



North Haven Public Schools
North Haven, Connecticut 06473

"As a result of their experiences in the North Haven Public Schools, all students will acquire the skills necessary to meet the demands of the twenty-first century."



January 2018

Dear Colleagues, Parents, and Guardians,

Happy New Year! I hope everyone enjoyed a restful winter break and have returned energized to take on the work needing to be done during the second half of the year. While January marks the beginning of the new calendar year, it also is the mid-point of the current school year.

To mark this milestone, it's a good time to share a **"State of the District"** report. Since beginning the new school year in August, we've accomplished a great deal within the North Haven Public Schools. Thanks to the work of many, we continue to expand our programs to better meet the needs of all learners. What follows is simply a sample of the fine work being carried out across the district by teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, clerical staff, custodial staff, and Board of Education members. Please keep in mind as you read that this is only a portion of the efforts of staff members throughout the district. None of this would be possible without their commitment to the district. My sincere appreciation to everyone for the part they've played in strengthening the North Haven Public Schools. Together, we're doing some exciting and remarkable work that is benefitting students.

- **Columbia Teachers' College** – North Haven's four elementary schools continue to serve in the capacity of "affiliate schools," working in partnership with Columbia Teachers' College on strengthening students' writing abilities, starting in kindergarten. The professional development provided by the college is held in our schools, with model lessons carried out in our classrooms, with our students. Our work with Columbia, though challenging, has been a rich and rewarding opportunity. Students are writing more, with greater confidence than ever before, and enjoying it. Writing has been shown to be instrumental in improving student achievement.

To better meet the needs of students transitioning from the elementary school to the middle school, our English/Language Arts Program Coordinator for grades 6-12, Susan Bass, along with language arts teachers, designed a sixth-grade writing curriculum that emphasizes writing techniques in each subject area. The curriculum teaches students how to effectively write science lab reports, essays in social studies using primary source material, and how to develop strong written arguments defending their answers to mathematics problems. One of our overarching district goals is to send fluent writers to the high school.

- **Transitioning Students from the Elementary Schools to North Haven Middle School** – Fifth and sixth grade teachers met in November to discuss student preparation for the middle school, to review the fifth-grade writing goals, and to review pacing, especially in the area of English/Language Arts. We want to be confident that students entering the middle school have had similar learning experiences in each elementary school that prepare them for the transition. The discussion between the teachers examined how sixth grade student work reflects mastery of the fifth-grade curriculum.

In December, eighth and ninth grade English/Language Arts teachers had a similar conversation regarding students transitioning from the middle school to the high school. Their discussion focused on the question of how well our middle school program is preparing students to meet the challenges of the high school; what is working well and what can be improved upon.

- **Certificate of Occupancy for North Haven Middle School** – In November, as promised from the start of the project, the district received final Certificate of Occupancy for North Haven Middle School. All work is completed and the facility is beautiful. There is an Open House planned for the public on Monday, January 29, 2018 beginning at 6:30 PM. If you can, please join us. The school creates a wonderful learning environment for students. We owe a debt of gratitude to the Middle School Building Committee members who have worked tirelessly on this project since October 2013.
- **Scientific Research-Based Intervention (SRBI)** - SRBI Teams are in place in each of the six schools. These teams of teachers and administrators discuss and make recommendations for classroom interventions as a first step in assisting struggling students. School teams establish individualized goals for every student brought up for discussion. Now in their fifth year of operation, SRBI Teams have fallen into a pattern for how they conduct their meetings, allowing them to serve greater numbers of students. Our goal continues to be one of standardizing team practices throughout the district and limiting the amount of paperwork a referring teacher is asked to complete.
- **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)** - The district's PBIS Program is intended to improve and strengthen each school's culture and climate. This is another K-12 initiative. The program encourages student to be respectful, responsible and kind toward each other throughout the school day and beyond. Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through 12th grade everyone tries to live by those three simple beliefs. Beginning in kindergarten, the truths are reinforced daily. While the implementation of the program looks different at each level, the goal remains the same; to develop students who contribute to a positive school and classroom environment where everyone feels included and respected.
- **Technology** – The district has taken a significant step forward this year in the area of technology with the appointment of Jenn Kozniewski as the Director of Educational and Informational Technology. In the short time that she's been with us, beginning on July 1, 2017, we've already seen evidence of her positive impact. Under her direction, the district has unified our parent contact information into PowerSchool and switched to the SwiftK12 announcement system for phone calls, emails, and text messages. Professional development on PowerSchool and Google Apps has been provided, or is scheduled to be provided in each school.
- **District Data Team** – The District Data Team has met regularly throughout the first half of the year examining student achievement from a K-12 perspective. Of particular interest has been determining how well we're preparing students throughout the district for the next grade and, at the high school level, the next level of a class. We do this by reviewing state data results, report card grades, classwork, and benchmark assessments. We've also begun a Chromebook pilot at the high school.
- **Instructional/Academic Coaching** - Throughout the district, teachers are receiving instructional coaching by coordinators, math coaches and literacy leaders. These content area specialists are supporting teachers in the planning and delivery of instruction across grade levels and content areas. Specialists from across the district participated in an intensive 8-day Cognitive Coaching training to learn how to best support classroom instruction/teachers.
- **Middle/High School Intervention Program** - North Haven Middle and High School's Intervention Programs, now in their second year, help students with skill deficits to improve academically. In the areas of executive functioning, literacy, and math, instruction is personalized, goal-driven, and progress monitored for each identified student. Intervention services have proven essential and highly effective to struggling learners at both levels, changing their outcomes significantly, with over 90% of supported students succeeding academically.

The first half of our school year has been extremely productive thanks to the efforts of many. I look forward to keeping you informed of our progress going forward. Please don't hesitate me at any time with questions and/or concerns. Once again, Happy New Year.

Sincerely,
Robert D. Cronin, Ph.D.
 Robert D. Cronin, Ph.D. Superintendent