

Initiatives Update

Dear Teachers,

It is quite a year for the Curriculum Department! We are in the midst of implementing new standards, programs and initiatives, as well as, developing curriculum and units of study. It seems as if we are always “on the go.” We have so many teams and committees that meet regularly to ensure that we are delivering the very best education to our students... your time, energy and effort is so very appreciated. This edition of the “Initiatives Update” is simply to keep you all in the loop.

-Clare

Dates:

January 30th- Curriculum and Instruction Refinement- Grade 4

February 2nd- Professional Development Advisory Committee Meeting 3:00 @ KD

February 4th- Music Grades 9-12

February 5th- Curriculum and Instruction Refinement- HS English 9/10 (3)

February 6th- Curriculum and Instruction Refinement- HS English 11/12 (3)

February 6th- Curriculum and Instruction Refinement- Grade 5

February 11th- Music Grades 9-12

February 12th- Curriculum and Instruction Refinement- Grade 2

February 12th- Curriculum and Instruction Refinement- HS Math ALG 1&2 (4)

February 13th- Curriculum and Instruction Refinement- HS Math Geo (3)

February 25th- Music Grades 5 & 6

March 11th- Music Grades 5 & 6

Community of Practice

We are continuing to implement our year-long **K-12 ELA and Math Community of Practice – Shared Classroom Initiative**. The purpose is to generate meaningful conversations about pedagogy by organizing opportunities for teachers to ‘share’ our classrooms as way of exchanging ideas.

The premise of the initiative is simple; by visiting other classrooms within our district we can gain exposure to varied teaching practices, reflect on our own practices and encourage conversation about the art and craft of teaching. In addition, this initiative will serve 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.



NGSS

North Smithfield Schools has begun to study the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS.) The standards have been internationally benchmarked, are organized across disciplines and grades and emphasize scientific practice. North Smithfield Schools has established a “NGSS Task Force.” A special thanks to Lynn Hannah, Lauren Nelson, Karen Robinson, Gale O’Keefe, Sarah Dionne and John Lahar for serving on this important committee.



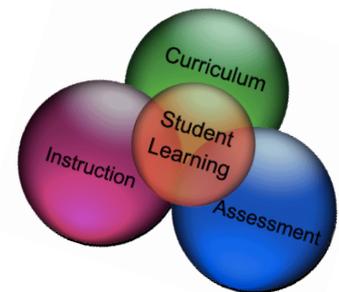
14 Chromebook Carts with 420 Google Chromebooks!

Thanks to the approval and support of the North Smithfield School Committee, Planning Board and Town Council, NS Schools purchased 14 Chromebook carts with 420 Google chromebooks. **Mr. Adam Stanley** and his technology department have been working around the clock to get the carts to the schools as soon as possible.

A chromebook is a laptop running Chrome OS as its operating system. The devices are designed to be used primarily while connected to the Internet, with most applications and data residing

"in the cloud". Google Apps for Education is a collection of applications that Google offers to schools and districts for free. All of the applications exist online and all documents can be accessed from any device with an Internet connection. The office suite of tools includes: Docs, Sheets, Drive, Forms, Slides, and more – each tool offers the ability to work from any device as well as share and collaborate. Students and teachers can seamlessly save work and collaborate simultaneously. Our teachers have all been trained on Google Applications.

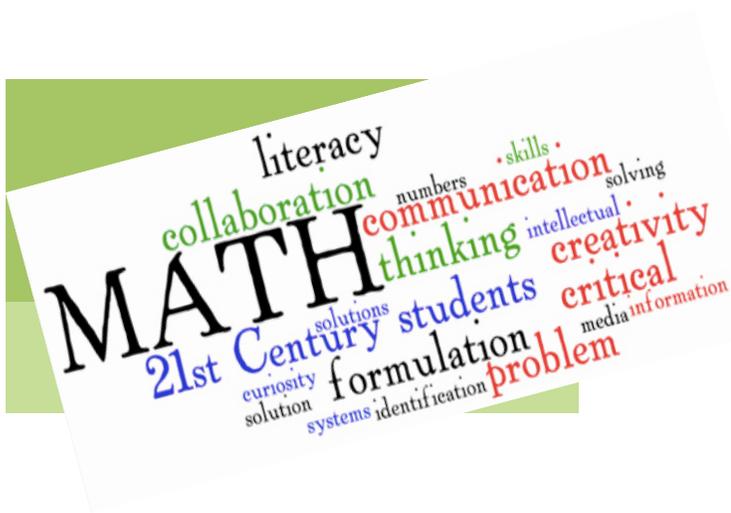
We are thankful for all of our teachers and administrators who have taken a lead role in professional development and implementation of Google Apps: Mr. Stanley, Mr. Mezzanotte, Mr. McGee, Mrs. Carnevale, Ms. Blais, Mrs. Nangle, Mr. Lahar, Ms. Mathurin, Dr. Tillotson, Mr. Williamson, Mr. Benz, Mrs. McAdams, and Mrs. McKay.



Music Curriculum Update

North Smithfield Schools is in the process of developing Music curricula. We are 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. After the curriculum is written we will be making live binders of the work and embedding into curriculum website. During the curriculum development we will establish a "Task Force" which will meet after school to review research, and ensure the curriculum is articulated and aligned across and between grade levels.





K-12 Math Task Force

The math task force has been a really powerful group of educators that come together to discuss 'where we are' and 'where we are going' with regards to the mathematics curriculum implementation. Through honest conversations, we have been able to make timely decisions that impact our implementation process. The first K- 12 Math Common Core Task Force meeting is scheduled for February 9th @ 3:00pm at KD. Go Math!

PDAC

The Professional Development Advisory Committee continues to meet to plan, coordinate and refine PD days. This year, each of the four PD days (there will be a few exceptions) are broken into three sessions. One session will focus on technology, one session will focus on instruction and one session will be reserved for grade level/department meetings. Our next PDAC meeting is on February 2, 2015 at 3:00 @KD. I appreciate the commitment of our team- Alyssa Koerner, Jennifer Daigneault, Corinne Ferri, Brittany Rousseau, Amy Wright, Mark Labossiere, Tracey Nangle, Claire McWilliams, Robert Mezzanotte, Carolyn Frayne and Diane Jolin.



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 will 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.



PARCC – General Information

This year, North Smithfield Schools will introduce the new PARCC (or Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) assessments in mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA)/literacy. These assessments will replace the NECAP Mathematics, Reading, and Writing assessments that we have used for the past 9 years.

Every year, our students take a number of state assessments. We share the results of these assessments with you in order to give you an idea about the progress your child is making in school. We also use the results of these assessments to help us improve classroom instruction and to identify areas where students may need some extra support.

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Another change is that PARCC testing will have two separate

testing periods: One in the early spring and another shortly before the end of the school year.

For the PARCC ELA/Literacy tests, all students in grades 3 through 10 will participate. These tests will include both reading and writing in every grade. (Previously, we tested writing in only three grades.)

For the PARCC math tests, most students in grades 3 through 8 will take the mathematics test for their grade level. In high school, however, the test your child will take depends on course enrollment. High-school students will take either PARCC Algebra I or PARCC Geometry, depending on which course they're taking. High-school students not taking either of these courses will not participate in the math assessments this year.

Students in middle school enrolled in either Algebra I or Geometry will take the PARCC test for their course, rather than the PARCC test for their grade level (for example, PARCC Geometry rather than PARCC Grade 8).

Another exciting change is that students will take PARCC assessments using a computer rather than using paper and pencil. Students will either be using the desktop computers in the computer labs or use chromebooks.

The testing windows are as follows: Performance-Based Assessment (PBA): March 16 - April 10, 2015 End-of-Year/End-of-Course Assessment (EOY/EOC): May 4 - May 29, 2015

Formative Assessment Resident Expert Team

Our "Formative Assessment - Resident Expert Team" of teachers met this month to continue their study of formative assessment practices and strategies to enhance instruction and student learning. We are grateful for the work and commitment of our teachers: Jessica Phaneuf, Lindsay Brooks, Jaclyn Cunningham, Kelly Hubacz, Bernadette Hawkins and Tracy Lafreniere. The team continues to share knowledge and resources during this "NS Formative Assessment Blog," faculty meetings and emails. I thoroughly enjoy working with this talented group of teachers and will certainly keep you all posted with updates and information.