

K-12 math PLC vision work and next steps

By Callie Heck & Dr. Riddle

The K-12 mathematics professional learning community met on March 30, 2016. This was the last of four meetings aimed at setting the tone for a collective understanding of and agreement to our students' K-12 mathematic experience. Teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators began to draft a vision statement of mathematics in Holt Public Schools. Using professional texts specific to mathematics instruction, the team began to outline the experiences all Holt students should have in mathematics classrooms.

The input of this group will, in part, help shape the professional development for teachers around mathematics instruction for the 2016-2017 school year. This team will continue to meet during the 2016-2017 school year to support laying out how the vision looks and what experiences are need at each grade level.

The anchor texts we have and will continue to use are *Small steps, big changes: Eight essential practices for transforming schools through mathematics* (Confer & Ramirez, 2012),



Principles to actions: Ensuring mathematical success for all (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2014), and *Adding it up: Helping children learn mathematics* (National Research Council, 2001).

Building a common 5th-6th grade literacy curriculum

By Olivia Nelson

On June 2nd, 5th-8th grade ELA teacher leaders met with building principals, coaches, and Dr. Riddle to review several sets of curricular materials. This group was assembled to represent their colleagues and provide feedback that will be a vital factor as HPS moves forward toward an adoption of a quality, Common Core-aligned,

common English language arts curriculum at 5th and 6th grades.

The primary goal of the day's work was to build personal and collective understanding of the programs and to engage in a preliminary assessment of their alignment to the demands of the Common Core and to Holt's 5th-6th grade curriculum criteria.

The group used the EQuIP evaluation tool to examine Journeys and Collections (HMH), ReadyGen (Pearson), and EngageNY. The group will also review MyPerspectives (Pearson) before making a recommendation about a 2016-2017 pilot.

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The latest on grades 5-8 FastBridge math & literacy screeners

By Amanda Lantz

On March 25th (ELA) and March 28th (math), 2016, a small committee representative of roles and experiences across the district K-8 with particular emphasis on grades 5-8 met to develop a recommendation for screening assessments to administer in the 2016-17 academic year. 2016-17 screening assessments were examined based on incoming proposals and the transition of grades 5-8 from AIMSweb to FastBridge assessments.

Recommendations have been reviewed by the curriculum office, and follow-up questions have been addressed with feedback from teacher, administrator, and the IISD. A decision was communicated through a memo from the curriculum

office to all staff impacted by the decision.

All ELA, math, intervention staff, and any additional staff involved in screening students will attend the ½ day session (AM) offered by Kelly Trout on September 1st, 2016.

Buildings will reserve PD time and computer lab use for staff on September 14th to complete the training modules.

Administrators and coaches will attend August 23rd training with Leslie Public Schools to receive training prior to their building staff and be able to serve as a support for staff during and following the September 1st training.

The benchmark window for administering screening assessments will not begin until the 3rd week of school to allow sufficient time for staff to complete the training modules and obtain certification. This adjustment will be reflected in the district assessment calendar.

Holt Public Schools, along with the rest of the county, will be shifting from the use of AIMSweb screeners to FastBridge Screeners. In Holt, grades 5-8 will migrate in 2016-2017 and grades K-4 will transition in 2017-2018.



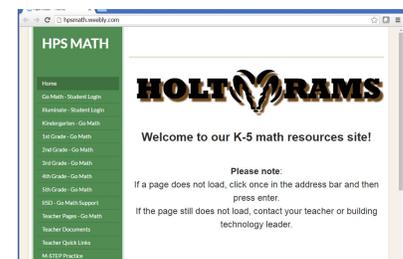
Go Math! weebly site created as a math resource

By Joe Cleary

Go Math!, our current K-5 math curriculum, requires a student login to gain access to its online resources. However, a new web site, created by the Holt Curriculum Office, alleviates the need for a login while still providing access to most of the Go Math online resources. Some of the best Go Math! resources, including the Animated Math Models, Mega Math games, and Math on

the Spot videos are all directly linked on our site. Please note, because we have linked resources that normally require a login, the first time you click on a link an error message may appear. To bypass this, simply click once in the address bar and press enter, and the resource should display and in the future the error message should not appear. If you haven't already checked out the site, we

encourage you to visit soon, and check back often because we continue to update it. hpsmath.weebly.com



We have a new curriculum secretary...who is amazing!

By Linn Gladstone



Hello – My name is Linn Gladstone and I am so happy to be here at Holt Public Schools! I come to HPS after spending 26 years as an Administrative Assistant at HP (Hewlett Packard) supporting leaders and software developers too numerous to count. While at HP I worked with and supported folks located all over. It sure made the world a much smaller place

when you have conference calls and video chats in the middle of the night – just to get the work done. I enjoyed my time at HP and even though I wasn't necessarily ready to leave when I did (thanks to Workforce Reductions) the doors flew open to new opportunities... and I was blessed to land in Holt. The Holt community is no stranger to me. My husband Troy and I have lived in Holt for many years, our daughters are graduates of Wilcox, Hope, the Junior High and High School. You may recognize their names; Kristina and Rachel Gladstone (now Wesley). Rachel even had the privilege of being in one of Dr. Hornak's very first Kindergarten

classes way back when. If you know a Darling here in Holt – yup, they are my family and I love them all dearly. If you've been around awhile you may have known/worked alongside my mother; Lorelei Darling, a longtime teacher at Elliott and then teaching music at Sycamore and Wilcox as well prior to retiring. There must be something in the water that draws us all in. I have been most encouraged by the camaraderie and support of everyone. It has made learning a new job very enjoyable. I have been welcomed beyond measure and love it when someone says 'Hey – You came back!' in the morning. It just makes me smile.

Holt's K-4 Writing Task Team identifies priorities for 2016-2017

By Tammy Shorna

The Writing Task Team was active this school year in working toward the goal to develop a common understanding of student outcomes across grade levels and develop instructional practices to meet these writing outcome targets. At kindergarten, first, and second grades, Writing Task Team members reviewed new *Reading Street* materials and identified important updates and additions to the writing component of the curriculum. As this work continues next year and we become more familiar with the *Writing to Sources* component of the 2013 edition of Pearson's *Reading Street*, teachers will have opportunities to

provide input regarding instructional practices to support the implementation of these materials. As a result of the team's collaboration, all kindergarten, first and second grade teachers in the district will use at least one writing prompt from the new materials before the end of the current school year, and we will collect a set of first and second grade student writing samples to use as we tune our expectations for student proficiency.

During their time together, representatives from third and fourth grades revised the expectations for report card assessment and further refined

lessons to ensure a common student experiences across buildings. Representatives also initiated a collaborative process for generating feedback about writing opportunities and expectations. Teacher leaders are seeking feedback from grade-level colleagues so current writing "non-negotiables" proposed for the 2016-2017 school year can be presented to primary principals at their May meeting. Thank you to all Writing Task Team members for your leadership.

A K-12 writing continuum: the middle grades as a "bridge"

By Olivia Nelson

The 2016-2017 school year marks the first time common summative writing assessments in each of the three Common Core genres (narrative, informational, and opinion [5]/argument [6]) have been universally implemented at grades five and six. Teachers have worked throughout the year to employ specific protocols for identifying key features in student writing samples and for surfacing patterns across a set of sample papers. Through this process, we found encouraging evidence of student skill in many areas:

Students used multiple and effective strategies for planning and organizing ideas into topics, appropriately used organizational features such as headings and paragraphing, drew detailed and accurate information from texts in their

responses, supplemented information from the provided texts with information from their own schemas, and drew connections across topics using information that was explicitly stated in the text and evidence from which they drew inferences.

Teachers also used the process of examining student work to generate questions that will drive professional development during the 2016-2017 school year:

What additional patterns do we see across wider samples of student work?

What revisions to the writing assessment might result in more actionable data?

What instructional practices and materials we used, and what correlations to student outcomes might we make?

What foundational skills are needed to demonstrate success on these more comprehensive summative assessments?

Our focus on writing instruction at grades five and six is anchored at one end by what we know about practices and processes in kindergarten through grade four and at the other end by our understanding of the level of skill required for success in secondary school. The middle grades are a critical time for developing writers, and Holt teachers are engaged in deep thinking and reflective modification of their practice to support

Integrated Arts update

By Ahna Brown

Integrated Arts has been an evolving and growing program here in our Holt elementary schools. This year the teachers created many unique learning opportunities for our students, as they collaborated their own expertise and were able to create a unique Arts curriculum. We the Integrated Arts teachers, were proud of all that our students

accomplished as well as our dedication to the arts. As a point of pride and as a way of honoring this year's accomplishments, we invited families to each of our schools to celebrate the music and visual art created by our artistic students. We continue to collaborate and grow our program to ensure the students of Holt have an amazing music, theater, dance,

and visual art experience and learning opportunity.



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A note from Dr. Riddle: A special thanks to all staff and to an amazing transformational coach. We will miss those Tammy-isms!

As the year comes to a close, I want to thank you for another amazing year of excellence! Collectively, you all have worked diligently to provide our students with opportunities and learning experiences that will have a lasting impact on them long after they exit our pre-K-12 system. The field of education and teaching in particular is a noble profession. It is also a necessity to maintain the type of world that we can be proud of.



Finally, I want to thank Transformational Coach Tammy Shorna for 30 years of excellence! When I think of Tammy and the impact that she has had on thousands of students, hundreds of staff, many administrators and on me, a few quotes come to mind. The first quote is that of Maya Angelou who once said, *"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."* **Well, Let me tell you...** Tammy has the will of steel and a heart of gold. She demands professionalism and quality and at the same time she builds everyone up whom she works with. Tammy has this way of commanding your attention and appealing to your sense of service while at the same time celebrating your accomplishments and who you are as an individual. I think Traci Heuhs said it best when she said that Tammy, in all that she has said and all that she has done with regards to literacy, TLTs, Data days, Reading Apprenticeship etc., never lost the human touch. She has a way of making you feel like anything is possible and attainable. She has this way of making you feel important, valued, and heard.

Henry Ford once said, *"Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young."* Tammy has maintained her youth. One of Tammy's famous sayings is "yet." When any of us made comments such as "I can't do it," Tammy would chime in and say "Yet...I can't do it *yet.*" I recall saying once, "I haven't figured it out," and Tammy responded by



saying, "You haven't figured it out *yet*". I remember telling Tammy that she was being assigned the responsibilities of supporting K-4 reading; her response was, "I

don't know a lot about Reading Street *yet*, but I am putting myself through Reading Street Boot camp so that I can lead this work." And that is exactly what she did. Suffice it to say she has successfully led this work with a spirit of excellence by supporting teachers, teacher leaders, and building principals. ***This I know for sure...*** Tammy is a lifelong learner who has left a lasting mark and unforgettable impression on many in Holt Public Schools.

Tammy's decision to retire was an easy one. She has given this district 30 years of her talents, professionalism, passion to invest in the present and future of children. As a parent, one of my favorite moments was the assignment where my son had to write himself a letter in 7th grade that he would read after he graduated from high school. Tammy was his English teacher. I read this letter and cried. It was so thoughtful and real. I saw my baby through his words transform from a boy to a man and this is a memory I will always treasure. It was almost as if his words were timeless. The fact is that Tammy has imparted so much in our children and students over the years. She leaves this work to enjoy her family. She looks forward to spending time with Mike, Lindsay, Hilary, Norm, and most of all, Eli.

This leaves me with my last quote: Paul the Corinthian said, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."* This is what I know for sure...Tammy, congratulations to you! You have fought the good fight in education; you have finished the race strong and with grace. You never lost faith in our kids, your colleagues, friends, Holt Public Schools, or in Education. Best wishes to you!