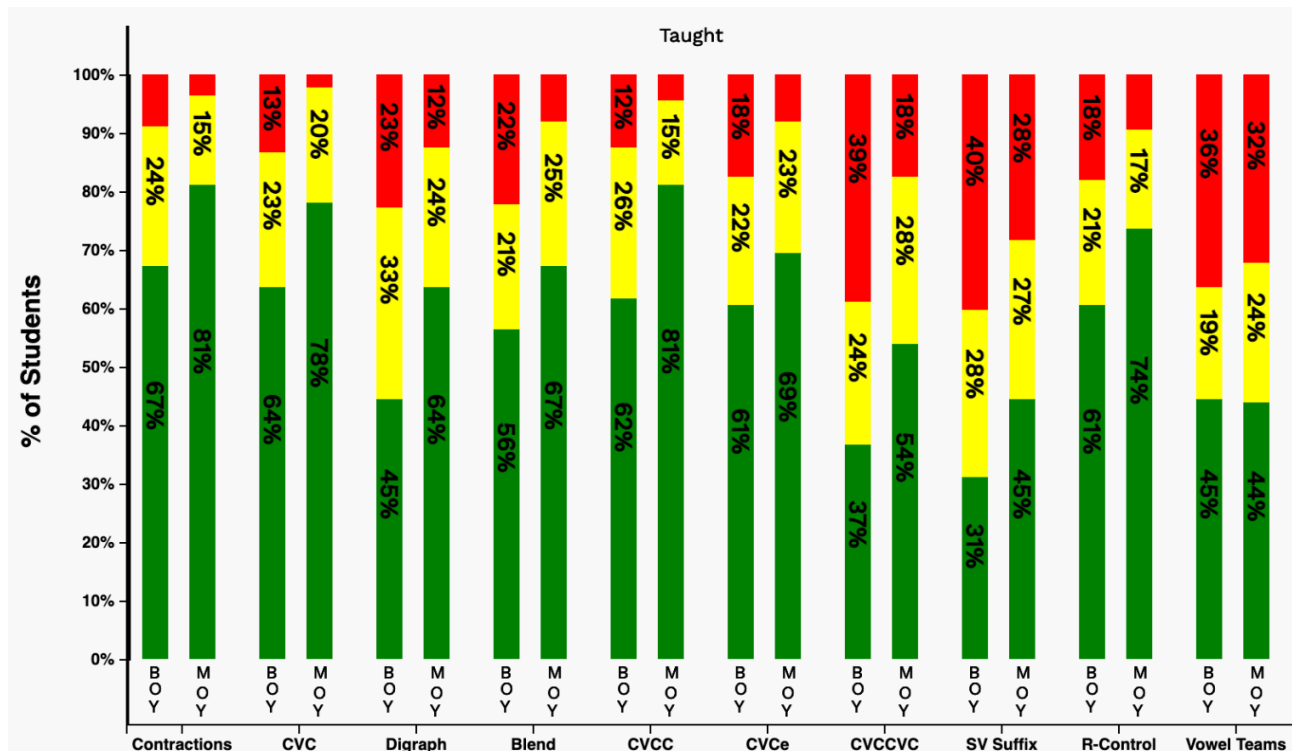


Dedham Public Schools
Interim Superintendent's Update
March 15th, 2023
Day 117 of the 2022-2023 School Year

Teaching and Learning

STAR Phonics. Given the disruptions to learning that Grade 3 students experienced during COVID, the District has implemented specific word study instruction to ensure that all students continue developing critical literacy skills and concepts. As a result of this supplemental support, Dedham's students continue to learn and make strong progress. The chart below provides a summary of data for grade three students across the data. Assessments are grouped by skills along the horizontal (x) axis. Within each skill student results are grouped by beginning of year assessments results (BOY) and middle of year assessment results (MOY). For beginning and middle of year assessments of each skill, results appear in green (% of students meeting benchmark), yellow (% of students progressing towards benchmark), and red (% of students not making adequate progress towards benchmark). Definitions and examples of the skills assessed and represented on the chart below can be [can be found here](#).



Instructional Rounds. On March 8th, the elementary leadership team (principals, instructional coaches, and curriculum coordinators) conducted instructional rounds at the ECEC. Instructional rounds provide district leaders with important insights into teaching and learning in classrooms around the district. Rounds focus on specific areas of practice or strategic improvement that the District is targeting. This series of rounds at the ECEC focused practitioners on the extent to which children have opportunities to engage in oral language skill development. During the visit, the leadership team observed students engage in discussion with peers and adults through buddy reading and teacher modeling, sing songs, practice reading words that follow the consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) pattern, and build words and sentences collaboratively with their peers.



Bren Bataclan Visit. Bren Bataclan (Boston based artist) visited the district for a week-long artist-in-residency involving all 5th-grade students across the elementary schools. Mr. Bataclan's residency focused on spreading kindness through art and the creative process. He visited each school for an entire day (Monday-Thursday) spending time discussing spreading kindness in our community and creating artwork with students. On Friday Mr. Bataclan conducted a 45 min workshop at each school to help students write artist statements about their work highlighting the importance of literacy and writing in the art-making process. This was made possible by a generous grant from the Dedham Education Foundation (DEF) and the hard work of the elementary visual art teachers (Kristin Prata, Sarah Altone, and Sarah Oliveri). Mr. Bataclan's residency was a great success and an important part of *Youth Art Month*. [Additional photos from Mr. Bataclan's residency can be found here.](#)



Johnny Appleseed. Nearly 50 Oakdale students presented the mini-musical, Johnny Appleseed, under the direction of music teacher Christopher Molinaro, assisted by teachers Bridget Kelly, Claire Eisenberg, and Michelle Blanchard. Students and families enjoyed exuberant singing, adorable dances and clever dialogue that told the story of this great American pioneer, his respect and appreciation for nature, and his kind hearted reverence for all humankind.



Visit to Costa Rica. Ms. Abby Zuckerman and Ms. Allison Guiffaro accompanied 26 sophomores, juniors and seniors to four regions of Costa Rica. The trip focused on the students not only expanding their language skills, but expanding their knowledge about the biodiversity that Costa Rica has to offer the world. The first three days were spent in the Monteverde region, in the northern cloud forest of Costa Rica where the students learned first hand about coffee growing from bean to cup, they were guided through the process as well as organic and self sustainable farming. Then they continued on by doing different community service projects and it was inspiring to see them grow in character.

The next three days were spent in the rainforest of Arenal and its surrounding beauty. We hiked towards the volcano in Arenal National park, We only got as close as was allowed and we were impressed by the lava formations. One of the pictures shows us in front of a 400 yr old tree in the rainforest which is very uncommon. We enjoyed a nice break in the hot springs!

We visited the ASIA Preserve where they rehabilitate animals back into the wild. We learned why it is against the law to keep macaws, monkeys, and sloths and why they should not be kept as domesticated pets. We then visited a butterfly preserve in the middle of the rainforest where the environmentalists shared with us each stage of the butterflies life and we touch and got to play with them. The owner also roasted cacao and took us through the process of how chocolate is ground and we sampled 100 percent pure chocolate which was a staple of the natives to the country. While leaving we challenged a local group of Costa Rican students to a game of fútbol which was entertaining to watch especially since our side was stacked with some phenomenal DHS players from the girls' team.

For entertainment at night we had the students put on a good old fashion talent show. Our guide, Adrian and our driver Hector were the judges. It was a fun night and certainly one to remember because we were awoken at 5am by howler monkeys which Ms. Guifarro thought was a puma outside our lodge. The noise they make is incredible and in the morning as we left the monkeys were playfully swinging from the trees as we left. Clearly they got more sleep than we did! Our last day was spent in the capital city touring around and using our Spanish to buy souvenirs. Costa Rica left a lasting impression in our hearts and we are proud of the students for getting out of their comfort zone in Dedham and learning about self sustainability among other things, and ultimately becoming global citizens of the world. Additional photos [can be found here.](#)



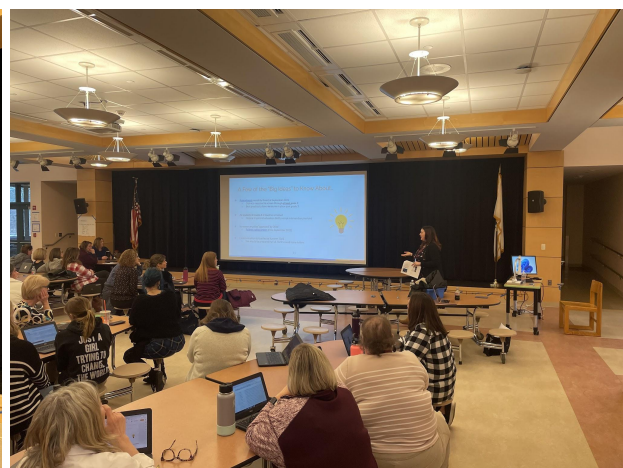
Professional Development

Inquiry Journeys. On Tuesday, March 7th, our team of instructional coaches participated in a workshop on [differentiation](#) with Inquiry Journeys to support teachers and students participation in the pilot.



LiPS Training (Part II). On March 8-9, special education teachers, related service providers and interventionists participated in LiPS training. [LiPS](#) is a phoneme sequencing program developed by Lindamood-Bell.

Early Release Day. On March 2nd, educators across the district participated in professional development. [Topics may be found here.](#)



Community Engagement

Avery and Greenlodge voluntary faculty meetings. On March 6th and 8th I visited the Avery and Greenlodge schools for voluntary faculty meetings as part of my continued efforts to connect with faculty and staff and continue developing a deep understanding of the strategic needs of the District as we prepare to onboard our next Superintendent of Schools. Meetings were well attended and I am grateful for the thoughtful and honest dialog and feedback that faculty and staff provided during these conversations.

Tri-County Superintendent's Legislative Breakfast. On March 3rd I attended the Tri-County Superintendent's legislative breakfast at Newton's City Hall with Dr. Pearrow and incoming

Superintendent Nan Murphy. Superintendents from Norfolk, Middlesex, and Worcester Counties along with School Committee Chairs, and legislators convened to [discuss pressing fiscal issues](#) for FY24 and their direct impact on students and schools across the state. The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) has established [key legislative priorities](#) which target economic relief from the state to offset extraordinary increases to the costs of goods and services in FY24.

District Curriculum Advisory Focus Groups. On March 13th, members of the District Curriculum Advisory facilitated focus groups for families. The first of two events held in March, took place at Dedham Middle School where families had dinner and our DELTA high school volunteers provided babysitting. The [agenda](#) for the evening can be found here, as well as a list of the focus group questions facilitators asked.

Management and Operations

DHS Turf Field. The turf replacement project at the high school is moving through the administrative phase of the project. The turf design has been approved with the help of our Athletic Director Steve Traister, and the order has been placed with the factory for the production of the carpet. The bid documents for the installation of the turf are being developed by the town Procurement Officer Rana Mana-Doerfer and are expected to be released by the end of March with an anticipated bid due date in mid April. Twice monthly meetings have been scheduled for the high school team and will be held internally until the project is completed.