy specialists, Title teachers and ed techs, Reading Recovery experts, EL specialists, and others supporting literacy instruction. In the eight years I've been in OOB and the RSU, I've been in awe of the expertise within our nine school buildings. We shared best practices and strategies, and celebrated the expertise within our buildings. Thank you for the great two hours, ladies! Special thanks to Amy Tousignant and Danielle Bogardus for being such

wonderful hostesses! I will forward our Google document, resource posters, and pictures soon!

Math CDT – Your Math CDT members are continuing their exploration/understanding of the Mathematical Practices. 6-8 CDT members are using exit slips to formatively assess student understanding of the focus for that grade level. Math CDT facilitated the ERD on February 12th. K-2 continued work on report card benchmarks and assessments; 3-12 studied the Smarter Balanced Assessment – the tools, features, and question types. All Smarter Balanced links are on our Curriculum and Instruction website for anyone who may have missed the opportunity.

NECAPs – Principals are concluding their 10-day review of NECAP data – primarily the information that is uploaded from MEDMS. Upon initial review, our data shows that across the RSU, 70% of our students are proficient in Reading; 60% in Math; and 50% in Writing. I have been working with teachers from many of the buildings to establish accounts and data tables to review teaching and testing year data. If you are interested in learning more about this, do not hesitate to contact me. Although this is the last review of NECAP data, there are some valuable takeaways as we move forward. Most of my February vacation will be spent disaggregating and analyzing.

New Staff Meetings – Next meeting is Wednesday, March 12th

NGSS – Our three Science CDT Co-chairs – Michaela Lamarre, Kristen Moustrouphis, and John Nye – represented RSU 23 this past Wednesday, February 12th at a full-day event at People's Choice in Saco. The Curriculum Coordinators from York and Cumberland Counties pooled resources to bring in Brett Moulding, Director of the Utah Partnership for Effective Science Teaching and Learning, to share his expertise with teacher leaders who are already incorporating the tenets of the Next Generation Science Standards. Never heard of Brett? Google him and check him out! Michaela, Kristen, and John will be sharing their new learning with our science teachers (and guiding our K-5 next steps, I hope) at our April ERD.

NWEAs – The winter testing window closes at the end of the month. Seventh grade teachers at SMS proctored for the first time and did an outstanding job. This was our first attempt using the iPads, and overall it was a huge success. At SMS, thank you to Celeste Libby, Dianne Fearon, Pat Evans, and Terri Cameron for helping us navigate the iPad testing situation. LMS and OOBHS are finishing up, and I'm very thankful to all the proctors who worked through kinks and “RED” status checks.

Proficiency-based Diploma Work – Did you know that the current 8th grade students in Maine will be required to graduate from high school with a standards-based diploma (except those who will be attending private academies)? That

being said, Rick and his leadership team at OOBHS, have been immersed in conversations and collaborations on this. I'm working with the Saco Bay Educational Collaborative to bring grades 6-12 teachers together from our schools, Wells, RSU 21, and Biddeford. I hope to have more information on this soon. OOB Schools and SMS are also gearing up for the MPA Summer Retreat on proficiency-based reform efforts. These opportunities are thanks to the 1/10 of 1% monies the state has provided districts. This is quite an endeavor!

Reading Teacher Leaders – Although our monthly meetings have come to an end, the great work this group has done with “Responding to Reading” will be shared soon via the literacy website Terrilyn Lebel, Janet Giguere, and Cathy Melanson have created. All K-5 teachers MUST visit this site! If you have not, please have your PLT, grade-level team, or job-alike make time on an upcoming agenda to do so! Great job, ladies!

Report Card Update – Overall feedback of Trimester I rollout has been positive. The Report Card Committee will be seeking feedback from parents and teachers in March. The 2nd Trimester report cards will go home with students on March 14th. Although documents read that grades “close” on the 7th, teachers can input data at any time. One of the items we will seek feedback on in March is the rating scale for Work Habits. Currently teachers note whether a student’s behaviors are Excellent, Good or in Need of Improvement. The RCC is recommending that if a teacher is contemplating between Good and NI that they choose NI – especially in the beginning trimester. We will seek feedback on whether or not we should add an indicator between Good and NI. Also, the RCC will be sharing two documents we are deeming as best practice for teachers and/or administrators to share with parents: one is a letter Mike Flaherty has authored titled “Be a 3” and the other is an example from first grade Fairfield teacher/Report Card Committee member Danielle Bogardus. After completing her first trimester reports, Danielle wrote a “state of her classroom” letter. These will be placed on the OCI website for staff this week.

SBAC Training – Our 3-12 staff learned more about Smarter Balanced on Wednesday, February 12th, but I also participated in a helpful webinar during our snow day last week. Wowzers is a company from Chicago that has created their own practice math sessions for grades 3-8. They hosted “Addressing Online Testing Challenges with Your Students.” Let me share with you some strategies to consider as we learn more about this computer-adaptive assessment and how best to prepare our students:

1. Explicitly teach the **action verbs** students will be exposed to in each question (at least 15 different verbs throughout the math tests – Explain, Drag, Write, Select, Complete, Plot, Create...).
2. Show students how to identify and to use the navigation tools as well as how to solve the questions.

3. Facilitate individual practice of different vocab-focused assessment objects.
4. Begin with action verb and scaffold toward mastering the entire question.
5. “Show and Explain” – SBAC asks students to show basic skills knowledge and to use that knowledge within a higher-order application task.
6. Have students write about math everyday and utilize problem-based activities.

You are more than welcome to check out wowzers.com and let me know what you think of the “product.”

Social Studies CDT – See the C3 Framework info.....

Title I – Barbara Stasio will be forwarding a data collection template to all Title I staff soon.

WOW! – Academic vocabulary can always be improved; make sure you are taking advantage of the great work Barbara Fletcher and Gwyneth Nicholson have prepared via the prezis and resources. It’s never too late to start incorporating WOW into your school day!

February & March OCI Dates:

Monday, Feb. 24th – SBEC Curriculum Meeting – 8:30 in Kennebunk

Tuesday, Feb. 25th - Math LT Meeting 7:30-9:00 at C.O.

Wednesday, Feb. 26th - ELA LT Meeting 7:30-9:00 at C.O.

Thursday, Feb. 27th – Advisory Council meets at SMS 3:00-4:15
Science CDT Co-Chairs meet at LMS

Friday, Feb. 28th - Registration Deadline for Kathy Collins' Dine & Discuss
Winter Testing Window closes for NWEA

Tuesday, March 4th - Math CDT Meetings

Wednesday, March 5th - Saco MSAU Board Meeting – 7:00 City Hall

Thursday, March 6th - ELA CDT Meetings

Friday, March 7th - York and Cumberland County Curriculum Meeting – 8:30

Monday, March 10th - Kathy Collins Dine & Discuss at People's Choice 4:00-6:00

Tuesday, March 11th - RSU #23 Board Meeting – Saco City Hall

Wednesday, March 12th - CDLN (Literacy) Dine and Discuss at USM – 4-7:00 PM

Thursday, March 13th - AC Leadership Meeting – 12-3:00
MCSS Dine and Discuss in Portland – 4-6:00

Sunday, March 16th - Mary's Walk – Saco

Thursday, March 20th – NWEA Growth and Goals session at MPA – 8:00-3:00

Tuesday, March 25th – Author Cynthia Lord at LMS for the day
Math CDT Leadership Meeting – 7:30-9 AM

Wednesday, March 26th – Tentative Literacy Specialists' Collaboration at People's Choice 2:00
Saco MSAU Board Meeting – Finalize budget – 7:00 – City Hall

