

the visit, noting any patterns across all classrooms. If a teacher asked for feedback from me directly, I met with that teacher and modeled the post-conference protocol with the principal/headmaster observing this practice.

- In the spring, I repeated this procedure with administrators who were not involved in the fall round of observations (housemasters, curriculum leaders). Principals/headmasters who had done classroom observations with me in the fall were given the option of repeating the observations with different teachers or having me observe them implementing the post-conference meeting protocol and giving them feedback on it.
- Other members of the central office instructional leadership team participated in the observations in the fall and spring.
- All school leaders are using the “CCT Short Form” in the spring to visit as many classrooms as possible to gather evidence about instructional practice. Using the rubric, in consultation with staff, each school will develop a focus area for the coming year (called a “Problem of Practice”). The purpose of this exercise is not for individual teacher evaluation but to determine the “Problem of Practice” for the entire school.

Future work during 2011-2012 will involve the following activities:

- Continued observation of classrooms by the full Cabinet to sharpen administrators’ skills in observing classrooms, gathering and interpreting evidence, and coming to common understanding of effective practices.
- Continued practice and feedback on post-conferencing with teachers after an observation.
- Continued focus on the attributes of a high quality task, coming to a common understanding of effective tasks.
- Each school will develop and implement a plan of action to improve instruction in the identified “Problem of Practice,” and include it in the School Improvement Plans.
- Developing a protocol for colleague visits (“Instructional Rounds”).
- Implementing colleague visits to other schools to observe instruction, focused on the school’s “Problem of Practice.”
- Revision of each school’s plan of action based on colleague feedback and year-end observations of instructional practices.
- Engagement of teachers in classroom observations in each school and across the school district.

Improvement of instructional practice does not occur as a singular event. It happens over time in a culture where administrators and teachers are willing to put their practice “on the table” for others to see. We are fortunate in Fairfield to have administrators and teachers who have been willing to open their doors and let their colleagues observe their work and receive feedback on it.

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ENCLOSURE NO. 6

JUN 14 2011

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Gary Rosato, Ed.D.
DATE: June 10, 2011
RE: High School Academic Expectations

The development of common High School Academic Expectations – a brief history:

Every ten years, each Connecticut high school undergoes a thorough accreditation process through NEASC, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Fairfield Ludlowe went through its accreditation visit in April, 2008 and Fairfield Warde had its visit in October, 2009. An important component in preparing for a NEASC review is the development of school wide academic expectations and associated rubrics used to measure student progress. Both Fairfield high schools developed their expectations and rubrics in accordance with guidelines outlined by NEASC. Recently, NEASC adopted new standards to be used by high schools beginning in 2011. These new standards include a requirement that schools write their academic expectations to include 21st century learning outcomes.

The NEASC requirement to develop academic expectations with specific 21st century outcomes provided Fairfield with an opportunity to revise and align expectations across both schools. To that end, a joint committee of teachers, building administrators and curriculum leaders was formed. All departments from both schools were represented on the committee which met several times during the 2010- 2011 school year. The committee began its work by taking the academic expectations that were in place at both schools and developing one common set of expectations by combining and blending the two together. In addition, the committee worked with a consultant from Education Connection to insure that 21st century skills were integrated within the expectations and rubrics. The consultant presented an overview of research pertaining to 21st century skills and showed examples of how other school districts incorporated them into their academic expectations. He also provided the team with models of academic expectations to consider in their work. A full professional development day, January 14, 2011, was devoted to this work. During this day, the entire faculties from both schools were placed in randomly assigned small groups to read, react and provide feedback to the committee about the draft expectations. A great deal of feedback was generated which helped guide the work.

Attached you will find the 5 Academic Expectations that have been adopted followed by DRAFT rubrics to measure these expectations. The rubrics are used to analyze a product or performance by looking at each of its relevant component parts or criteria. By breaking out the criteria, the rubric provides students and teachers with specific information on how to reach the desired results. These DRAFT rubrics will be “field tested” during the 2011 – 2012 school year. Each department will have the opportunity and obligation to utilize the rubrics and provide feedback to the committee which will continue to meet and refine them throughout the year. This work is evolutionary; therefore the rubrics will be modified as they are put into practice. The administrative teams of both high schools along with the teachers who have worked on the Academic Expectations Committee are to be commended for their hard work, insightful contributions and willingness to lead this important work.