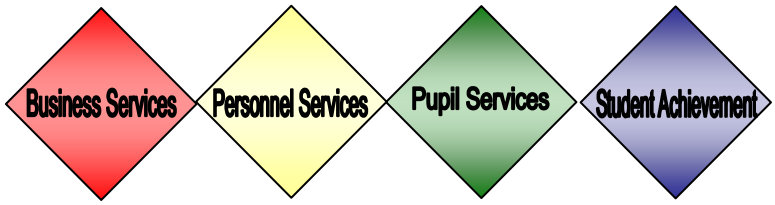
School District of New London



MONTHLY UPDATE

By: Kathy Gwidt
Director of Teaching and Learning
Date: February, 2010

Building Staff Capacity: A team of 18 teachers and principals attended the state's annual WI State Reading Association (WSRA) convention on February 4-6 as indicated in our district's Professional Development Plan. Michael Fullan, Richard Allington, Shane Templeton, and Ellin Keene join dozens of other internationally recognized presenters to focus on a variety of topics related to literacy.

Funding is provided through the Title I portion of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and Title IIA of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). We are very fortunate to participate in this renowned learning opportunity which is so close to home.

Clear Learning Targets:
Our district goals indicate the importance of setting clear, high academic standards that describe precisely what today's students must learn and be able to do in order to be successful in school and society. That is why we continue our efforts to provide clear consistent learning targets. Learning targets are being refined for elementary and middle level music, art and physical education curriculums as well as high school science and social studies. Technology permits us to provide updates and continually improve documents. We are currently researching electronic grading programs that will allow teachers to score to these published benchmarks. This is a giant step toward our efforts to connect instruction, assessment, and evaluation.

Technology Proficiencies:
Final Technology Proficiency checklists are being completed this week. This baseline requirement has encouraged many teachers to utilize databases that they had not previously accessed. Our library media specialists continue to provide support in areas of technology integration, and are reporting many successful team teaching experiences.

Mission Leadership Team:
Members of MLT continue to serve as communication liaisons by providing effective building and district level leadership opportunities. This group has been focusing on the implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI) in our schools.

Wisconsin's framework for (RtI) is based on the following principles:

- RtI is for ALL children and ALL educators.
- RtI must support and provide value to effective practices.
- Success for RtI lies within the classroom through collaboration.
- RtI supports and provides value to the use of multiple assessments to inform instructional practices.
- RtI is something you do and not necessarily something you buy.
- RtI emerges from and supports research and evidence based practice.

The elementary schools have implemented RTI over the past years, and they are now working to improve and refine their work. A process has been developed that allows the expertise of Problem Solving Teams to address student concerns. Data is tracked and progress monitored. This group has recently published an electronic survey to aid in improving their efforts.

The middle school will attend training which will allow them to pilot a Student Intervention Monitoring System (SIMS). SIMS is designed to manage the documentation of student needs and intervention for all students.

The high school has fully implemented the Advisement Program which directly relates to RTI. They are now working to introduce components of the Problem Solving Team to their staff for the purpose of improved collaborative problem solving and the use of data to make educational decisions.