

Learning Circle Connection

Connecting you to events, resources, technology, curriculum, and instruction ...
Creating a learning community that uses best practices to meet the diverse
needs of all students

SAU 53 News and Reviews

Fall 2010
Volume 2, Issue 1

Boxes, Boxes, and More Boxes of Science Equipment

500 pieces of equipment were inventoried, tagged, and delivered to 20 classrooms with help of Diane Bourke and SAU Tech Team

If you noticed a parade of large boxes coming into the schools, it is probably the science equipment recently purchased. ENO boards, digital microscopes, flip video cameras, Dell mini and larger laptops and carts, Response Systems, and Digital Science probes were just some of the equipment purchased. Each science teacher also received their own Dell XT2 mini tablet that has a cover that turns 360 degrees and folds into a tablet like you would see UPS or pharmacies use to sign off receipt of items.

What is with this onslaught of boxes coming into our schools? It is new 21st century science technology purchased with ARRA Title II D grant funds. The SAU wrote a grant to explore how computer technology can be integrated into the science curriculum of K-12 classrooms. The Grant will benefit students in 20 classrooms.

During a one-year period - March 2010 through March 31, 2011 each classroom teacher will incorporate digital equipment into lessons, design experiments, collect data, and evaluate how the technology enhanced student learning.

An Integration Technology Specialist, has been hired to help with this project. Professional development for teachers is a major component of this grant. Both teachers and students are extremely excited about this new equipment. Lucille Constantine from PHS, Laurie Hardt and Liz Pearson from AES along with Diane Bourke will be presenting at the Christa McAuliffe Technology conference in Dec. The topic will be "Integrating Probe Ware into K-8 Science Curriculum".

Interview with Diane Bourke, SAU Technology Integration Specialist

Diane is our SAU Technology Integration Specialist hired with science grant funds. She grew up in NH and has recently returned since her husband retired and they wanted to be closer to family. Diane has a degree in Biology with a Masters in Instructional Technology.

What is some of the science equipment purchased and how it can be used?

- Turning Point Response Systems is a great way to do formative assessment because teachers get immediate feedback with the push of a button.
- Digital Cameras- If a class is studying plants, they can take camera to photograph different kinds of plants then put photos into a slide show or mini movie.
- Flip Video Cameras - TRS may use them to video students doing class science experiments.

How can these tools benefit all students including those with various disabilities and other challenges?

- The Student response system (SRS) addresses all students because students can participate, interact, and demonstrate knowledge anonymously. It avoids the embarrassment of raising hand and getting the wrong answer. Students with anxiety issues can be more actively involved without fearing competition. All students get immediate feedback and can self-monitor how they are doing. A SRS gives teachers a new teaching method that is intertwined with student engagement, motivation, assessment, instant feedback and active learning.
- Students with vision difficulties will benefit from document cameras and microscopes that are magnified onto a white board or computer monitor.
- The Cameras and Flip Videos may help build background information as students interact with the environment. The hands-on experiences of touching, observing and documenting their own work is taken back into the classroom.

Diane shares, "The ultimate goal is to infuse 21st century technology to help increase all student achievement. The SAU chose the science curriculum as the pilot program but the goal is to infuse digital tools into all curriculum areas in the future."



Scoop of Events

Literacy and Numeracy Task Force mtgs. open to all , 1:00-3:00 at SAU:

11/18 1:00 Num 2:00 Lit
12/9 1:00 Lit 2:00 Num
1/13 1:00 Num 2:00 Lit
2/10 1:00 Lit 2:00 Num

Book Club 11/16 & 12/21 3:00 at SAU

6 Trait School Visits by Fred Wolff :

11/16 PA Gr. 9-12
12/8 DCS Gr. 3 & 5 assess and scoring
1/25 CCS Gr. 6,7,8
2/17 AES Gr. K-5

Learning Circle Event 11/30 6:30 at PA
Worried Kids in a Stressed Out World by
Lynn Lyons

SAU Data Team 2:30 at SAU: Nov. 15,
Dec. 6 & 20, Jan. 3 & 18, Feb. 7 & 21

Pool of Resources

SAU Resource Center at PA

Read Naturally Stand Alone software
Phonics level 0.8-2.8 and Seq. 1.0-5.0

**Project Read's Framing Your Thoughts
Written Expression Kit** (includes Sentence
Structure & Applied Writing Guides
with DVDS, Sentence Builder set, sound
symbol cards, and Sentence Structures
Practice CD Rom.

Exchange

6 Traits Sites from Fred Wolff

<http://www.writingfix.com>

<http://www.TheTraits.org>

<http://www.sixtraitslive.com>

<http://www.sciencewithme.com/>
Free website offers science animations
movies, Melissa Tanguay, TRS
<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/>
Cool site with interactive games, images,
videos, experiments, and lessons. Ross
Mondello, ECS

Chichester Explores Accommodations and Modifications

Allyson Vignola, State of NH Alternate Assessment Coach visited CCS to discuss differences between accommodations and modifications. A full staff brainstormed 4 chart papers of how they support students every day. Some of these included visual blocking of text, enlarged print, extra time, word banks, scaffolding, reducing number of problems, using technology for access, visual organizers, sensory supports, cues, and pre-teaching. Staff found that a lot of supports they are doing are accommodations, not modifications. Allyson summarized that how you get at or access the content is considered accommodations. Best practice says to do accommodations first exhausting all before considering modifications. Some modifications include changing the content or curriculum expectations such as expecting math facts instead of working on 3 digit problems with regrouping, writing for a student during writing assessment, reading text for a student on a reading test, changing vocabulary, or reducing what students are expected to know.

Key to success is to have team instructional planning time to work together to discuss lessons and discuss what is needed to support students. Allyson shared a helpful technique for students who always choose the last answer during testing. Read all the answers first then read the question. She reminded the group that teams can always ask for “O-Other” accommodations using NECAP Appendix E <http://www.ed.state.nh.us/NECAP>. For example a team had student use a smart board with scanned test for student with autism. Allyson gave copies of “Assessment Supports that are not Accommodations” from NECAP resource booklet pages 4-6 as a reference.

“Allyson did a nice job in starting the conversation about accommodations and modifications.”

Framing Your Thoughts with Bonnie Bell

Language was put into motion making the abstract concrete and grammar more easily accessible at a summer training held June 22-24 at Pembroke Academy. The different movements helped 42 teachers of all ages remember concepts learned to improve written expression instruction.

Teachers had expressed a need for additional training in written expression. The SAU Literacy Task Force advocated for the course in hopes that Project Read Written Expression will be used as a common teaching tool across the district. Designed to teach students, grades k through adult, sentence structure and paragraph development, this course emphasizes direct teaching of concepts and skills, presented in dependent order and delivered through multi-sensory strategies, materials, and activities. Bonnie Bell, presenter, shared that The Applied Writing Active Participation is part of Project Read’s research based materials by Language Circle. The workshop provided the materials needed to build a foundation to teach the writing process. The flexibility of the program allows special educators and RTI staff to meet the varied needs of students. In first grade, the students will learn to write and identify simple sentences and identify the main idea of a story. They will eventually be able to expand those sentences to include adjectives and phrases. Pembroke Village ‘Grade 1 team will connect Framing Your Thoughts Program to the Harcourt Trophies Reading Series and the Picturing Writing Program.

“In the final analysis, a writer is only as good as his or her sentence.” - Percy Marks from [Better Themes](#)

“We took the Framing Your Thoughts workshop in order to learn ways to make writing instruction more meaningful and enjoyable for our students. We have realized that we can incorporate the ideas across our curriculum in Daily Oral Language, vocabulary building activities, comprehension, main idea, and content area instruction. The common language the program offers will be a connecting thread across grade levels. ... We are looking forward to incorporating these new ideas into our teaching of writing.”- Classroom teachers

“We had a great group for the Framing Your Thoughts Training this summer. The three days went quickly. The fact that teachers requested the training made it just that much more meaningful. More of the classroom, teachers, Title 1 teachers, and sped teachers from Hill and Village were present than not. We would eventually like to have all staff trained to use this program in conjunction with 6 Traits Writing” – Pembroke Administrators

“It was fun to participate in the actual lessons we will be teaching to the students. I loved the combination of various learning styles used-visual, kinesthetic, auditory...which will allow all students to become engaged learners. I certainly have enjoyed learning this program. I can already see improvement in my own writing. I can’t wait to use this program with middle school students.” Diane Eaton, Reading Specialist TRS

“Project Read’s bare bone sentences will prove to be a great foundation and stepping stone to determining main idea in sentences, paragraphs, and texts. Work with predicate expanders and subject describers presented us with a powerful tool to develop and enhance student expressive and receptive vocabulary. A goldmine of instructional tools and strategies- well worth an educator’s precious time.”- Sylvia Hunter, Reading Specialist

“...This program could be used in the classroom in conjunction with 6 Traits in the middle school. I could imagine 3 levels for small groups. Level 1- sentence structure taught first to students who have not yet mastered construction of a sentence. Level 2 can be used for students who have not yet mastered writing a paragraph but can develop a well-written sentence. Level 3 can be used for students who have mastered levels 1 & 2 and can think more globally, generalizing information beyond fundamentals.” Val Leuchter, M.Ed DCS



Team diagrams bare bone sentences using symbol cards.



Teachers enjoyed participating in actual lessons during the Framing Your Thoughts Workshop this past summer.

Six Traits Live with Fred Wolff

Six Traits Live came to SAU #53 on August 17th and 18th where teachers gave up summer vacation to hear Fred Wolff at PA present writing tools. The Six Traits of Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions provide structure yet allows each component to be taught one at a time. When thinking about current writing programs used in SAU #53, Fred suggested the writing process be taught first, then teach the components of Six Traits to build on the writing process, and then teach genre writing.

Fred emphasized that being a good writer requires students to read and write every day. He also shared the quote, "Writing is very, very, very hard work because you must rewrite, rewrite, rewrite . . .until the words say exactly what you want them to say. That is not as easy as it may sound."-Julius Lester. Reading examples from texts and writing their own pieces to practice using each trait actively engaged the audience.

There are 3 key ingredients in this program.

1. It uses a common language to discuss writing
2. It provides a reasonably consistent way to answer, "How good is this paper?"
3. It is a gateway into revision.

Ways to teach the traits:

1. Use literature.
2. Have focused lesson ideas.
3. Students use rubrics to assess writing.
4. The single most powerful tool is to write with students and share it .
5. Model, write, share, and ask students to assess your work.
6. Teach two traits at a time. Ex. Ideas and conventions

Planning ahead:

1. For each trait, gather 3-5 pieces of literature that demonstrates trait used.
2. Choose 3-5 lesson ideas to teach traits.
3. Think about how you will model writing.
4. Find a paper you can use to assess trait with class.

Suggestions:

1. Teach traits 3x a week, every week throughout the year. Sessions should be at least 15 Mins.
2. Most writers can't edit own papers unless they wait 3 days.
3. Work toward mastery of conventions instead of just for coverage.
4. What is taught in Sept. will need review.



Allenstown Staff work on sequencing a story.



Fred Wolff presents Six Traits for SAU teachers at summer workshop.



Workshop participants share the traits found in literature.

I'm beginning to remember the thrill of writing. The workshop rekindled my passion, and with it, my eagerness to share and inspire tomorrow's writers. Who says language arts has to be boring? Thank you, Fred Wolfe! *Christina Dyer*

"Fred's workshop was a balanced combination of informative presentation and audience experimentation. It was a valuable use of our time and full of humorous classroom examples."

"What a way to get students writing. In the two-day workshop, Fred taught us what we are doing and what more we can do. He also shared the how to give the students the full line of emotions and joy of writing."

"Fred Wolff is a dynamic instructor who models teaching the 6 Traits Writing Process in his sessions. The participant leaves Fred's workshop with practical application of the 6 Traits for use in any classroom."

"What a way to get students excited about writing...I got so many activities to use in my high-school classes: computer application, college marketing, business, and internship classes."

SAU Book Club Continues This Year

During the 2009-10 school year, the Book Club was a success with six or more people in attendance. Breeda Whitmore who has offered to organize the Book Club shares, "The Book Club is fun. We read some very interesting books with ideas and strategies that we could use in the classroom. It is also a nice opportunity to gain certified hours for professional development."

The Club will continue to meet on a monthly this year. On Sept. 21st, the teachers' book group discussed What Great Teachers Do Differently by Todd Whitaker. Along with Helene Bickford, assistant superintendent, who facilitated the meeting, approximately 10 teachers attended to discuss the ideas presented in Whitaker's book.

It was suggested that Whitaker's ideas are really about how to treat all people well, whether they are students, teachers or administrators. It is about caring for where people are coming from, and treating children in ways that give them the tools, including the language of how to communicate helpfully with other children and with adults.

On Oct. 19th the group started the book The Art and Science of Teaching by Robert Marzano. This book identifies specific characteristics of effective teachers. As this book is highly supported by research and includes Marzano's 10 design questions, it has been decided that members will take three months to fully appreciate Marzano's ideas. On Nov. 16th at 3:00 at the SAU they will continue with this book discussing chapters 4-6. On December 21st chapters 7-10 will be reflected upon.

For future book studies, many people expressed an interest in reading books about brain-based learning. At the next meeting, a list of all choices for future reading will be available. Thanks to Helene, all previous and current book comments are posted under Wiki on SAKAI's Supt. PLC. The Club looks forward to seeing many familiar faces and welcoming new friends to the upcoming meetings held from 3:00-4:00 at the SAU.

Learning Circle Helpline

Learning Circle has started a "Helpline" where Educational Friends offer to call, email, answer questions or help others. Here are examples of educational friends sharing with others. These people do Six Trait Training at their schools and CCS presented at SAU March Workshop Day:

Kristen Davis, DCS
Resa Audet, Denise Keeler, Bea Pazonowsky, CCS

The Buzz

NH Parent Involvement in Education Awards Ceremony on Oct. 4, 2010. The Awards were organized by the Parent Information Center of NH (PIC) to coincide with October as Parent Involvement in Education Month in NH. Governor Lynch signed a proclamation to promote family engagement in education, both at school and at home.



Judith Howe, Home School Collaborator in Allenstown works to promote positive educational experiences by fostering communication between parents and school. She has spearheaded multiple events to ensure families and schools connect. Judith believes in empowering parents to get skills that will improve their and their children's lives.



Jan Santosuosso, ECS special educator promotes the use of SAKAI for home school communication and has trained others in its use. She is mentor for Beyond Access Inclusion Project (UNH IOD) and leads meetings to discuss Best Practice goals and actions to meet student and team needs.

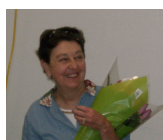
Learning Circle Mission

The Learning Circle exists to support General Educators, Special Educators, and Administrators in their fulfillment of the SAU philosophy of inclusion of students while promoting their educational gain. The Learning circle will: facilitate reflective practice groups around topics of interest, enhance knowledge of curriculum, instruction, resources, technology, assessment, and unify the SAU by establishing greater relationship with others. Dec. 2006



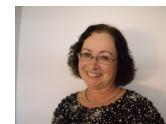
Learning Circle Members

AES/ARD : Kathy Cruson, Anne Burnett
CCS: Johanna Sanborn, Lisa Clark
DCS: Val Leuchter, Kathy Whittaker
ECS: Jan Santosuosso, Darcy May, Claire Flannery
VILLAGEHILL : Mona Sandberg, Shannon Hurley, Becky Butler
TRS: Mark Richmond
PA: Janice Sheen, Lisa Dowd
SAU: Peter Warburton, Helene Bickford, Patty Sherman, Vicki Therrien



Kathy Hering was honored for serving 5 years on Learning Circle. She recently retired from Hill School but will continue to be Learning Circle Community Rep., helping with resource center, events, and newsletter.

Helene Bickford is welcomed to our SAU as Assistant Superintendent hired to supervise curriculum and instruction. Patty Sherman with new title of SAU Assistant Superintendent will now supervise all student services including special education laws and process, 504 plans, home education, and homelessness.



Looking Ahead

Inclusive School's Week December 6-10, 2010
Winter Learning Connection:
1000 Book Club, RTI Math Software,
PBIS at Hill, PA Competencies, NH ALP ...



Allenstown School District's Data Team

The Allenstown School District Data Team was born from the Focused Monitoring process, which the Allenstown School District was selected to participate in during the 2006/2007 school years. The team's initial membership included several persons participating in the Focused Monitoring process selected to look at the district's implementation and use of formative and summative assessments as part of a root cause analysis of the district's low student achievement as indicated by the NECAPs. Since then, a core group of individuals have maintained the team – a representative for administration, a representative for technology, and two assessment specialists meeting weekly faithfully. Most recently, three regular education teachers have joined the team to expand the team's purpose and efforts.

The common purpose Allenstown School District Data team is to improve student achievement by providing key stakeholders with valid, relevant information regarding each child in the learning process. The team believes that assessment not only informs instruction, it is instruction. While the team operates on a transparent level - it puts forth every effort to not categorize, label, or sort students based on classes, teachers, or background information. Rather, the team reflects on data to determine where in the curriculum a particular child's learning repertoire may have holes and to then inform teachers to help fill in those holes. The team also looks for trends in data while taking into consideration curriculum used by the district as well as New Hampshire's grade level standards and expectations. Any trends, strengths, and/or weaknesses are reported to teachers and administration for their consideration.

The Allenstown Data Team exerts great efforts to ensure the administration and purposeful implementation of school wide and district wide formative assessments as well as state wide summative assessments occur effortlessly on the part of teachers and students. We are well versed and continually seek professional development in internet access of assessment systems, material preparation of assessments, administration of assessments, organized data collection of assessments, data input of assessments, and data report generation and dissemination to key stakeholders including students. The team also takes charge to ensure student accommodations are implemented with fidelity taking into consideration student needs, including special education considerations, time and space considerations, and personnel considerations.

SAU 53 DATA TEAM FORMED

Mission SAU #53 District Wide Data Team: will serve to train coaches so that they will be able to take the work and information regarding the use of data to drive instruction back to building teams. This will allow more consistency throughout the SAU #53.

Goal 1: The Data Team will review the NECAP and NEWA Spring results, and utilize Performance Plus to a) determine data trends across the SAU, b) promote collaborative dialogue, and c) assist school wide data teams to develop S.M.A.R.T. goal(s).

Goal 2: The Data Team will design common assessments for each grade level that will measure what students should know and be able to do based on grade level expectations, grade span expectations, and the common core standards. Common assessments will be developed in the area of language arts during the 2010-2011 school year. Math will be reviewed after NECAP scores are received. Other content areas, such as science, will be reviewed as determined at a later date.

The team meets biweekly and includes representatives from each school. Administrators, General Educators, Special Educators, and others comprise this committee.