

# Report for 12/15/2011

## Mark Vallone

### COMMUNICATION

- **Enrollment** numbers Pre-33, K- 85 1<sup>st</sup>-81 2<sup>nd</sup>-81, 3<sup>rd</sup>-84, 4<sup>th</sup>-63, 5<sup>th</sup>-85; Total - 512
- **Winter Concerts** (Based on my writing of Monday, December 12) EES students performed at the Epping Middle School Gymnasium this week with grades 2-3-5 and the second year band performing Tuesday and grades 1-4 and the first year band performing Wednesday. Thanks to Mary Beth Coleman and Jared Breault for all their work preparing our students for these concerts. Thanks, too, to the middle school administration and custodial for helping make this happen.
- **Harlem Wizards Return...** 500 people attended the PTO's benefit basketball game between the Harlem Wizards and the EES All-Stars. Thanks to teachers Stephanie Baker and Matt Cartmill who joined EHS alumna Sam Newton and Elise Morgan along with parents ( Names TBA)
- **Make and Take Craft Fair...** Last Thursday night's Make and Take Craft Fair raised nearly \$900 to support the Artist in Residence program. Thanks to Cheryl MacLeay, Sarah Boudreau and other volunteers for making this program a success.
- **Grade 4 Music Field Trip to A Christmas Carol in Manchester.** This Friday, Mary Beth Coleman and Sarah Boudreau will take grade 4 to Manchester to see a production of A Christ Carol and a study tour of the architecture and pipe organ of the Ste, Marie Cathedral. Thanks to the Epping PTO for subsidizing the cost of the bus trip.
- **Title I Reading and Math Workshop and Meeting for Parents this Friday** Parents and guardians of students receiving reading and/or math services through the school's Title I program will have an opportunity to meet with Title I staff, ask questions and review the 2011-12 program.
- **Student Service Projects.** The Student Council has set up a small ornament making shop as a fundraiser to support students in need through the Chamber of Commerce Children's Fund. Students can make tree ornaments for a small cost during lunch and recess time over the next week. Grade 4 is completing its service project of making and selling pet treats for the holidays. Benefits from this project will go to the Rockingham Count SPCA.

### ACCOUNTABLE AND COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

- **Band Update** Due to the loss of access to a storage closet formerly used as a practice area, some Epping Elementary Band students are now taking lessons in the band room at Epping High School. Some lessons and all band rehearsals are still held at the elementary school from 7:45 to 8:35 a.m. as these activities do not impact academic instruction and uses either the current music and art rooms, spaces that generally are not in use until 8:40 a.m. Students whose individual or small group instrumental lessons take place after 8:30 are traveling between EES and EHS. They meet Jared Breault in the main lobby and walk together to and from the buildings. Right now, the average amount of time students lose due to travel time and setup is between 10-15 minutes which means instruction time is cut almost in half. The amount of time lost due to travel will likely increase during the winter months.

- **Math in Focus Program** Implementation of the new math program is in full swing now that NECAP testing has concluded. Grade level teams are meeting every 6<sup>th</sup> day with special education teachers, Title I tutors and math specialist to plan math lessons and assessments. Facilitation of meetings has been split between Dea Mayne and myself as Mrs. Mayne's position has been reduced to 60% which means she is unavailable to attend all meetings. Last Friday's professional development day was devoted to math and featured 2-3 hour blocks of instruction by highly trained consultants from the publisher. Implementing the program has been easier for teachers in the lower grades since their students do not have as many gaps as the older students have. Teachers in the higher grades are using transition guides and the online resources so that they can design lessons using materials from earlier grades to make the introduction of new materials easier to understand. This process is typical for schools that adopt a new program K-5 in one year. What is interesting is that, despite some of the difficulties of jumping into the program in the higher grades, student confidence in basic numbers and operations is increasing and they are handling increasingly complex problems. Next month, students from grade 4 will demonstrate one of the central strategies for solving math problems- bar modeling. I believe you will be pleased at the level of understanding these students will show and also find the strategy a very compelling one.

Parent reactions have been much more positive. One concern is that some students who were used to earning high marks in math have found some of the program challenging. To help address that issue, the school will emphasize one strategy of its Math Improvement Plan which is to allow students to retake tests of the same material. Retaking tests does not mean students may work on the exact same problem, but rather be given another opportunity to demonstrate what they know using similar examples or problems

## STUDENT LEARNING

- **Literacy Work** Teams of teachers continue to revise and improve their unit of instruction in both reading and writing. With the increased emphasis on Non-fiction literature and writing that is found in the Common Core standards adopted by New Hampshire, the teams have expanded Non-fiction instruction in both reading and writing. Reading consultants Stephanie Maze Hsu and Cynthia Merrill from the Teaching and Learning Alliance are working with all teams.
- **Schools visit EES** Teams of teachers from Somersworth, NH and Narragansett, MA have visited EES in the past month to observe how Epping Elementary teaches reading and writing. Such visits are an indication of how much our school has improved instruction over the past few years.
- **"Mini" NECAP** For the second year in a row, EES students in grades 2-5 took a 30 minute test in mathematics this week that uses a format patterned after the NECAP, the NH state test. Each test will include 8-10 multiple choice and two open-response items that are based on grade level curriculum frameworks and taken from a bank of questions made available online through the NH Department of Education and the Performance Pathways Company. The tests will be given at least three times this year. The purpose of the Mini NECAP Testing is to provide teachers with feedback on what students are learning and will help students be familiar with the testing format- a critical component in helping students pass the test.

## TECHNOLOGY/FACILITIES

- **EES Staff attend Christa MacAuliffe Technology Conference** Teachers and staff attended the conference between November 29 and December 1. Notable was a workshop on a Deerfield kindergarten classroom that uses a variety of technologies that promote very active learning by students. We viewed videos created by kindergarten students that were used to train other students in the classroom ! Students in the classroom used an Internet connection and simple camera to skype directly with another kindergarten class in Manitoba, Canada. The Deerfield teacher, Maria Knee, will present this workshop to the EES Technology Committee in January.
  
- **Increase use of computer labs for math.** With the adoption of Math in Focus Teachers in grades 3-4-5 have increased their use of computer labs for students to access tutorials in numbers and operations and to access Think Central's online assessments of chapters in the program.

## Calendar

December 13	Visit by 12 teachers from Narragansett Regional School District 9 8:30 to 2:30 Note that if there is a snow day on 12/12 this event is cancelled <b>EES Concert Grades 2-3-5 Erin Milbury supervises</b>
December 14	<b>EES Concert Grades 1-4 Mark Vallone supervise</b> Dental van at EES for X-ray and exams by appointment only
December 15	Math Committee Meeting School Board Meeting
December 16	Title I parent luncheon meeting ( will need to order pizza etc) Grade 4 field trip to Manchester
December 21	EES Technology Committee meeting
December 22	Faculty meeting
December 23	Winter holiday vacation through Jan 2
January 2	Classes resume
January 3	Winter NWEA assessments
January 5	Advisory Council Meeting
January 9	Literacy Committee Meeting
January 12	Faculty Meeting
January 13	Professional Development Day
January 16	Martin Luther King Jr. holiday
January 18	EES Technology Committee Meeting
January 19	Math Committee Meeting
January 26	Faculty Meeting