

Principals' Reports for October 2020

Celebrations

ALBANY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

We borrowed the kayaks, and students in grades 3-8 had the opportunity to use them at Little Hosmer during October. Students also had opportunities to bike or hike. It was very important for us to get outside during the fall, for both physical and social/emotional well-being in the face of COVID. Our middle school students also had a chance to work with Sterling College professors. Kudos to our teachers who went the extra mile to organize these events.

Every student also had the opportunity to carve a pumpkin, some of which were grown here in our school garden, and the balance of which were grown by one of our fourth graders, Oscar Peters. Originally, we were going to light them up in the evening and hold a "pumpkin walk for the families, but with the spike in COVID cases in late October, we decided that canceling that event was wise. The design of the pumpkins was integrated with our art program, and the students took their pumpkins home for halloween, so it all worked out well.

I'd also like to celebrate that we had a soccer season, however shortened, thanks largely to our coaches Lindsay and Jonathan Davis. Normalcy is a good thing in a pandemic.

BARTON ACADEMY AND GRADED SCHOOL

On October 8th and 9th, we held our student led conferences. 96% of our students and families attended virtually. 23% joined via Google Meet and 77% participated via telephone.

The Barton Parent Club showed their appreciation for our staff with a "sweet treat." Every Barton staff member received a little jug of Vermont maple syrup and a kind note. This was greatly appreciated.

BROWNINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOL

The Fourth graders won a grant from the Grow Kids' Love of Reading grant sponsored by author James Patterson and Scholastic Book Clubs. We won \$500 and 500 bonus points to purchase books for our classroom library.

GLOVER COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Glover celebrated Red Ribbon Week in October. Students learned about drug prevention, ate some ice cream treats from the Union House, and had some themed dress up days. You can find more details in our last two newsletters. <https://www.smores.com/xr498> <https://www.smores.com/yf2vp8>

We had a great soccer season, winning most of our games. At times it was challenging to get spectators to follow health and safety rules, but we got through it. I appreciate Coach Kennedy's dedication and am sorry that we'll most likely need a new coach next year since his daughter is moving to high school for the 2021-2022 school year. Jason Kennedy has always been reliable and professional, and GCS will miss him.



IRASBURG VILLAGE SCHOOL

One of our 2nd grade students won a pumpkin carving contest! He was very excited to get the news.

Even though there were some technical difficulties during parent conferences, the discussions with parents were very successful and informative.

ORLEANS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

We had a successful soccer season and won almost every game. Our K class successfully took a field trip to the fire station. They walked and sat outside, masked and socially distanced. They were escorted back to school by a fire truck! Exciting times!

OCSU REMOTE ACADEMY

Students and staff have settled into their daily routines. All involved are getting better at navigating the technology to meet with one another, to access instruction, and to submit assignments.

We're gathering data from all involved to see if there is interest for ORA to continue next year. We have 21 submissions so far. We'll keep asking families to fill this survey out.

Focus on Learning & Equity

ALBANY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

While we began the year with an emphasis on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), there is plenty of academic work occurring as well. The other day I witnessed a class where the morning circle prompt was integrated with the writing project the students were working on. We have volcanoes being studied in the 3-4 class, and all kinds of hands-on science activities going on in the middle school. It is important to realize that SEL and academics are mutually reinforcing; SEL makes academics better and more equitable.

I am currently taking a webinar on Reflective Leadership and a graduate course entitled "Transforming Trauma" with Dave Melnick of NFI. I've worked with Dave before (which is amazing) but I wanted the real Dave Melnick experience. It is my plan to channel Dave in staff development activities starting in November. This is called "workforce development" and involves putting the teacher, and the teacher's dispositions and emotions in the center of conversations about student behavior and learning. We are a PBIS school, and an important part of PBIS is the idea that the only behavior we can control is our own, and if we can reflect on, and improve, how we respond to struggling students, they will have a better experience at school and learn more.

We have a lot of TEPs this year, as most of our teachers are year 3 and beyond. Taking a cue from Bev, who did this in cabinet, I have been giving teachers staff meeting time for their TEP advisories. This has led to many people

collaborating on goals in their advisories. Most teachers have a wellness goal as well, which is an important part of trauma-informed practice. I have been very intentional about having teachers reference Danielson components in their TEP in order to address our need to connect our supervision and evaluation to a research-based rubric. Improving supervision and evaluation is one of my AEP goals.

Our short-term closure plans are in place should we need them. Teachers have deployed a mix of paper packets and online materials. They have worked to ensure equitable access by creating "Choice Boards" which give a variety of options to continue learning in the event a class or the whole school needs to pivot to short-term closure.

BARTON ACADEMY AND GRADED SCHOOL

On October 7th, Sally Cochran and I attended Heather Lynn's second HHB virtual training. I also attended the virtual mini-series, *Making Legally Compliant and Student-Centered Decisions as an LEA* with Heather Lynn and Erin Maguire. I am continuing to participate on the OCSU Equity Team. I am a part of a sub-committee focused on community outreach and awareness. Our focus is how we can provide opportunities to create awareness about equity in the community and schools.

On Wednesday, October 21st, year 3 and beyond teachers met with their TEP advisories to share their goals for the 2020-2021 school year and offer feedback to one another. Mike Moriarty provided a training for first and second year teachers on grading and reporting.

On Friday, Oct. 16, 2020 the book "No-Drama Discipline" by D. Siegel, M.D. & T. Bryson, PH.D. was sent home with students (one copy per family). This book was made available through a grant provided by Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC). Sally Cochran "Ms. Sally", Barton School Counselor and Duncan Nutter, Barton 3rd grade teacher will be facilitating a discussion group with families. We recently sent out a survey to families to see who might be interested in participating.

BROWNINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOL



In our first week of art this year, we talked about community, kindness, mindfulness and relaxation. Students were asked to draw something that represented either kindness, mindfulness or relaxation on a lego piece. These legos were compiled into a community artwork to remind our school community to practice kindness and self care and that we are still together.

Our middle school science classes have been conducting physics labs in the gym while maintaining physical distancing.

GLOVER COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Glover teachers spent October's PD time preparing short-term closure plans. These have recently been sent home with each student just in case we have to close for a few days due to COVID cases or lack of staffing.

The k-4 PLC is made up of 2 new teachers and 2 veteran teachers. Steve Laurie, our coach, has joined their meetings for a few weeks. They've learned about how to run a Eureka lesson and how to input grades in PowerTeacher Pro. Monique Schneider facilitates this group.

The middle school PLC is made up of veteran teachers only. They have been focusing on equitable practices and social justice. Natalie Dalpe facilitates this group.

IRASBURG VILLAGE SCHOOL

Our staff developed short-term closure plans during a couple weeks in October, just in case. All packets have been sent home with students.

I attended the equity workshop, which was offered during inservice on 10/12/20. It was titled, "Equitable Learning Environments In Crisis Mode," and was very informative.

Our teachers and I recently viewed Pedro Noguera's presentation on PBL & Equity. Teachers completed some observations, notices, and wonders after the viewing.

ORLEANS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Staff participated in a webinar about Decolonizing Thanksgiving. This week they will discuss equity and upcoming holidays.

Grades 3 and 4 students delivered speeches and held an election to learn about the process.

Middle school students are enjoying genius hour, time when they can focus on an area of strong interest. Students are making crafts, painting, editing photographs, learning about journalism, etc.

OCSU REMOTE ACADEMY

This staff continues to amaze us. They are doing a book study using *The Distance Learning Playbook K-12*, thinking, learning about, and trying new strategies for providing feedback in a remote setting. This month ORA, with the help of Perry Burnell also created a new way to track and communicate attendance to our families and we are currently creating a new system for communicating with families about missing assignments.

Staffing

ALBANY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Albany staffing has been remarkably stable, but it's a fragile stability. We are organized into cohorts, each with at least two teachers/adults, so when one adult is absent there are other adults to help fill in. If we are fortunate enough to have a sub, so much the better.

There are two things which could send a classroom or a whole school remote:

1. An actual case of COVID
2. Staffing difficulties because staff perceive themselves to be unsafe.

I spend a fair amount of energy on the latter problem. Being strict and consistent with the flowchart creates a sense of safety in staff, which lowers anxiety and keeps people showing up for work. That said, there is a lot of anxiety to be managed. I'm very proud of the way our staff is giving 100% in the face of uncertainty. We need the continued support and goodwill of the community.

BARTON ACADEMY AND GRADED SCHOOL

During the month of October, we had six different teachers and one paraprofessional out of the building due to a COVID related situation (i.e. needing to quarantine, no childcare). It was difficult to find substitutes to fill all these positions. The CEC program is still in need of two paraprofessionals.

BROWNINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOL

We are filling a paraprofessional long term leave with a regular substitute who is only available part time. Other absences usually go unfilled by substitute teachers; interventionists and the principal have usually been able to cover the classes.

GLOVER COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Glover is down a .4 interventionist and our librarian is on leave. We will hire a substitute for book checkouts if one becomes available soon. Ms. Corkins is also doing what she can for library services when she's in Glover.

We've had a few days when we couldn't find subs for everyone who was out. We made it work with others filling in when and where they could.

IRASBURG VILLAGE SCHOOL

We have hired a new 4th and 5th grade Math/Science teacher, who will begin work on November 16th. Kaylor and her husband will bring with them 4 children to add to Irasburg's enrollment.

Probably a celebration - we had one day last month when all staff members were here! The difficulty in finding substitutes has certainly added to the challenges this year and there have been many days without a substitute, but we've managed so far.

ORLEANS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

We have had days with no subs for some positions. We have made it work and haven't had multiple open/no sub positions on the same day yet. We are working on posting for a long term sub position for our librarian.

OCSU REMOTE ACADEMY

We are fully staffed. We've lost a few students, but have gained a couple in the last 2 weeks as well.

Hazing, Harassment, Bullying Investigations

ALBANY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

3 investigations in October, all substantiated

BARTON ACADEMY AND GRADED SCHOOL

0 investigations in October

BROWNINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOL

0 investigations in October

GLOVER COMMUNITY SCHOOL

0 investigations in October

IRASBURG VILLAGE SCHOOL

1 investigation in October/not substantiated

ORLEANS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1 investigation in October/not substantiated

OCSU REMOTE ACADEMY

0 investigations in October