

Our vision is a professional learning community where instruction invites effort and supports academic rigor for all students and educators.



Guilford Public Schools
Focused on Learning

Charting the Course

June 2009

FY 09-10 BUDGET

With the passage of the May 19 budget referendum, the school budget was approved with a 1.02% increase over the 2008-09 budget. A special thanks should be extended to all the Guilford Public School employees for agreeing to a variety of wage concessions that saved the district just over \$750,000. Without the wage concessions, positions would have been lost and class sizes would have increased.

It is clear that the financial crisis is far from over. Our District Leadership Team is already planning for the 2010-11 budget. Our hope is to find new and innovative ways to cut costs while continuing to move closer to our vision of creating a collaborative culture where outstanding instruction and academic rigor are evident in all of our classrooms.

I would be remiss if I did not extend a thank you to all of our parents who either worked to get the budget passed or just took the time to vote on this important issue. Please feel free to contact me regarding any cost savings ideas or suggestions you may have for the next year's budget deliberations.

Tom Forcella
Superintendent of Schools

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES/ PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

As you are aware, the Guilford Public Schools have created collaborative cultures in all of our schools where teachers constantly dialogue about what they teach, how they teach and the degree to which students learn. We have implemented an instruction and learning focused model that is constantly evolving, improving and is accountable for results.

Each school is organized as a Professional Learning Community with collaborative teams that answer three basic questions: 1) what do we want students to learn, 2) how do we evaluate whether or not they have learned, and 3) what are we going to do if they have not learned or already have the knowledge? As Richard DuFour, the accepted originator of the PLC model, states, "Members of a PLC are 'invited' to work with colleagues: they are called upon to be contributing members of a collective effort to improve the school's capacity to help all students learn at high levels."

The organizational structure of a PLC dovetails perfectly with the nine Principles of Learning that we have adopted from the University of Pittsburgh Institute of Learning founded by world-renowned educational researcher, Dr. Lauren Resnick. The Principles of Learning (POL) are based on the assumption that with sustained, focused effort from our students and outstanding instruction that invites effort and rigor, all students can achieve at higher levels.

During the 2009-10 school year, we will be continuing our educational journey with an even greater focus on instruction through the lens of the Principles of

Learning. Our collaborative teams will engage even more deeply in a collective inquiry regarding instructional excellence as defined by the nine Principles. I urge parents to visit our website to learn more about the Principles of Learning and the Professional Learning Community initiative.

EARLY INTERVENTION AT A.W. COX SCHOOL

Principal Merry Leventhal watches her students “bounce out of their cars and into school,” as they arrive at 7:50 a.m. to participate in an early intervention reading program for one hour before the start of the regular school day. The program exemplifies the district’s commitment to intervention strategies that improve instruction and increase student learning.

Students are invited to participate based on results from formative assessments developed in the faculty’s Professional Learning Communities and from district assessment data. Data reflects that these students are reading at close to grade level. The goal of the program is to raise student achievement to the level where all participants are reading at or above grade level. The environment provides for more individualized instruction in a comfortable setting where the teachers can focus on the specific needs of the students. Running records and the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) will continue to provide teachers with long-term data on the students’ progress.

Currently, sixty students, grouped by grade level, are instructed in reading by five teachers. Early intervention for approximately one dozen more students will be offered in math in the very near future.

HEALTH UPDATE

In our ongoing effort to keep you informed of issues related to H1N1 influenza, I would like to advise you that we have seen a recent rise in the number of elementary students who are absent from school due to flu-like symptoms. At this time none of the students have been confirmed to have the H1N1 flu.

We will continue to monitor all cases of the flu. Our school medical advisor and Town Health Director advise that students who develop flu-like symptoms see their family physician and follow the medical advice of your doctor which normally would include:

- If you have influenza-like-illness, stay home for seven days after symptoms begin or at least 24 hours after symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.
- Cover your cough/sneeze.
- Wash your hands frequently, especially after coughing or sneezing.

Cases of H1N1 influenza continue to grow in number throughout Connecticut and will more than likely occur in Guilford, including among school-age children. It is important for parents to realize that privacy laws do not allow us to share information that would lead to the identification of individuals who have the H1N1 influenza.

The Federal Center for Disease Control and State Department of Public Health continue to stress that school closures should only be considered when the level of absenteeism is so high, in a particular school, that it is impractical to operate the school. Visit our district web site for additional information on H1N1 influenza.

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