

# Initiatives Update

Dear Teachers and Staff,

The fast pace of education certainly seems to make the school year fly by. We are in the home stretch and we are headed for a **STRONG** finish! Due to the commitment and perseverance of our faculty and staff we have accomplished a great many things. I feel extraordinarily fortunate to serve an educational community that is so very dedicated to our students.

This edition of the “Initiatives Update” is simply to keep you all in the loop.

-Clare

## Professional Development Advisory Committee

The PDAC met on May 11, 2015 to reflect on the professional development systems, structures and offerings for the 14-15 school year. It was the PDAC that worked last year to re-vamp how the days and sessions were structured and the feedback was excellent. Each PD day was broken up into three separate sessions. One session was reserved for department/grade level meeting time, the second session focused on technology and last session focused on instructional strategies and pedagogy. The technology and instructional strategy sessions were mainly offered in an “un-conference” type setting in which individual teachers could choose from a menu of workshops offered. I truly appreciate the time and effort of our committee members: Alyssa Koerner, Jennifer Daigneault, Corinne Ferri, Brittany Rousseau, Amy Wright, Tracey Nangle, E. Claire McWilliams, Robert J. Mezzanotte, Diane Jolin, Adam Stanley, Sarah Glover and Deana Cook.





## Digital Citizenship Continuum of Study

In collaboration with the RI State Police and supported through grant funding, Lt. Stephen Riccitelli and Meghan Martinez, Cyber Terrorism Program Manager- worked with North Smithfield administrators to access and review the K-12 “ISafe” web-based resources and lessons. The ISafe materials cover topics ranging from Cyber Community Citizenship, Cyber Bullying, Cyber Security, Personal Safety, Digital Literacy, and Intellectual Property.

During our last Professional

Development Day in April, our K-12 Health teachers worked with Mr. Jim Fitzgerald, HS Department Chair, to create a K-12 Cyber Citizenship continuum of study. The teachers created a shared Google document identifying lessons, objectives, essential questions and content topics that will be taught within the health classes. The continuum of study will be extended and refined throughout the 15-16 school year. The time and effort of all involved is much

appreciated. A special thanks goes out to our K-12 Health teachers: Nancy Crowell, Ariana Stanton, Pamela Authier, Cristina Lima, Mark Lobossiere, Kathleen Fagnant, Mary Dispirito, Matthew Tek, James Fitzgerald, Jeffrey Crins, Alisha Crins, and Amy Gravel.



## Music Curriculum – Complete!

North Smithfield Schools has completed the development of K-12 Music curricula. We created curriculum guides that 'unpack' each standard, a curriculum map that shows which standards we are teaching by quarter and units of study based on the Understanding by Design (Ubd) format. This summer I will be making live binders of the work and embedding into curriculum website. I am grateful for work and dedication of our K-12 music teachers: Sue Czyzewicz, Kerri Greco, John Knasas, Regina McAdam and Fitz Benz.





## Community of Practice – Shared Classroom Initiative

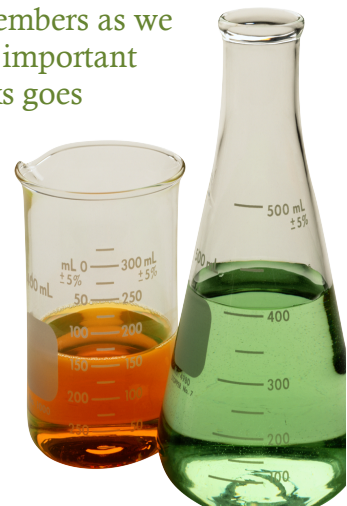
During the ELA/Math Instruction Refinement days, all K-12 ELA and Math teachers participated in our **Community of Practice – Shared Classroom Initiative**. This has been one of my favorite initiatives this year. I do have to admit that I take some ribbing from my fellow administrators for the length of the titles of my initiatives☺ but, even with the incredibly long title, it was a success! The purpose was to generate meaningful conversations about pedagogy by organizing opportunities for teachers to ‘share’ our classrooms as way of exchanging ideas. By visiting other classrooms within our district we were able to gain exposure to varied teaching practices, reflect on our own practices and engaged in conversation about the art and craft of teaching. In addition, this initiative served as another vehicle to ensure that our curriculum is articulated and aligned K-12. The development of this initiative stemmed from last year’s “K-12 Math Tours.” Groups of teachers “toured” each other’s classrooms; this project received positive feedback from all teachers’ involved-host teachers and invited guests. I wholeheartedly thank all of our host teachers for opening up their classrooms!!

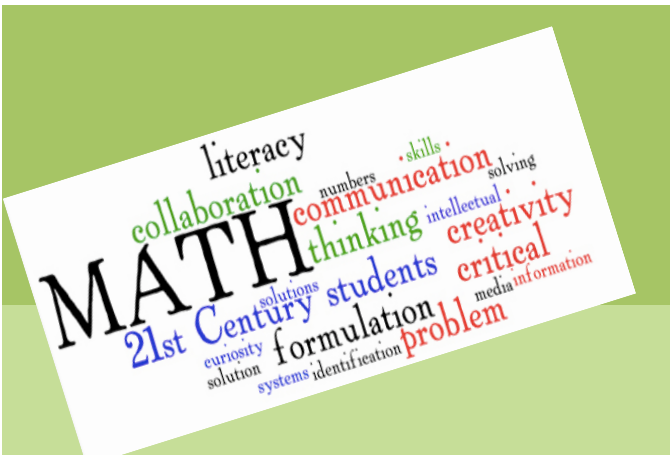
# NGSS

Rhode Island has adopted new science standards called the “Next Generation Science Standards.” The standards have been internationally benchmarked, are organized across disciplines and grades and emphasize scientific practice. There is a significant difference between developing or revising curriculum and units of study based on previous standards and developing curriculum and units of study based on new standards. When new standards are adopted, teams of teachers first have to study the new standards prior to grouping them into units.

To prepare for our study of the standards and development of curriculum next year, North Smithfield has developed a “NGSS Task Force.” The voluntary task force has met during after school hours throughout this school year. Most recently, the team met and developed a shared Google Doc that will help to unpack the standards and can be viewed by all science teachers. During a Professional Development Day, middle school and high school science teachers reviewed standards by domain using video resources compiled by the Lewis Center for Educational Research. <http://www.lewiscenter.org/AAE/Departments/Science/Teaching-the-Next-Generations-Science/>

Next year, we will be ready to tackle the NGSS and develop an articulated K-12 curriculum. I am appreciative of the work of our NGSS Task Force members as we prepare ourselves for this important initiative. A special thanks goes out to Lynn Hannah, Lauren Nelson, Karen Robinson, Gale O’Keefe, Sarah Dionne and John Lahar for serving on this important committee.





# Go Math!!

*The universe stands continually open to our gaze, but it cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and interpret the characters in which it is written. It is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangles, circles, and other geometric figures, without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it; without these, one is wandering about in a dark labyrinth.*

**- Galileo**

We first sat down to study the new math standards three years ago, it honestly seems like it was yesterday. I am not going to lie, at first glance, I was a little nervous about implementing the new/rigorous standards. Fast forward three years... and I am incredibly impressed! Our K-12 math teachers took the "proverbial bull by the horns" ...studied the standards, developed completely new curriculum, developed assessments, analyzed data and worked together to create and implement engaging lessons. It has been quite a journey! The best part of this on-going initiative to improve student achievement in mathematics has been the enthusiasm of our teachers!

This year our two elementary schools were fortunate to implement a math intervention program. Two very motivated and skilled teachers, Ms. Stephanie Massa and Ms. Sarah Glover, worked throughout the school year with students in need of math

support and intervention. This EIS grant funded program supported fifty children in grades one through five. It was a fantastic program that yielded excellent results!

We were also able to implement an after school math program utilizing Title I grant funds. The teachers worked collaboratively to develop and implement standards based lessons in an engaging environment for students in grades 3-5 in need of some extra help. I thank all those involved with the development of this program.

At the middle and high school level, we set out this year to explore and recommend a new math program for Grades 6 through Algebra II. I am happy to report that the "Big Ideas" Math textbooks and materials have arrived and are already being used within the classroom by our teachers and students. The program was unambiguously recommended by our Math Program Selection

Committee after a thorough review of multiple programs. The new math materials are aligned to the Common Core State Standards and include the textbook, an online text subscription, student consumable journals, online tutorials and assessment software. The program was developed in a way that will help students master content through inductive reasoning opportunities, engaging activities that provide deeper understanding, rich thought-provoking exercises, and a continual building on what has been previously taught. I appreciate the work of our program selection committee: Christine Lopes, Christine Shepherd, Amy Wright, Jane Franklin, Diane Turcotte, Cassie Jalbert, Deb Downes, Amanda Bednarczyk, Robin Broman, Margaret McPherson, Heidi Martel, Julie Houle, Melissa Rowse, David Mellor and Thomas Yeaw.



## World Language Curriculum Complete!

North Smithfield Schools has completed the World Language curricula! Our teachers worked in collaboration with Burrillville Foreign Language teachers creating curriculum guides that 'unpack' each standard, a curriculum map that shows which standards we are teaching by quarter and units of study based on the Understanding by Design (Ubd) format. During the curriculum development process we established a "Task Force" that met after school to review research, and ensure the curriculum is articulated and aligned across and between grade levels. A HUGE thanks goes out to Roberta Palumbo, Linda Milner and Lisa Cardin for their time and effort.





## Chromebooks!

This year NS schools purchased 14 Chromebook carts with 420 Google chromebooks. All NS teachers have all been trained on Google Applications. We are thankful for all of our teachers and administrators who have taken a lead role in professional development and implementation of Google Apps.

North Smithfield Schools has partnered with the Highlander Institute,

funded by The Learning Accelerator, to implement the Fuse RI initiative. This initiative strives to share, implement, evaluate, and scale blended learning (integrating technology into instruction) by working with educators and districts across the state. As part of the FUSE initiative, North Smithfield Schools will be supported through the creation of tailored resource playlists, statewide professional

learning communities around identified topics, collaboration opportunities with other LEAs, workshops, events, and consulting support. On April 17th, North Smithfield educators were provided professional development from our FUSE fellows focusing on enhancing instruction and creating engaging lessons utilizing technology.

## A Walk in the PARCC!!!

The implementation of the PARCC assessment was completed this year. Our students were able to take the assessment online due to the time, energy and effort of our administrators, teachers, guidance counselors and technology department. Preparing for the assessment was incredibly time consuming. The professionalism, dedication and commitment shown by all was extraordinary.



# Professional Development Sessions and Workshops

The implementation of professional development workshops and sessions is a collaborative effort. We implement some of our presentations using outside vendors supported by grant and local funds. This year we worked in collaboration with Teachers 21 to present PD workshops on Questioning Techniques, which was a recommendation of the District Evaluation Committee based on the previous year teacher evaluation data. We also work with other school districts. Mr. Paul Barrette, Technology Director for Smithfield Public Schools, shared his expertise with GoogleApps. We are so appreciative of our relationships with our neighboring



The large majority of our workshops were delivered by North Smithfield School Department teachers, staff and administrators. Just a few of our sessions this year include: Google Docs/Drive 101, Questioning Techniques, Collaborative Learning, Engagement Strategies, Ipad Apps, Search Ninja, Chromebook 101, Kahoot, Google Classroom, Learnzillion, Kaizena, Google Drawing, Google Forms, Google Presentation, Google Sheets, Special Education IEP Goals and Objectives, Autism Strategies, Easy Breezy IEP Accommodations, Growth Mindset, Student Choice - Student Voice, You Tube in the Classroom, Formative Assessment Strategies, Infinite Campus Beta, and Deeper Dive into the Common Core Standards.

## Google Summit

A team of ten educators from North Smithfield participated in the first annual EdTechTeam Rhode Island Summit featuring Google for Education held at Coventry High School. This high intensity two day event focused on deploying, integrating, and using Google Apps for Education and other Google Tools to promote student learning in K-12 and higher education. The event featured Google Certified Teachers, Google Apps for Education Certified Trainers, practicing administrators, solution providers, Google engineers, and representatives from the Google education teams. I thank our team: Carolyn Frayne, Andrea McKay, Jennifer Deigneault, James Williamson, Deana Cook, Sarah Glover, Tracey Nangle, Hunter Stewart, Adam Stanley, and Melissa Mathurin for giving up their weekend to participate in this event. The participants then came back to our district and offered a variety of workshops during our PD days.

