



Notes from the Desk of the Superintendent

As we enter the final two months of our school year, I am pleased to share some of the excellent programs and achievements of our students and staff.

The month of April opened with a very successful, well attended “Culture Fair” that featured 15 community and school organizations, as well as a “Hip Hop” dance presentation at Ansonia Middle School. Sponsored by the Ansonia Middle School Human Relations Club, the Culture Fair brought music, dance, dress, and history to our students and members of the community who visited the school. Special thanks to AMS Teacher Lisa Blake, advisor to the AMS Human Relations Club, for organizing this amazing event, as well as our staff members who participated by sharing their talents.

The AHS Spring Concert on April 6, “Bloom into Spring” was a success in several ways. First, the concert – led by AHS Music Teacher Maria Tangredi – featured more than 100 students in our bands and choral groups. This is the largest group of music students we’ve ever had at AHS! Second, AHS Art Teacher Nancy Bennett-Morgenstern and the Art Club collected donations for the Drums For Troops Program during the concert and raised more than \$1,400 in a system-wide dress down day later in the week. A great job by everyone involved!

The AHS Human Relations Club sponsored its third annual Community Conference on April 7 at AHS. More than 100 people learned about the genocide in the country of Darfur from El-Fadel Arbab, the keynote speaker. Workshops followed the main speaking program. We are grateful to the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven for providing the funding for this free event.

The District Data Team met on April 8, and administrators and Board of Education members met that evening for continuing leadership training as part of the Lighthouse Project.

I am proud to report that several Ansonia teachers and administrators led workshops in the 5th Annual Connecticut Data Conference, which is sponsored by the Connecticut State Department of Education, Connecticut Association of Schools, and other education agencies. The two-day conference was held April 28 and 29 in Waterbury. Here is a recap of our participation and what we shared with nearly 500 educators from around the state:

I served on a Superintendent’s panel, teaming up with the superintendents from Middletown, New Haven, and Stamford to discuss the key areas of school improvement work we have undertaken in our districts, which will yield the greatest impact on student learning, as well as describe major challenges that lie ahead and our plans to move forward. Nearly 400 people attended this presentation. In a breakout group of approximately 50 educators, Fran Adjei, PreK to Gr. 12 language arts coordina-

tor; Amy O’Brien, assistant principal of Mead School; and Michelle Fraher, language arts instructional coach, shared what they have learned during the ongoing process of developing a curriculum that meets the needs of diverse learners. I served as a spokesperson on behalf of the Lighthouse Project. I talked about the role of the Board of Education in promoting and supporting student achievement. I am proud that the Ansonia Board of Education was the first to sign up for this project, and I shared how far we have come this year. Lynn Bennett-Wallick, principal of Ansonia Middle School; Bill LaRovera, math instructional resource coach; and Bridget Calabrese, language arts instructional coach, shared the process of restructuring a middle school to provide Scientific Research-Based Intervention for both struggling and excelling students.

The AHS World Languages honor society induction was held on April 20 in the school auditorium, followed by a breakfast. A total of 13 French and Spanish students were inducted into the honor societies.

The district’s Technology Council met on April 21, with a major focus on the progress of our leadership team in the transition to a new student database program this coming year. Meetings have been held with various staff members already and several trainings will be held in May.

The monthly Area Superintendent’s meeting on April 23 in New Haven focused on the State Department of Education’s plan to reapply for federal Race to the Top funding. Ansonia was one of many school districts that signed a Memorandum of Understanding during the first round of applications, and the state is trying to get 100% commitment during this second round.

The quarterly meeting of the Ansonia Safety Committee was held April 26 at the Board of Education offices. We had a good discussion about the status of the worker’s compensation claims that have been filed by Board of Education and city employees this year and will be discussing training that can prevent some of the injuries.

As you know, we welcome community involvement in our schools, and I believe in leadership by example: On April 27, at the 42nd annual meeting of the Valley United Way, I was inducted to the Board of Directors for a four-year term.

Sincerely,

Carol Merlone
Ansonia Superintendent of Schools