



It's all about the kids!

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHT
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Danbury Public Schools



The Danbury Enhancement Collaborative (TDEC) updates and continued communication efforts

The draft plan will go out to all staff for feedback. Then it will be submitted to the Board of Education in June for approval so it can be submitted to the State in October. Please keep in mind that it can be revised if needed.

Your continued input and feedback is essential. If you need additional information or explanations, you may contact a group leader for more information. They may also be willing to attend staff meetings.

Group leaders are: Cindy Mirochine, Laura Mead, Ian Strever, and Kara Casimiro.

The following dates of open forums were held:

- May 11 @ 2:30- High School (40 attendees)
- May 18 @ 3:30p.m.- Early Elementary Level (20 attendees)
- May 20 @ 2:45p.m.- Middle School Level (20 attendees)
- May 21 @ 4:00p.m.-

Late Elementary Level (10 attendees)

This newsletter will give you updates on the recent TDEC meetings and focus groups. Please be advised that there are things that have been modified from the previous newsletter. Four goals have been merged into three. At this time research is being done, and Adult Action indicators are being developed. Minutes from TDEC meetings have been distributed to all staff.

Inside this issue:

- TDEC updates and continued communication efforts
- TDEC information from April 24 and May 7
- Meeting with Commissioner and Ad Hoc Committee
- Focus group feedback from May 4
- Open Forum Feedback

The next TDEC meeting date:

Tuesday June 2 from 3-7pm

TDEC information from April 24 and May 7 Meetings- New Goals and Tier I Indicators

Listed are the three goals and Adult Action indicators that have been drafted.

1. *All students will be respectful, socially responsibly citizens, who value education.*

- Adults will provide students opportunities to participate in authentic learning experiences that connect classroom curricula to community need.
- A 15% decrease over 3 years in the number of students suspended from school at the secondary level.

• A 15% decrease over 3 years in the number of students with 10 or more absences from school.

2. *All students will demonstrate inquiry, advocacy and, wellness skills for the 21st century.*

- By June 2012, all students in grades 4-10 will demonstrate proficiency in inquiry,- research, higher-order thinking, and communication skills through a project measured by a grade appropriate rubric.
- By 2012 the percent of stu-

dents who pass all 4 tests on health standard will increase from 19% to 36%

• By 2012, we will reduce at risk behavior as indicated by the Adolescent at Risk Behavior Survey.

3. *All students will demonstrate academic success.*

- In literacy and numeracy, increasing student achievement at all levels and closing the gaps (CMT, CAPT, SAT, AP)

Meeting with Commissioner and Ad Hoc Committee

On May 19th, Dr. Pascarella, Dr. Glass, Karen Casimiro, Laura Mead, Kevin Haddad and Sue Morris attended a meeting with the Commissioner and the Ad Hoc Committee of the State Board of Education in Hartford. Dr. Pascarella and Dr. Glass made a presentation and were asked questions by the board and commissioner about Danbury's progress with its improvement plan. In addition to the Commissioner, Jay Voss, Allen Taylor and Janet Finneran of the State Board of

Education were in attendance as well as the Associate Commissioner and numerous Bureau chiefs.

The presentation was well received. The state recommended that the following be included in our improvement plan:

1. Attendance data and an overall improvement in attendance. (our current system is somewhat flawed and the district is addressing this.)
2. Creation and support of data

teams in all schools.

3. More specificity in our curriculum and fidelity of implementation.
4. Training of principals in their new leadership roles. (since they will be changing, especially at the middle school and high school levels.
5. A timeline of how the district is progressing from having several autonomous schools to a more systemic school system.

Parent Focus Groups from PTO, African American and Latino community

Meetings were an open forum for the community to give feedback on the TDEC information. There were many similarities in the feedback that the groups gave. The district is committed to address and work collaboratively on these topics.

Topics across three groups include:

- Cambridge Report needs to be clearer.
- Increase in the number of ways to communicate as a vehicle to reach out.
- Use resources such as community organizations, businesses and companies.
- More diversity in teachers,

being careful not separate groups or picking/tracking specific students.

- Lack of alignment in the curriculum.
- Parents need to know and understand their ability to speak up and get involved.

Sample of feedback from school open forums

After Dr. Sal gave the overview of the Cambridge report through the formation of the TDEC, staff had many similar questions and concerns.

1. Professional development- staff don't feel they are trained to use data properly in order to inform instruction. PD days are not aligned therefore special area teachers are not receiving timely PD in conjunction with class-

room teachers.

2. CAPT- are only taken once and there is no emphasis on the test itself. Students do not see the importance of the test.
3. Time- need more planning time and teachers need enough time to collaborate.
4. Communication- wide spread communication, sending the newsletter and minutes by

email. Updating the minutes more timely and the issue of inconsistency.

5. Alignment- the goal of alignment is excellent in looking at entire schools and not just departments. The coordination of the two middle schools need to be focused.
6. Lack of resources.
7. Parents- the importance of parental involvement.