

October 2007



BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Superintendent's Bulletin

From the Superintendent of Schools

Recently I had the opportunity to attend a conference entitled *The Time is Now: Education for Global Citizenship*. The conference featured a diverse and very influential panel of presenters. Paul Reville, the recently appointed Chairman of the Board of Education, moderated the panel. I thought the presenters were outstanding and the topic, as presented, provocative. The presenters included John Wilson, NEA President; Kathy Innis, Executive Director, Primary Source; Yong Zhao, Chinese Scholar; and Marika Beaton, Public Relations Specialist and recent college graduate. Here are some of the tidbits I gleaned from the day's dialogue.

1. We need to de-parochialize education in the United States.
2. Schools are global enterprises. Let's connect our students in meaningful ways to demonstrate this.
3. Our work in schools must focus on our children's future, *not our past*.
4. America is *the least* innovative country in terms of our competitors.
5. We must *infuse the curriculum* with a global perspective.
6. The Global Education initiative should be joined with the state's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) initiative.
7. The competitive vs. cooperative model should be treated as a relic as we commit to educating students for the global village focusing our energies on the need to expand students' understanding of the world and people from other cultures.
8. Americans need to remember that *creativity is our country's edge*. America needs to shift to a *creative economy* and realize that the international comparisons made based on standardized international test comparisons (TIMMS, etc.) reveal but a small piece of the picture in terms of student achievement. *Creative thinking is our strength, so let's celebrate it and design schools that develop such thinking with intentionality*. In doing so, we should "measure opportunities" offered to all students in an effort to address the needs of the "whole child" as well as the national disgrace of the suburban vs. urban divide. In other words, let's expand the "achievement report card" on a state and national level.
9. Put technology into the hands of all American children, i.e., the MIT \$200 Laptop initiative.
10. Focus on Foreign Language instruction in the early grades. Re-examine what we offer in terms of the foreign languages in our schools.
11. Capitalize on the bi-lingual skills and the cultural richness of the residents in our own communities.
12. Include Service Learning and Community Service in the schools.

As you review our system goals for the 2007-2008 school year and the work you are doing in and beyond your classroom, I think you will see that we are on track in many areas. The new mission statement for the high school, the intense examination of the middle school day, and the K-5 focus on ensuring equity and high standards for all students are but a few of our initiatives that provide the opportunity to evaluate what we are doing us-

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Administrative Summer Reading	2
Four Keys to High Achievement	2
Social Studies—Middle School & Lane School	3
Mathematics—HS, MS, Self-Study	4
Mathematics—Elementary	5
Reading Department	6
Fluency & Guided Oral Reading	8

Art Department	8
Science—LS & DS	9
Social Studies—DS	9
English Department	10
BHS Mission Statement	11

(Continued from page 1)

ing global education as our lens. In addition to your work on these initiatives, I would urge you to conduct an assessment of your own professional practice in terms of how you prepare students for and connect students to the global village. Is your classroom focused on the preparation of students for the future or on the maintenance of a static past? Are you deliberate in your efforts to develop creative problem-solving skills and to promote growth through appropriate risk-taking behaviors?

In closing, I would call your attention to a poignant quote in the Asia Society 2007 publication, Learning in a Global Age: Knowledge and Skills for a Flat World:

The world is indifferent to tradition and past reputations, unforgiving of frailty and ignorant of custom or practice. Success will go to those individuals and countries that are swift to adapt, slow to complain and open to change.

...In the twenty-first century, the country that is open to new ideas about learning—from around the world—will be the country that succeeds.

Report on Summer Reading for the Administrative Team



Liz, Age 17

In my opening of school message to Bedford residents, I always share a brief synopsis of the books purchased for the administrative team. I thought you might be interested in a brief summary of this year's offerings.

This summer's readings included Jonathan Kozol's Ordinary Resurrections, Glenn Singleton's Courageous Conversations About Race, and Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin's Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace. These books reflect key themes that permeate the values and work of Bedford's leadership team. Kozol's book captures the refreshing innocence of childhood and the hope that it represents in even the most challenging circumstances. Singleton's text urges us to continue our quest to ensure educational equity in our schools while simultaneously challenging us to acknowledge the central role that race plays in terms of students' access to both the opportunity and support needed to succeed and perform at high levels. With the recent Supreme Court decision on race and the concerns this decision has posed for the METCO Program, the most successful desegregation program in the nation, this book is a reminder that we have not yet achieved the promise of the 1954 Brown Vs. the Board of Education decision and that we have much work to do. And, the final reading selection presents the odyssey of a climber, Greg Mortenson, who was nursed back to health in a Pakistan village after he was injured and lost following a failed attempt to climb K2. Mortenson's personal journey challenges us to view our commitment to global connections through the lens of a child. In this text, Mortenson poignantly describes how a three-week recuperation period in a remote Pakistan village changed the course of his life. The kindness of strangers and the compelling needs of the children in an isolated village lead to a promise to the village elders that he would return with the resources needed to build them a school. In keeping the promise, he eventually founded a charitable institute that provides impoverished children in Pakistan and Afghanistan with an education.

Four Keys to High Achievement

In a "kicker" at the end of their working paper, "Privatizing Education in Philadelphia: Area Educational Management Organizations Improving Student Achievement?", Johns Hopkins University researchers Martha Abele MacIver and Douglas MacIver mention the four key factors that recent research has linked to high student achievement:

1. Teacher Quality
2. Principal Instructional Leadership
3. School Climate Focused on Academic Achievement
4. Consistency and Coherence in Curriculum and Instruction

(Source: **Marshall Memo 202**, September 24, 2007)

Middle School Social Studies by Joe Casey

The Social Studies Curriculum at JGMS continues to be revised to meet the expectations outlined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and to enhance the teaching methods used for a wide variety of learners. In addition to our ongoing curriculum revisions started in the summer of 2006, a significant amount of time was spent last year developing curriculum maps that are being used to provide continuity at and between grade levels. We are continuing this curriculum initiative this year, working on establishing common assessments between grade levels and teams.

Our sixth grade World Geography curriculum is entering its first full year using our newly purchased geography series from Prentice Hall. This series was purchased in the spring of 2007 and will help complement teaching and learning in the areas of general geography such as the five themes, using maps, etc. and the study of the continents of Africa, Asia and Europe.

Also, for the first time, this school year, the seventh grade and eighth grade have two distinct teams of teachers and students. This concept of two parallel teams, we believe, has already produced benefits as our students are learning in smaller-sized classes, and the staff has the opportunity to develop a more cohesive and collaborative instructional approach.

Seventh graders in their Ancient Civilizations classes have been exploring the ideas of culture and archaeology. Students are studying how civilizations develop and what happens when different cultures come in contact with one another. This curriculum has been in place at the seventh grade level for the past three years.

At the eighth grade level, significant work was done over the summer to revise our World History I curriculum. Units were developed using essential questions to guide teaching and learning in each of the five areas of the world that we will be highlighting including the Middle East, Europe, Latin America, India, and East Asia. Currently, students have been studying the major monotheistic religions of the world: Judaism, Christianity and Islam and their major impact on world history.

Finally, we would like to welcome first-year- teacher Jim Nagle to the Social Studies Department. Jim has already proven himself to be a valuable member of the newly created eighth grade grey team.

Lane School Social Studies by Karen Lerra

Grades three, four, and five are in the process of developing binders for their Social Studies curriculum. Binders will include common units for each grade level. Included in these units are the required activities, assessments, and open response questions (as they are developed) along with suggested activities and materials. Each grade level is at a different place in this activity. The three grades should complete this culmination of curriculum by the end of this year.

Grade 3: developed a binder for their curriculum, "Colonial New England, Massachusetts: 1620-1776" last year. They will be reviewing the curriculum with their new and returning staff this year as well as refining learning outcomes and open response questions.

Grade 4: began the process of collecting units for their Social Studies Binder which covers "The United States People & Geography". This process will continue this year in addition to revising some of their open response questions based on sample MCAS questions.

Grade 5: initiated the creation of a Social Studies binder for the fifth grade curriculum, "British Colonial America through the Constitution 1700-1792". Materials for the first 3 units were collected and organized. This collection of curriculum will be shared, and the last unit on the constitution will be refined this year.

Suzanne, Age 16



High/Middle Mathematics by Richard Stephenson

Additions and Subtractions:

Kim Comeiro has been subtracted from the middle school staff and added to the high school staff where she is teaching Algebra. As the Mathematics Program Administrator, I welcome Kim to the high school, but I regret losing her numerous contributions to the middle school, not the least of which was her leadership as the middle school Math Curriculum Coordinator. In her place, Vanessa Underwood and Karen Knight will be sharing the curriculum coordination duties.

Stacey Mayo is another addition and subtraction. Last year she split her teaching duties between the high school and the middle school; this year she is teaching full-time at the middle

school. The high school's loss is the middle school's gain. The high school will miss her presence not just because she is a great teacher, but also because she is such wonderful company.

Yet another addition is Chase Michael Larimore, born on September 21st. While his mother, Christine Larimore, is taking a leave of absence to tend to her baby boy, Gary Hunt has returned to Bedford High to cover her classes. Needless to say, we are thrilled for the Larimores, and we are delighted to have Mr. Hunt at the high school for the next few weeks to share with students his great teaching.

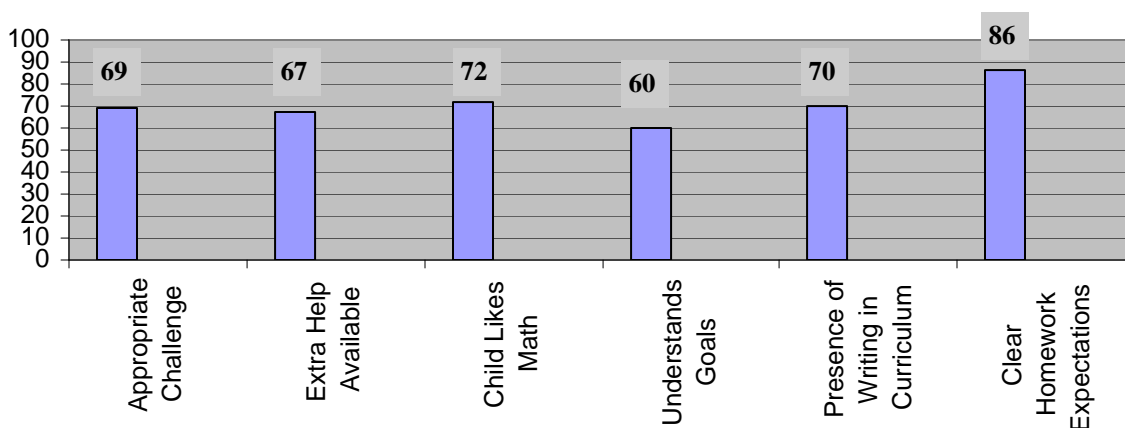
Mathematics Department Self-Study

At the start of the 2006-2007 school year we began a self-study of the K-12 mathematics program. This is the first district curriculum review. Throughout the year we gathered information about the program from teachers, students, and parents. Along with the information provided through surveys, we gathered evidence of the work we do, including curriculum maps, syllabi, standardized test results, course assessments, and student work. This fall we are organizing the information and compiling summaries of our findings.

During the week of February 5-7, 2008, the District will be welcoming a visiting team, comprised of out-of-district educators and administrators. The goal of the visiting team is to review the District's findings and provide additional insight. Teachers may be asked to provide the visiting team with additional student work samples or speak with the panel. The math review team will also ask for volunteers to host our visitors in their classroom. Please stay tuned for more information on these opportunities.

We are grateful to everyone who has contributed to this project, teachers, students and parents alike.

**Percentage of K-12 Parents that Indicated They Agreed on District Math Survey
2006-2007**



Elementary Mathematics by Sarah Dorer

The school year typically begins at Davis and Lane Schools with Beginning-of-Year math assessments. At Davis School, these take the form of an individual interview with each student and a small written component for students in grades one and two. At Lane School, these take the form of a written assessment for all students. Teachers then use the data that is gathered to inform instruction for the class. In addition, we use the information as one of the selection criteria for Title I math support services for students in grades 2-5.

As for curriculum, the *Bridges in Mathematics Program* is now being used in all Kindergarten and First Grades classes at Davis School. A component of this program (The Number Corner) has been added to the second grade math curriculum to be used in conjunction with the *Everyday Mathematics Program*. The *Everyday Mathematics Program* continues to be used in grades 2-5, and enters its tenth year at Lane School and longer at Davis School. During the course of this year, there will be a formal review of the effectiveness of the *Everyday Mathematics Program* for grades 2-5 with a report to the School Committee later in the spring.

On a district level, we are entering the second year of the Curriculum Program Review process for the K-12 Mathematics program. Throughout last year and the summer, work continued to gather and publish curriculum documentation, and to analyze and publish results of teacher, parent and student responses to surveys that were sent out last spring. All materials will be ready for review by a team of administrators and teachers who will visit the Bedford schools in February, 2008. This team will report back to the Bedford community after their visit.

Bridges Mathematics Curriculum K & Grade 1 by Jenny Brown

The kindergarten team adopted the *Bridges Mathematics Program* in the Spring of 2006 after a year-long pilot study.

This adoption prompted two first and two second grade teachers to pilot the program in the 2006-2007 school year. The result of the pilot was a recommendation to the School Committee to adopt the program at grade one.

So what does *Bridges Mathematics Program* look like and what does it offer our youngest mathematicians? *Bridges*, which originated from the University of Oregon, is comprised of the following three components:

1. Number Corner
2. Investigations
3. Work Places

Number Corner provides students with an opportunity to practice mathematical skills. Students work on money, time, place value, patterning, addition and

subtraction during this time.

Investigations, however, develops students' understanding of basic number sense and beginning math concepts using real world problems. Concepts are reinforced through games, which students later practice independently or in small groups during work places.

Work Places is also a wonderful time for teachers to gather informal assessment data on individual students.

Davis teachers are excited to implement a developmentally appropriate program that provides students with a strong foundation in number sense through a hands-on format.

Educators believe the program fosters a love of mathematics and allows for a higher level of discussion.



Reading Department by Susan Rozen and Linda Volpicelli

The Bedford Reading Department is off to a quick start this fall with the continuation of existing initiatives and the start of new ones. All schools are continuing their work with classroom teachers through trainings, workshops, and book talks with the aim of helping teachers continue to build our students' literacy skills through the use of content-area texts and assessments. All schools are also beginning new curriculum development initiatives.

We are happy to welcome two new teachers to our Reading team. Rebecca Wetzel has joined the Davis School as a second grade-reading specialist, and Lauren O'Keefe has joined as a high school reading specialist. This year Lauren is being trained in Wilson, a phonics and fluency program for older students who struggle with reading, and Rebecca is being trained in Project Read, a phonics program for beginning readers.

High School and Middle School:

For the past four years Bedford has received funds as part of the Massachusetts Department of Education's Secondary Reading Grant to provide classroom teachers at JGMS and BHS with the opportunity to learn more about how to teach reading in their content areas and thereby improve reading achievement. We are now in the fifth and final year of this program. Because reading is the foundation for most academic areas, teaching reading is a responsibility that goes beyond that of the reading specialists. Thus, the Secondary Reading Grant has given the Reading Department the opportunity to work with content area teachers in grades 6-12 to help improve our students' reading skills. Since many content area teachers feel the need to better understand the reading needs of their students so that they can better teach their curriculum, they have been eager to work towards that end. The middle school teachers are being trained in CRISS (Creating Independence through Student-owned Strategies). Last year strategies such as "Power Notes" and "One Sentence Summaries" were taught to teachers so that they could teach students how to take notes, recognize main ideas and supporting details, and write summaries. Both Robin Talkowski and Sarah Crosby are becoming trainers of CRISS so they can run CRISS courses for JGMS teachers.

Last week at the high school, an expert in the field, Joan Sedita, was brought in for the first of a two-day program in training teachers to teach reading skills through the use of their content materials. Her "Key-Three Routine" provides teachers with the skills to

teach main ideas and supporting details, summary, and note taking. The program emphasizes the teaching of textbook reading skills and the reading of difficult expository texts. In addition, Susan Rozen will be working with the Reading Leadership Team -- a team that consists of a representative from each department, as well as a group of additional teachers who teach at-risk students -- training them in these and related concepts. The Reading Leadership Team trains teachers how to teach the foundational skills of reading, knowledge of the reading process, the skills needed to be good readers, and what each teacher can do to build better readers.

Both the middle and high schools have adopted a new program "Read Naturally" for improving fluency, the ability to automatically and accurately read for comprehension. Reading specialists from the middle school (Robin Talkowski and Rachel Fawson) and high school (Susan Rozen) attended summer training in "Read Naturally". "Read Naturally" will be used as a key component of the middle school reading program, and reading specialists have spent the past month determining fluency levels of students enrolled in their reading and literature classes. They will begin to institute the "Read Naturally" curriculum this month. At the high school, the program will be used in specialized classes on an as-needed basis.

In addition to this new program, at JGMS Rebecca Fawson is introducing a new vocabulary strategy in her classroom, the LINCing Routine. The LINCing Routine is a word learning strategy that helps students remember the meaning of words through auditory and visual memory devices. A new term is linked to a word that is known to the student. This is the Reminding word. Pictures and sentences are created, using essential features of the new term's definition and the Reminding word. Using the LINCing Routine helps students organize information, and new terms are learned more efficiently since they are tied to previous knowledge. Over the summer, JGMS Reading Specialists Robin Talkowski and Sarah Crosby developed a New Teacher Induction class that is designed to incorporate teaching reading strategies and skills that can be used across the curriculum. This is the first time that new teachers will be given this type of course. Sarah also worked over the summer

(Continued on page 7)



Hope, Age 17



Holly, Age 16

(Continued from page 6)

with the sixth grade teachers in developing a curriculum for the reading classes. She provided the English teachers with a curriculum she and the JGMS reading specialists developed that covers reading skills and strategies, much of which was incorporated into the new sixth grade curriculum.

Lane School Reading Department

Over the summer, Susan Breslin and Linda Volpicelli met to plan the August workshop “So We Can DIBEL...Now What?” The primary focus of the workshop was to examine the definition and components of fluency. Since the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills) was implemented K-5 in September 2006, and teachers administered this assessment last year, they are now ready to take on the challenge of increasing student’s oral reading fluency. Teacher participants discovered that fluency is enhanced through ongoing assessment, modeling of fluent reading, adequate practice time, home connections, and word study activities.

“Teaching Reading 3-5” is the title of an Annenberg Media (produced by WGBH Interactive and WGBH Educational Productions) reading course being offered after school to twenty Lane School teachers. It is an eight-part professional development course with supplemental classroom videos and is designed to give teachers the strategies they need to help all students become better readers in the intermediate grades. The sessions provide current research, questions for reflection, tips for new teachers, activities to enhance teaching and video examples from classrooms across the country. Susan Breslin and Linda Volpicelli, instructors for the course, will provide the teachers the opportunity for cross grade level discussion. The course started in September and will meet through May.

Davis School

Rebecca Wetzel is very excited to be working as the new reading specialist at the Davis School. Rebecca earned her undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina and her masters degree from Teacher’s College, Columbia University. Rebecca comes to Davis with varied elementary classroom experience. She has enjoyed getting to know the students and teachers at Davis and looks forward to working with everyone throughout the year. Rebecca will help the teachers at Davis to continue to work on the district K-5 English Language Arts document as a team to create and develop additional common learning experiences. These experiences will be added to the already existing lessons found in the current ELA document. They also are continuing to study the five components of early literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension).

The reading specialists at the Davis School have been giving short presentations during faculty meetings that focus on one of the five components of early literacy. In September the focus was on phonemic awareness and the focus for October will be fluency. These short presentations will act as a springboard to introduce the 2007-2008 book club. This year the club will focus on balanced literacy using specific articles or chapters versus a single text. The reading specialists are eager for the book club to start!

Other continuing efforts involve implementing the DIBELS assessment three times a year in grades K-2 and implementing research-based reading interventions based on multiple sources of data. In the afternoons, the reading specialists at Davis School will be teaching small, intensive reading groups which are formed based on the results of the DIBELS assessments. These flexible groups will focus on one of the elements of reading (e.g. blending, segmenting) and will work in conjunction with classroom practice.

August 30 Professional Day

“Hitting the Ground Running” by Jenny Brown



Both Davis and Lane schools are off to a great start! Each school tackled several ongoing curriculum initiatives. Below are the highlights from each school’s opening day:

Davis School:

- Reviewed common English Language Arts experiences drafted in the 2006-2007 school year. Available resources were also shared.
- Discussed the implementation of the new *Bridges Mathematics* curriculum in Grade 1.
- Discussed implementing a component of the *Bridges Mathematics* curriculum called *Number Corner* in Grade 2.
- Reviewed a new beginning of the year mathematics assessment from *Bridges Mathematics* program in Kindergarten.

Lane School:

- Reviewed teacher, parent and student mathematics surveys, MCAS data and mathematics websites.

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

- Discussed fluency (i.e. the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and expression). The importance of fluency, its components and research based instructional strategies.



Katelyn, Age 16

Fast Fluency Facts & Guided Oral Reading

"Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension." (Reading Links, 2002, p.9)

- Modeling fluency is essential! Make sure you incorporate a read aloud into daily instruction. You can also model fluency by encouraging buddy reading or creating listening centers that house books on tape.
- Students need assisted guided oral reading to improve their fluency. Try choral reading, peer paired reading (each student reads a passage silently and then reads it three times orally), or echo reading (the teacher reads a sentence or paragraph and then the student chorally reads the segments).
- **Repeated Readings:** Students choose their own appropriate text and the students discuss reading behaviors such as phrasing and intonation. The students then practice their passages aloud several times.
- **Oral Recitation Reading:** This is a combination of Readers' Theater and Round Robin Reading. The teacher reads the text aloud and focuses on comprehension. After modeling fluency and teaching comprehension, the teacher asks a student to act out the passage.
- **Readers' Theater:** The students perform a script and show meaning through expression and intonation. Emphasize the need to interpret the script rather than memorize it.



Katie, Age 17

Art Department by Aleta Devaney

It is only October, but please remember that you will be able to view some examples of the work described here on May 2-4, 2008 at the annual K-12 Art Festival at JGMS! Next month, Bedford High School Major/Advanced students will participate in the Lexington Arts and Crafts Society High School Show, opening on Friday evening, November 2, 2007

The second graders at Davis are studying cartooning through the use of shapes. The students will be offered a variety of materials to create "folding" paper cartoon characters or cartoon puppets. They will also create cartoon characters on the computer using the paint program, Core FX. Students will explore animation through the creation of flip-books and on the computer using a Core FX animation program. Davis art teacher, Gillian Frazier, received a grant from the Bedford Cultural Council to develop and implement an art technology curriculum with the aid of a technology assistant.

Catherine Johnstone's fourth grade students are studying the artist Wayne Thiebaud. They looked at the way the artist repeated shapes in neat rows in his cakes and pies paintings. The children came up with an idea for a dessert of their own, and on that dessert, they are repeating shapes, such as toppings for ice cream or frosting designs for cakes. They "googled" images of fancy desserts for further inspiration. The final project for this unit is to "paint" the dessert they sketched in colored modeling clay on cardboard. The clay is being spread with modeling tools on the background, and then the dessert will be sculpted in relief on top.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Paul Harrington's students in the grade six visual art classes at the John Glenn Middle School began the year asking the question "What is art and why do people make it?" The students explored the reasons artists were motivated to create their artwork throughout history. Grade six students will be putting their imaginations to work as they begin to create drawings based on the things they fear. They will build on the concepts of imagination, abstraction and expression as they move forward in the curriculum.

In grade eight, at JGMS, Candy Banks' students learned that art is a visual language that can teach us about our history and lives, and those of other cultures. As a prelude to discussing how politics and other world events can be expressed dramatically through art, students were asked to think about their every day lives as eighth graders and to make a simple statement through cartooning that would express that point. Simplicity was the key for the visuals while the strength of the point being made was emphasized. This was the first project of the year and will lead to a painting unit about the politics of our times.

Art as Communication is a new minor course at the Bedford High School and is taught by Whitney Davis. The students are currently working on a visual dictionary defining the design elements. The class is a diverse group (freshmen through juniors—some with art experience, some without) and all seem to be enjoying themselves! The class plans to go to the computer lab soon to explore how the assignment could be done with technology.

Eileen Wagner's Art III students just finished three weeks of life drawing where students posed for each other and drew the figure. The figure drawings in this issue of the *Superintendent's Bulletin* are from the students in this Art III class. The students will now take one of their figure drawings and create an environment for the figure—realistic or imaginary. Students will be able to use anything as a source for imagery—family photos, magazines, web, imagination. The objective is to create a believable combination of a person in a place.

Larry Sheinfeld is well known as a visual arts, graphics, photo and Humanities teacher at Bedford High School. Mr. Sheinfeld is also teaching the Senior Culminating Project Course for the second year in a row. When he was asked to show a connection between teaching art and the Senior Project, Mr. Sheinfeld explained: "I feel that my work as an art teacher is relevant to my concurrent work with senior project. Two specific points I think are worth noting: 1) In both areas there is an emphasis on a more open-ended approach than one might find in other areas (open-endedness and an exploratory spirit being a key aspect of the "essential questions" students develop and work with in senior project); 2) In both areas, intrinsic motivation is extremely important: it's vital that students explore what really matters to them."

Ceramics II and III students in Aleta Devaney's classes are making sketches and planning a Green Man project. Green Man is the name for a sculpture or drawing of a face framed by leaves or vegetation. Green Men are often seen as symbols of rebirth and spring. They were sculpted in stone and wood and are architectural elements in many cultures. BHS ceramic students will be building their Green Men from clay, sculpting the leaves and vegetation from clay as well.

Lane School Science by Lenore Zavalick



This year at Lane School, teachers will have the opportunity to continue refining common assessments and open response questions (primarily for grade four). Grade four teachers are also looking to expand their curriculum regarding the Simple Machines unit by possibly experimenting with new materials. Grade five teachers are using common open response questions for all four units that were developed over the summer by Gretchen Dick and Lenore Zavalick. Analysis of the grade five Science MCAS test will take place during October and November and will be used to guide review in April and May of 2008.

Davis School Science and Social Studies

Susan Nocera, Social Studies Co-Curriculum Leader, and Terry Kuhlmann, Science Co-Curriculum Leader, are working with Davis teachers to align grade level units. All grade levels will use the *Understanding by Design* format as they identify state frameworks, assessment measures, corresponding lessons and activities. Grade levels will also draft essential questions that will summarize key ideas that educators want students to learn.

English Department by Mary Lou Sallee



JGMS:

As part of JGMS professional development, Pat Stephen and Brendan Desilets met with a group of sixth grade reading teachers and reading specialists to work on a curriculum project for the sixth grade reading course. They produced a Phase One Curriculum Map and enriched the existing program with methods designed to enhance the teaching of critical thinking skills. They also compiled a selection of non-fiction readings to support and complement the other readings in the course. The group gathered greater resources in support of the curriculum and compiled approaches for differentiating instruction.

There are also some exciting changes in teaching assignments in the English Department at JGMS. Pat Stephen, one of two curriculum coordinators, moved from grade seven to grade eight and is enjoying the renewal and challenge that accompanies any such change. Nicole d'Entremont, moving from the high school where she was a reading specialist, is teaching seventh grade students. She is finding the transition a smooth one because she is familiar with the protocols and procedures of Bedford. Her experience teaching reading at various levels has given her the tools and knowledge to assist her students as they prepare to meet the challenges of high school. She is very excited to return to the teaching of English.

As part of this year's initiative in Writing across the Curriculum, Brendan Desilets has designed an online course of six sessions run over nine weeks open to all JGMS teachers. The course will culminate in an "infusion essay," one incorporated into the teacher's own discipline, as well as a series of lessons on topics related to editing. Development of the course was funded by Bedford Public Schools.

Bedford High School:

Maureen Sullivan and Kristen Tocci spent considerable time over the summer working on the details of the Global Voices course, an exciting new offering for seniors that has generated significant interest among students. This new course is part of a larger initiative by the department to move toward more defined course options for seniors. The other options are British Literature and a Humanities course, both of which are integrating new features, including a field trip in November to see a production of *Hamlet* following its study in class.

The publishing class, a new minor course option, has been both popular and successful. Students have been learning about how to come up with newsworthy story ideas, how to write leads, the process by which yearbooks are published and much more. Also, many are preparing to attend a workshop at Columbia University at which they will get the opportunity to learn from industry professionals, as well as see what students from across the region are doing with their newspapers and yearbooks. The first edition of The Lookout has already been published; editors hope to publish at least an issue every month and the yearbook promises to be better than ever.

In other areas of writing development, the department is continuing its Writing Portfolio project at each grade level with the purpose of deepening student reflection upon the writing process and upon their development as writers. As part of an ongoing effort to integrate technology into the curriculum, Kelly Sullivan and Jane Harvey completed coursework with technology integration specialist Sue Collins and plan to incorporate this work into the curriculum at grades nine and ten.

There are several new faces in the department at the high school. Program Administrator Mary Lou Sallee, coming most recently from teaching at Weston High School, is energized by the challenges of leading an English department in such a reputable school district as Bedford. Patti Messenger, who is teaching British Literature, English nine and a Writing Lab, began her tenure at the high school last year as a long-term substitute for Kelly Sullivan in the ninth grade. She has taught in a variety of settings, coordinated the Graduate Creative Writing Program at Boston University, and worked as editor and administrator at Houghton Mifflin. Joel Hebert, a native of Vermont whose father is a veteran English teacher, graduated from Williams College and taught for two years in Hollandale, MS as part of the Mississippi Teacher Corps. He earned a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Mississippi during his tenure there. Joel is teaching grades ten and eleven as well as the Mythology course. Joel loves the enthusiasm and dedication of his students and enjoys the friendly and cooperative atmosphere of the English department. The department has had an auspicious



Corey, Age 17

BHS Mission Statement



The mission of Bedford High School is to educate all students in a nurturing, democratic, challenging, and inclusive environment. Bedford High School, in partnership with parents and the community, helps students attain the knowledge and develop the skills and intellectual curiosity to become independent and self-sufficient adults who will contribute responsibly in a global community. By providing opportunities for students to create meaning and to develop understanding in a variety of contexts, Bedford High School prepares students to grow and to act in a well-informed, creative, ethical, and compassionate manner.

Academic Learning Expectations:

Bedford High School students will be . . .

1. Active Learners (AL) – *engaged in the quest for knowledge and understanding*

Students will:

- a. acquire and apply knowledge connecting curriculum to prior knowledge and real life situations
- b. read actively, widely and purposefully
- c. engage in inquiry and self-directed learning
- d. conduct analytical research
- e. use feedback and self-reflection to extend learning

2. Resourceful Thinkers (RT) – *engaged in solving problems, making meaning and developing understanding*

Students will:

- a. employ critical and creative thinking skills
- b. evaluate contexts, perspectives, and assumptions
- c. examine relationships, integrate knowledge, and apply understanding within and across disciplines
- d. imagine and generate innovative ideas, solutions, and understandings

3. Effective Communicators (EC) – *engaged in sharing information, insights, and ideas*

Students will:

- a. present in oral and written form with clarity, purpose, and understanding
- b. gather, synthesize, and present knowledge creatively using a variety of media
- c. use technology and the arts to demonstrate knowledge and skills
- d. use evidence and logic to respond constructively to critical questions

Social and Civic Expectations

Bedford High School students will:

1. act with integrity, respect, and responsibility towards themselves, others, and the environment
2. value cultural diversity and recognize global interdependence
3. practice the democratic principles of tolerance, activism, responsibility for and service to one's community
4. think independently and work cooperatively to achieve goals and resolve issues