

## **BERLIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **Demographics**

Berlin Public Schools opened the 2009-2010 school year with an enrollment of 1425 students K-12 and closed the school year with an enrollment of 1365. Kindergarten is offered in half-day sessions. Class sizes range from 15-24. The district hired 284 employees with professional staff, teachers, counselors, and specialists.

The schools opened with one less building with the closing of Bartlett School, and relocating kindergarten students from Marston School to Brown. Grade levels K-2 are at Brown School, 3-6 at Hillside, 7-8 at Berlin Jr.High, and 9-12 at Berlin High. Special education offices and Title I (federal project for disadvantaged students in reading) offices are based at the Marston School building. The district's central office is in the Hillside School building.

### **Instruction & Assessment**

The core curriculum for reading instruction K-6 is MacMillan/McGraw-Hill and for math, Scott Foresman. An array of assessments is used to continually diagnose where a student's instructional level is, by implementation of a 3-tier model of intervention, rather than a "wait to fail" model. The Response To Intervention (RTI) model is evolving through the grade levels with K-2 in full implementation in reading and progressing in math. Other grade levels are following suit.

The Junior High School (Gr.7-8) students and staff have embraced the best practices in middle school education as promoted by the New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS), and operates in teams for interdisciplinary instruction and increase in

student support. Students are grouped in teams and are assigned the same academic core teachers for two years.

Berlin High School (Gr.9-12) has implemented a student advisory program to provide an ongoing personal connection between students and trained teachers. Student portfolios are being developed to improve parent communications. With proven research, this process is expected to be effective with at-risk students and potential dropouts. BHS is a PBIS school with trained staff in using a behavioral analysis process for early interventions, both academically and behaviorally.

The RTI model, implementation of data teams, training in a data warehousing software Performance Tracker, implementation of a new reading program in grades 3-6, were district initiatives. Inclusion of students with disabilities, differentiated instruction, and changes in scheduling of NECAP testing appear to have contributed to the following gains. Students with disabilities in grade 11 increased by 4% in math. Grade 5 students with disabilities increased by 6% in math. Grade 4, from low socio-economic status increased by 7% in math. Students with disabilities increased by 15% in reading at grade 11, grade 8 student with disabilities increased by 8%, grade 6 increased by 7% and grade 5 increased by 11%, all in reading. Students from low socio-economic status increased achievement by 3% for grade 11, 8% for grade 8, 2% for grade 6, 9% for grade 5, 2% for grade 4, all in reading.

Under the guidelines of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Districts and Schools are given a designation of "districts in need of improvement" and "schools in need of improvement" if state testing results aren't indicative of Adequate Yearly Progress

(AYP) in each student subgroup: race, disabilities, low socio-economic and gender.

Berlin is designated as a District In Need of Improvement (DINI) in reading and math, Berlin High School is designated as a School In Need of Improvement (SINI) in reading and math, Berlin Jr.High School is designated as a School In Need of Improvement (SINI) in reading, Hillside School is designated as a SINI in reading and math, Brown School is a SINI in reading and math. These designations will continue until 100% of students attain benchmark.

Staff training was provided to support differentiated instruction in all math lessons, K - 12. Differentiated instruction is that a teacher proactively plans lessons where the students are, rather than presuming that all learners of a given age or grade are essentially alike.

Data teams were established in each building. In addition, district and content level (reading & math) data teams were formed. Our district goal is to actively review and discuss student data to drive instruction. Both formative and summative assessments are viewed to assist in the decision making process if a student needs an intervention to reach the benchmarks.

### **Staff Accomplishments**

After two years, a focus monitoring committee developed the district improvement plan that included specific K-12 goals. The committee members are: Corinne Cascadden, Georgia Caron, Jane Provencher, Beverly Dupont, Gary Bisson, Amy Huter, Karen Turgeon, Pam Carrier, Liza Aldrich, Roland Pinette, Christine Lindsey, Julie King, Don Picard. After a needs assessment, the committee established

a decision-making model to use for all major decisions within the district.

School nurses were proactive with local health agencies and public health to address H1N1 virus with staff, student and parent education. Nurses also participated in local immunization clinics and instituted a change in hygiene practice in the school setting.

District mentor program was instrumental in providing support to beginning teachers. Monthly meetings and classroom observations were part of the mentor's responsibility. Trained mentors are: Ben Murphy, Chair, Ann Nolin, Nancy Forestall, Linda Jacobs, Patty Hood, Tammy Fauteux, Tammy Watson, Nicole Arguin, Sandy Pouliot, Amy Cascadden, Susan Griffin.

District-wide committees were formed to address "Wellness", "Truancy", "Title IX/Harassment", and the revision of the Professional Development Master Plan.

The following staff members volunteered to participate on the Wellness committee: Mary Ellen Brady, Patty Hood, Craig Melanson, Betty Roy,R.N., Pauline Couture, R.N, Elaine Connary, Mike Poulin, Jill Poulin, Amy Blanchette, R.N., Dana Deblois, Candy Richard, Jan Millis, Corinne Cascadden. Their charge was to take an inventory of all district activity that complies with the required N.H. Minimum State Standards for Approval. The inventory included both student and staff daily physical activities that promote healthy lifestyles, review of our food service offerings and competitive food sales during the school day, the content and accessibility of vending machines, and CPR/AED staff training. This committee met 12 times during the school year.

The professional development committee included: Kevin Carpenter, chair, Cheryl

Bouchard, Suzanne Lanctot, AnnElise Record, Linda Scherf, Debbie Payeur, Alexa Easley, Corinne Cascadden, Jessica Henderson, Amy Cascadden,. This committee revised the district's master plan for professional development by integrating the district goals: differentiated instruction, response-to-intervention model, data team development and parent involvement. The plan has been approved by the N.H. Department of Education for 5 years. The plan will guide staff with professional development activities and with writing individual 3-year professional development plans. This committee met 12 times during the school year.

Staff training in TitleIX/Harrassment had to be provided in compliance with federal and state laws. A district committee was formed with the following members: Georgia Caron, Marion Huntley, Dr. Peter Rogers, Andy Rancloes, Jill Poulin, David Griffin, Rosemary Rancourt, Jennifer Lyon, Dolores Charest, Nancy Brannen, Ken Proulx, Ben Skoglund, Steve Vogel, Corinne Cascadden. The approach the committee took was a "train the trainer" model. PRIMEX (Public Risk Management Exchange) provided committee training, then the group developed a training presentation that was used with all current staff and will be available for any new hires. Acknowledgement forms are kept in each individual's personnel file.

In the spring of 2010, truancy/absence guidelines were discussed and revisited in an effort to comply with new laws and to hold parents accountable for all student absences. Assistant Principals Tim Forestall , Dan Record, Principal Amy Huter, Detective Keith Enman, and Juvenile Probation officer James Panzer updated the school policy and guidelines for compulsory attendance. Absences in excess of 10 half days will be

subject to parent notification. If continued absences, a mandatory meeting with Det. Enman, the truant officer, school administrators, and a juvenile probation officer will be scheduled. If there are no improvements in attendance, court petitions will be filed to address a parent violation of RSA193:1 Compulsory attendance or a CHINS (child in need of service).

Cafeteria workers have begun the process of becoming certified with two professional development activities: Safe Serve and Healthy Edge. Two custodians have received lead paint certification. Eighteen out of twenty educational assistants, who are not Highly Qualified, participated in a summer training to develop a portfolio of job related experiences that will be scored and evaluated to determine if they have met the criteria to be Highly Qualified Assistants.

### **Facilities Report**

A new hot water heating system was installed at Brown School, replacing a steam heat system. New windows were installed in the 1956 addition as well. Tile flooring on the first floor hallway was replaced at Berlin High School.

The Biomass Energy Resource Center (BERC) reviewed a study of the fuel energy used by the Berlin Jr. High School and Berlin High School. The conclusion was that it would be cost and energy efficient to consider a biomass wood chip boiler for Berlin High School and to consider city district heating for Berlin Jr. High School because of its congested neighborhood.

Previously boarded up windows on the High St. side of Berlin Jr. High School gym were replaced with energy efficient windows to add natural light to the facility.

The auditorium stage had a complete upgrade in the electrical panel and replacement of all stage lighting.

Two buses were purchased to update the Berlin bus fleet of 9.

### **Community/Board Involvement**

Student contact information was made more readily available to teachers for parent communications. A district-wide phone log was developed for fall implementation. The phone log will be used by teachers to document all parent communications. The phone logs will be submitted to the building principals at the end of the school year. A parent/teacher/student conference day is scheduled for Dec. 10, 2010 for all grades K-12.

Family nights were held at Brown and Hillside schools based on a literacy theme. Parent involvement increased by 55% at Brown School and by 57% at Hillside School from the previous 2008-09 school year.

Students at all grade levels visited local establishments for community service, learning about safety on the job, science education, fine arts performances, job shadows and internships.

The Berlin Board of Education began the process of district policy revisions. The following sections were updated during the 2009-10 school year:

- Section A - Foundations & Basic Commitment
- Section B - Board Governance & Operati
- Section C - General School Administration
- Section D - Fiscal Management
- Section F - Facilities

The following individual policies were either added as new or revised:

Truancy, Student Absences & Excuses, Implementation Procedures for Absences, Compulsory Attendance Age, Sexual Harassment & Sexual Violence, Employee/Student Relations, Participation for Home Study Students, Employee Use of Social Networking, Audio/Video Surveillance, Substitute Employment, Field Trips and Excursions, Use of School Buildings and Facilities, Community Use of School Facilities.

For the second consecutive year, the city level-funded the school budget at \$15,797,124.

Respectfully Submitted,

Corinne E. Cascadden  
Superintendent of Schools