



Updates from the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Professional Development

CPS
Cambridge Public Schools

June 12, 2015

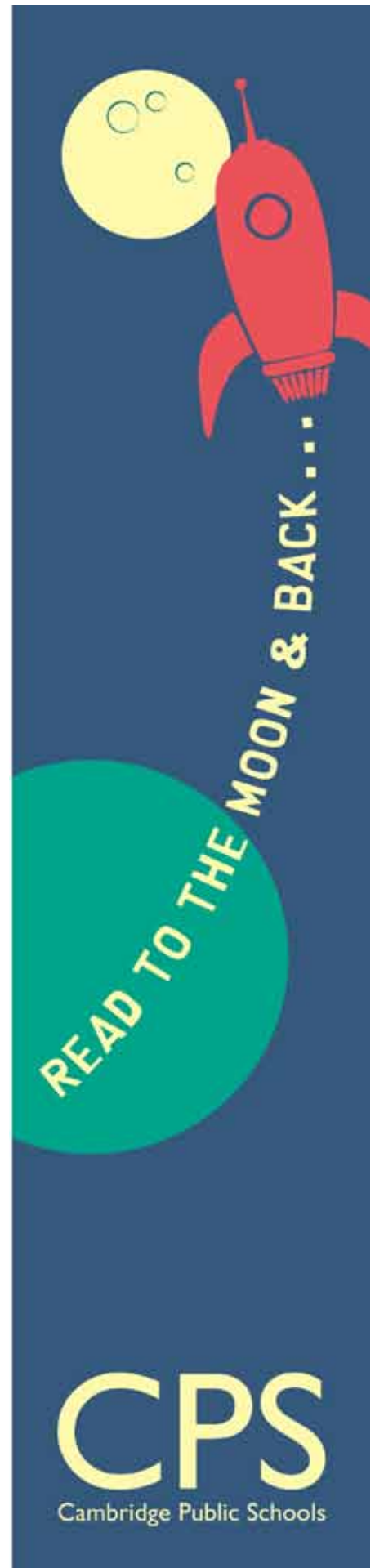


ELA Update: Summer Reading Campaign

Cambridge Public Schools is issuing a summer reading challenge to all students entering Grades K-8: **Read 20 Minutes per Day** to help us reach our goal of half a million minutes of reading per grade level! Every student will get a reading log and a bookmark (see attachments). Be on the lookout for an e-newsletter about this program that will go out to all staff and families and will include instructions for logging summer reading. Summer reading tips will be shared all summer via twitter/facebook. We are excited about this district-wide collective effort to increase summer reading and look forward to seeing our kids reach the goal of Half a Million Minutes by September. You can check for more information about this fun challenge on the CPS webpage beginning on June 15. http://www.cpsd.us/summer_reading.

In addition, every rising third grader will be presented with a bag of books to enjoy over the summer. Books will be distributed over the next two weeks. These texts are meant to complement other summer reading choices and be read in a variety of ways. Students may read the books independently or with a family member or friend. Adults or older children may also read aloud to students. All children love to be read to no matter their age!

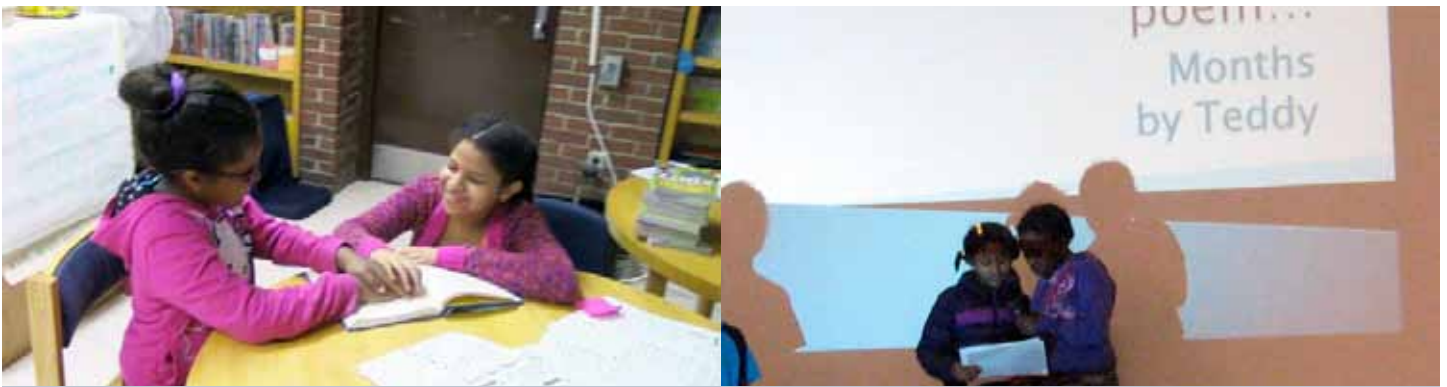
Moving from second to third grade is an important transition for children. It's crucial to continue reading throughout the summer months to prevent reading loss and so that students are successful as they move from primary to intermediate grades. This effort will also support our district goal of all 3rd graders reading at grade level.



ELA Curriculum Development Update K-9

During the 2014-2015 school year, the ELA department embarked on Phase II of the CPS curriculum review cycle. This phase included redesigning and aligning curriculum units for grades K-9. The ELA Curriculum Design team was formed and members include elementary, middle school and high school staff; special educators, Title I, ELL, technology, administrators and other content area staff were also members of this team. This team has worked diligently over the last nine months, participating in professional development to learn about the backwards design process (UBD). Over the course of the year, the team created a mission statement, unpacked standards, created unit maps and began unit writing. As a kick off to the next phase of the work, the team began working with Larry Ainsworth, author of *Common Formative Assessments 2.0*; *How Teacher Teams Intentionally*

Align Standards, Instruction, and Assessment and many other professional texts regarding curriculum design, instruction and assessment. On May 28, a group of 60 teachers, coaches, specialists, coordinators and administrators gathered at Lesley University to attend a seminar with Larry on *Common Formative Assessment*. The presentation included an outline of steps to take to align standards, instruction and assessment. Larry also worked with the ELA curriculum design team on May 29 to review the unit maps and units that have been created to date. He provided targeted feedback to the team. This feedback will be critical as we continue this work over the summer. Simultaneously, the ELA department and coaches continue to revise current K-8 curriculum units, improve alignment of units and rubrics, identify exemplars and pilot MCUs.



Cambridge Teachers Pilot Model Curriculum Units (MCU) in ELA K-5

Working with their district and school based literacy coaches, 18 teachers in grades K-5 piloted the Poetry and Financial Literacy (Grade 5) Model Curriculum Units from Massachusetts DESE during spring 2015. The Model Curriculum Units were created through collaboration between DESE and PBS. Teachers and coaches were responsible for planning, teaching the unit and providing feedback regarding the objectives and lessons in the units, as well as suggestions for possible inclusion in CPS ELA curriculum. This work was supported through the Literacy Partnership and Building Aligned Curriculum Grants.

Upper School Massachusetts *Letters about Literature* Awards

Once again 7th grade students from the Cambridge Public Schools participated in the national *Letters about Literature* contest as part of the 7th grade ELA curriculum. Sponsored locally by the Massachusetts Center for the Book and affiliated nationally with the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, students wrote a letter to the author of a book that had a profound impact on his or her life. Letters were read and evaluated by a committee. This year, Cambridge is proud to celebrate the work of 11 students whose writing stood out among the nearly 3,000 letters submitted. Among this year's class, there were three Honors awardees. These students attended a special ceremony at the State House this spring. One student received Honorable Mention and seven students were semi-finalists (among the top 5% of letter writers in the state).

For more information go to www.massbook.org.

English Language Learner Updates

ELL Summer Enrichment Programs (grades 1 – 8), funded by Title III Federal Funds are taking place at the Graham and Parks, King Open, Vassal Lane Upper Schools. The programs will focus on providing instruction in English as a Second Language, math, science and physical education (martial arts). We are close to enrolling 100 ELLs this summer!

The Summer Discovery ELL Program (9 – 12), will take place at CRLS. Students will study English as a Second Language and mathematics. This program includes a College and Career Exploration Program that will include field trips to various colleges and corporations, and special guest speakers from various fields.

Bilingual Department Grant Award
The Cambridge Public Schools Bilingual Department received a \$5,200 grant from the state to offer specialized training for secondary science and math teachers, in teaching academic vocabulary as part of their content. These workshops will support teachers as they begin to incorporate successful sheltered instruction in their lessons, and learn to effectively use the available resources for English Language Learners. These courses will take place in the fall of 2015.



Health/Social Emotional Learning Update

Social and Emotional Curriculum

This year 20 teachers participated in a pilot of the Second Step social emotional learning curriculum for Kindergarten and Pre-K. Their evaluations of the curriculum will be processed soon.

Mindfulness

About 100 staff members participated in courses on mindfulness in education and/or yoga movement breaks and started implementing practices in their classrooms for focusing, help with transitions and test taking. Parent workshops on mindfulness were held in conjunction with the Cambridge Health Alliance Center for Mindfulness and Compassion.

Middle and High School Health Survey

The upper schools participated in the Middle Grades Health survey and high school students in the School Climate Survey.

Responsive Classroom and Developmental Designs

We have two sections of the Responsive Classroom Course (formerly Responsive Classroom 1) and one section of Responsive Classroom 2 planned for the summer. Several middle grade teachers will be taking either Developmental Designs 1 or 2 this summer.

Curriculum Review Cycle

The Health/Wellness department is in the process of Phase 1 of the curriculum review cycle. The department spent the year examining the current state of health education, with particular focus on the areas of elementary grades and Sheltered English Immersion and Special Education self-contained classrooms. This phase focuses on the analysis of current curriculum practices across the district, making recommendations for improvement, and planning for implementation of recommendations. A full report will be provided to the School Committee in the Fall.





History and Social Science Update

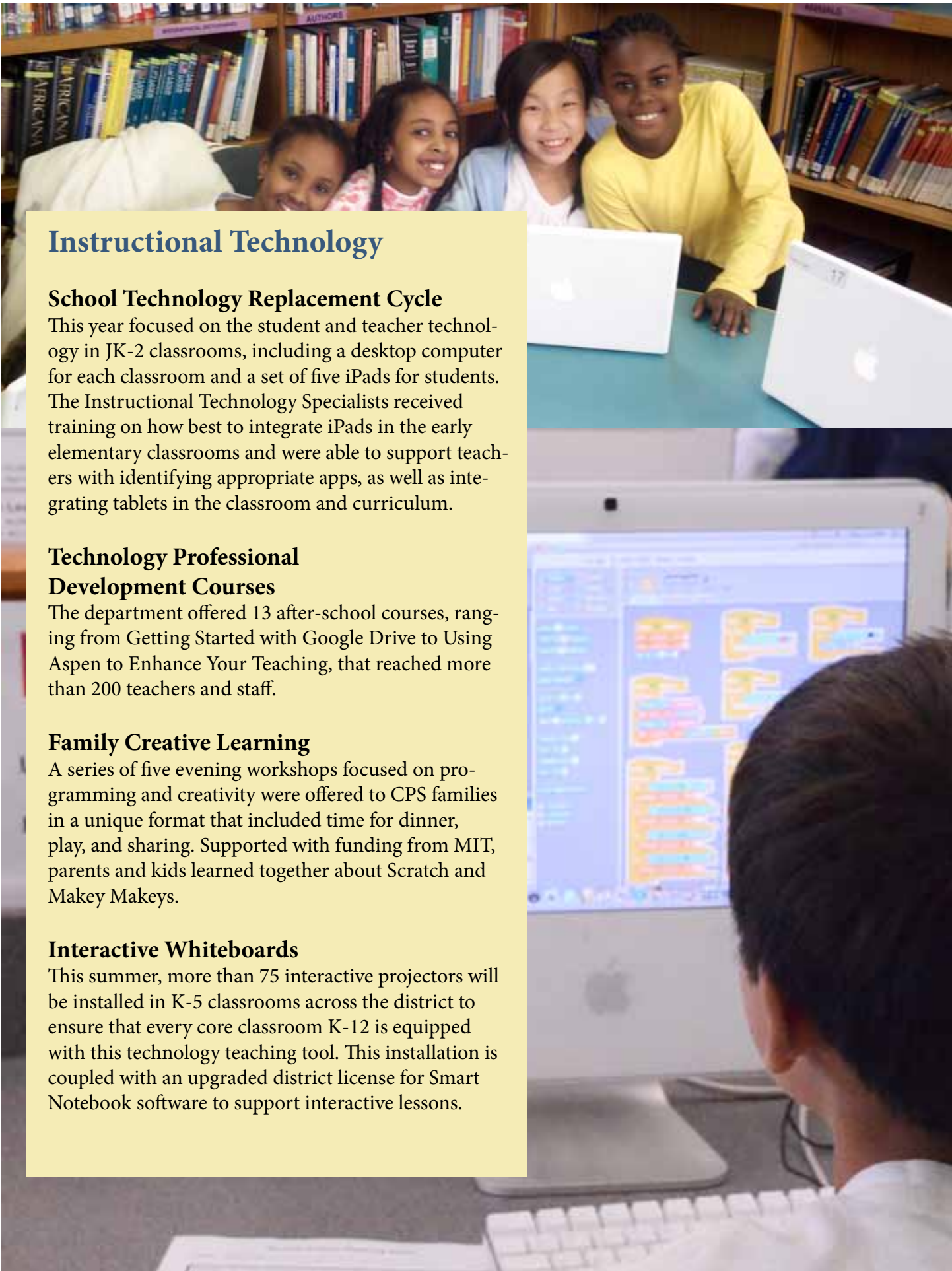
The History and Social Science Department continues to create and refine Understand by Design (UbD) units of study. Grade level teacher teams convened this spring, and their work will continue immediately following the end of school. Spring highlights include the 8th grade collaboration with Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO) to create “Civics and Power: The Individual and Society,” which incorporates the “Choices in Little Rock” curriculum, as well as a new 10th grade research paper which enables students to delve into connections between current public policy debates and the Constitution. Julie Craven, the K-8 district social studies coach, supported the first grade teachers at the Haggerty School as they piloted “From Sea to Shining Sea: Patriotic Songs and Symbols,” one of the model curriculum units developed by the DESE. This unit allows students to explore the foundations of civic learning by introducing the national ideals of liberty, democracy, and unity. Students also became skilled at organizing information into appropriate categories, an important writing goal for first graders. The unit culminated with an author’s breakfast for the symbols books students had created. To make this project a success, the teachers and Ms. Craven collaborated with the school-based literacy coach and the librarian. The revised unit will be shared with the entire first grade team.

Four CPS students, Karolyn Lee of CRLS and Alice Jacob, Sam Kravitz and Zev Dickerson of CSUS were winners at the Massachusetts National History Day competition in April, and are heading to the national competition in Washington, DC, on June 14th. Congratulations to them and thanks to their advisors Paula Feynmann and Barbara Weaver.

On May 27th, Public Radio International’s “The World” profiled student work on the 8th grade introductory unit on identity, which focuses on the following essential questions: *What is a just society? How can individuals and groups make a difference?* History teacher Jenny Chung and her English counterpart Woody Pierre-Louis guided students in understanding the ways in which identity stories can help combat stereotypes.

In July, the History and Social Science Department is convening a team of educators to begin the evaluation phase (Phase 4) of the CPS curriculum review cycle. We will be analyzing the existing curriculum and reflecting on ways to incorporate new national standards in history and social studies, including the C3 Framework. The department looks forward to this opportunity to consider new approaches to engaging students in understanding history and in participating in our democracy as informed and curious citizens.





Instructional Technology

School Technology Replacement Cycle

This year focused on the student and teacher technology in JK-2 classrooms, including a desktop computer for each classroom and a set of five iPads for students. The Instructional Technology Specialists received training on how best to integrate iPads in the early elementary classrooms and were able to support teachers with identifying appropriate apps, as well as integrating tablets in the classroom and curriculum.

Technology Professional Development Courses

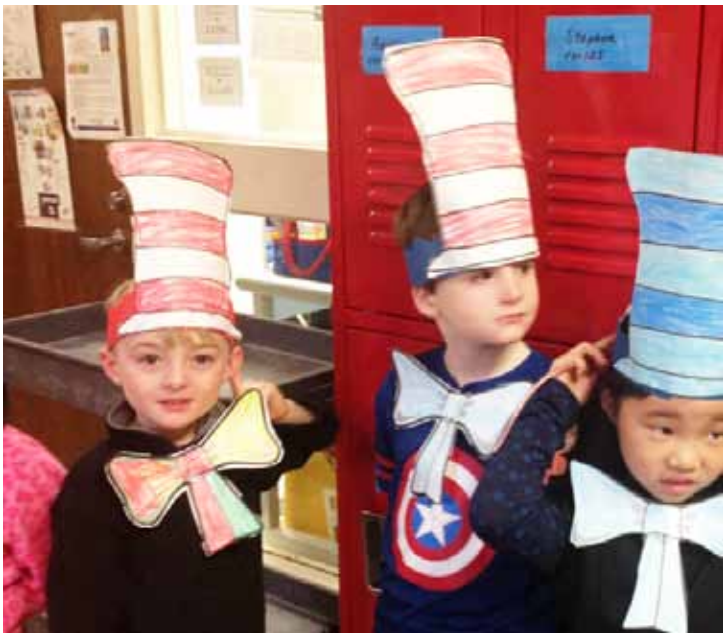
The department offered 13 after-school courses, ranging from Getting Started with Google Drive to Using Aspen to Enhance Your Teaching, that reached more than 200 teachers and staff.

Family Creative Learning

A series of five evening workshops focused on programming and creativity were offered to CPS families in a unique format that included time for dinner, play, and sharing. Supported with funding from MIT, parents and kids learned together about Scratch and Makey Makeys.

Interactive Whiteboards

This summer, more than 75 interactive projectors will be installed in K-5 classrooms across the district to ensure that every core classroom K-12 is equipped with this technology teaching tool. This installation is coupled with an upgraded district license for Smart Notebook software to support interactive lessons.



One way school librarians promoted a love of reading was through author and illustrator visits. This year, our school libraries hosted more than 20 author or illustrator visits. Students were treated to in-person or Skype visits from talented and accomplished authors and illustrators such as Avi, Loree Griffin Burns, Rukhsana Kahn, Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, BJ Novak, Mitali Perkins, Erica Perl, Uma Krishnaswami, George O'Connor, and others. Plans are already in the works for some exciting visits coming up next year!

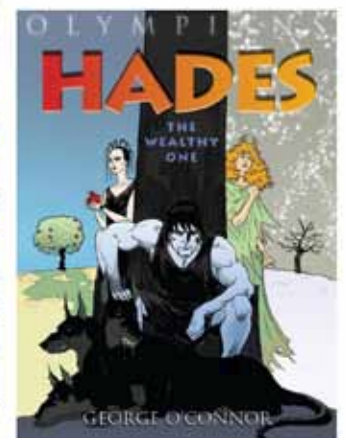
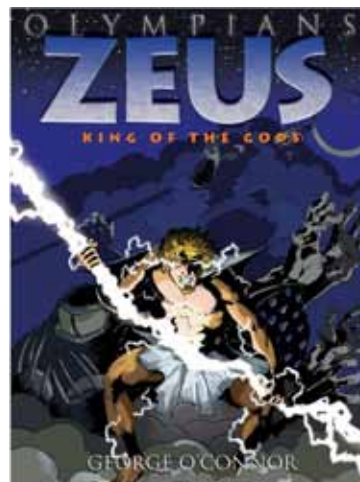


Library Media collaborated with the ELA and other departments to help create the Half a Million Minutes summer reading campaign. Our school library collections also help support summer reading. Most of our school libraries offer summer checkout of materials, providing students with increased access to books during the summer months.

Library Media

Cambridge students rely heavily on their school libraries for reading and research materials. This year, students and staff checked out a total of 127,025 books from our school libraries. That breaks out to more than 20 books per borrower and is a 4% rise over last year's totals! In addition, students also showed strong usage of digital tools and online databases to guide their research and complete assignments. More than 10,000 new items were added to our school library shelves this year to meet the demand for current reading and curriculum-aligned resources. CPS school libraries also added 147 new district-wide digital resource titles (eBooks and audiobooks) to enhance access to differentiated reading and research materials for all learners.

This year, school librarians continued to collaborate with classroom teachers to integrate information and digital literacy skills across the curriculum. Librarians taught classes focusing on literature appreciation, research skills, technology use, media literacy, and digital literacy and citizenship. Through our school libraries, our students are acquiring lifelong learning skills of how to effectively and ethically access, evaluate, organize, synthesize, use and share information. Students are also taught the importance of seeking diverse perspectives throughout this process. To inspire a love of reading, students are introduced to a wide variety of literature and encouraged to develop lifelong independent reading habits.





Math Updates June 2015

Summer Math Programs

There has been great interest in the Summer Math Programs, with enrollments just about at capacity. We are happy to report that 11 out of 12 elementary schools and all four upper schools have students participating.

There are 36 students enrolled in the Math 180 three-week program for rising 6th and 7th graders who received Warning or Needs Improvement on MCAS. Letters were sent home and phone calls were made to families, encouraging participation in this summer camp. This team effort has resulted in the high enrollment numbers.

The AMP Prep Program has an enrollment of 34 students. This three-week program was designed for rising 6th and 7th grade students who would like to enter the Accelerated Math Pathway. With the focus on building problem solving skills, this program also attracted eight of our students who are also participating in Math 180.

The applications for the Summer Bridge program are due by June 19th, thus the numbers are still fluid. As of now we have eight students enrolled in this six-week program that is required for any student moving from the 7th grade “on grade level” class to the 8th grade Accelerated Pathway. We are supporting families of students who already had various summer commitments and cannot attend this program. We will be making materials and websites available to them to allow for independent study or tutoring over the summer.

We have hired a terrific staff of highly qualified math teachers for all three programs, including a special education teacher who works at CRLS specifically in math. Planning meetings are already underway with the staff, to ensure that we can provide the best possible learning experience for the students.

All of the summer math programs will be held at CRLS with bus transportation provided.

Update on AMP Program for School Year 2015 – 2016

The process of recommending placement of students for next year in the grade 7 and grade 8 AMP or on-grade level classes should be completed by the end of next week. It has been a deliberate and thoughtful process that has been underway for the last few months and should result in the best learning environment for each student.

Four data points are being used to help guide these recommendations:

- MCAS scores
- District Assessment scores
- Teacher Recommendation Rubrics
- Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test scores

Once we receive the data from the Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test, the schools will be notifying parents of the recommendation for their child’s placement for next year. All families will also have the option of a meeting to further discuss the placement of their child.

Because we are waiting for the last round of district assessment scores and the results of the Iowa test, we can not predict at this time what the numbers will look like for the classes. We should know this information by the end of next week.

Spring Data

A report with data from the grades 3-8 Spring Assessments is forthcoming, after assessments are completed and analyzed.

Math Clubs

We are pleased to announce that there will be math clubs at all elementary and middle schools next year. Paula Feyman is partnering with the STEM department to offer parent workshops to support parents participating in the implementation of the clubs. She has already conducted four workshops for parents with more planned for next year.

New Teacher Induction, Mentoring and Professional Learning

This year CPS welcomed more than 100 new CPS teachers and provided mentors for approximately 50 of them. The New Teacher Induction seminars covered topics like classroom management, parent teacher conferences, principles of effective teaching and learning, understanding the important of mindset and using it and special education 101. This year we offered three separate induction programs, matched to the skill level of the teacher, including a group of 24 teachers who were able to take a Studying Skillful Teaching course. Next steps include gathering feedback from building and district coaches and principals to incorporate into the design of the orientation and induction program for 2015- 2016.

As a part of our recruitment and retention strategy and work to connect the district HET initiative to the classroom and professional learning, we are able to offer the RBT Studying Skillful Teaching course to 90 or more CPS educators next year. This includes 25 slots for teachers in their 2nd and/or 3rd years in the district. We are also able to subsidize slots for the entire Putnam Avenue faculty who have elected to take the SST course as a school next year as one of their school improvement strategies.

This summer a group of mentors who were trained through the Project Success program at UMass Dartmouth will meet for two days to review and revamp our mentor program. Topics for review include: training, revising job descriptions and expectations, sup-

port for mentors, and planning a focus for next year that is based on the district priorities around the High Expertise Teaching project.

This first year of our new professional learning system has been a success. In 14 months, we were able to shift the focus of our afterschool time from *meetings to learning*. More than 100 required and choice courses were offered for educators to choose from this year. The results of surveys and focus groups conducted throughout the year are overwhelmingly positive and many educators are engaging in far more than the required 35 hours. For next year, we currently have more than 80 choice courses available that cover topics as varied as understanding mental illness, integrated planning and curriculum, building a stronger skill set to work with students (for paraprofessionals), fine tuning phonics instruction, consultation and collaboration for psychologists and social workers, talking about race, and conversational Spanish (for clerical staff). For more examples, please visit the CPS Professional Development webpage.

We are pleased to have been chosen by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as a district to watch: one that is a leader in ensuring that all of our educators have access to high quality PD through the thoughtful use of the Massachusetts Standards for High-Quality Professional Development. Specifically, we were noted for building internal staff capacity to facilitate high quality, results-oriented PD in innovative and forward-thinking ways, for our labor/management approach, and for doing an exceptional job of coordinating/managing PD and creating the conditions for teachers to engage in deep learning together.

This spring, Dr. Huizenga, Chris Colbath-Hess and Dan Monahan presented at the DESE Spring Convening for sharing best practices across the state.





Recruitment and Retention of Teachers in Underrepresented Fields: Partnership with the Woodrow Wilson Foundation

We are excited to share that the Cambridge Public Schools will be partnering with the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation's Teaching and Learning Lab (TLL). The TLL is a graduate school and a laboratory designed for the 21st century. Embedded in several public school districts and affiliated with MIT, the TLL will initially offer competency-based master's degree programs in secondary math and science (STEM) education (starting in summer 2017) with school leadership programs being added after the teacher education program is fully operational. The laboratory will engage in controlled experimentation and research on what works best in those fields by researching the TLL, the Woodrow Wilson State Teaching Fellowships, and research by other organizations.



The TLL has provided the following information to describe their process to transform the existing model. The TLL seeks to transform this model of teacher preparation by:

- **Instituting a competency-based program** that shifts the focus of education from how long candidates are in the program to what they have learned. It changes the emphasis in education from establishing time-fixed processes, such as credits that must be accumulated, courses that must be completed and lengths of time students must spend in classes, to achieving time-variable mastery of outcomes—in this case, the skills and knowledge necessary to be a successful teacher or school leader. The TLL's competency-based program has three components:
 - *A set of outcomes or competencies* in which all candidates must be proficient in order to graduate, rooted in what excellent teachers must know and be able to do before becoming a classroom teacher of record;
 - *Assessment tools* designed to determine candidates' proficiency in competencies at the outset of the program, to gauge candidate progress during the program and to shape each candidate's course of study;
 - *An individualized, modular and blended curriculum*, aligned to the competencies, that integrates clinical and academic education tailored to the unique needs of each candidate and recognizes which competencies have been mastered and which have yet to be achieved.



- **Conducting experiments about what works in teacher and school leadership education.** The TLL will engage in research on who graduates, time to degree, performance of the secondary school students in their classes, and retention in the teaching profession. The TLL will also augment this work with the extensive research being carried out by the new teacher education programs being created through the Woodrow Wilson State Teaching Fellowships and by serving as a clearinghouse for cutting edge research conducted by researchers in the field of teacher education.
- **Transforming teacher education policy and practice at scale.** It will do this by disseminating, publicizing, tailoring, and targeting its research at policy makers and higher education leaders eager and under pressure for improvement in teacher and school leadership education. It will build upon existing relationships in the federal government, professional associations, media, and institutions of higher education. It will invite policy makers and practitioners to visit the TLL and the TLL will engage in exchanges of faculty with universities around the country.
- **Seeking to be a model teacher preparation program that can be replicated by teacher education programs around the nation.** Its costs, prices, and funding are designed to mirror or be below those of existing teacher education programs. The TLL will be accredited, state certified, university affiliated, and immersed in one or more metropolitan public school districts. Its programs, which will operate under the dual currency of competency and credits, will be designed to enable universities to adopt them as a whole or implement individual practices.

The MIT/Woodrow Wilson Foundation launch will take place at MIT on June 16th. During the summer, a team will be meeting with TLL to discuss the process by which we can begin this work in Cambridge. We look forward to this partnership helping us place the highest caliber teachers in the most challenging areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.





Science Department Update

On May 22nd, every 8th grade student from all Upper Campuses and Amigos participated in the fifth annual Student Science and Engineering Showcase at Harvard University. This annual event allows students to develop a presentation highlighting scientific and engineering concepts explored during their middle school years and share the presentation with their peers from across the district, Harvard students and faculty, CPS teachers and other adults from the community. Students also spent part of their time either on tours or participating in demonstrations facilitated by Harvard students and faculty.

CPS 8th graders recently wrapped up their 10-week unit, “Evolution as a Force of Change” which included a new partnership with the Broad Institute. Over the past year and a half the science department has been working with the Broad Institute to develop our new “Evolution as a Force of Change” unit. Broad scientists worked side-by-

side with teachers over the summer to develop the Understandings, Essential Questions, and Knowledge that would drive the unit, have hosted 8th grade teachers for two days of professional development, and provided content PD as well. But most excitedly, every 8th grade teacher has been paired with four or five scientists from varying departments at the Broad Institute.

For each of the 10 weeks of the unit, Broad Scientists spent a day with 8th grade students. Sometimes the scientists assisted the teacher, sometimes they led lessons, and

sometimes they talked about their own research. The goal is to provide students access to a diverse pool of local researchers using STEM in their daily lives. Teachers and Broad Scientist Teams are collaboratively developing activities and experiences for their students and making each schools’ partnership unique to their needs. Many Broad team members even attended the Student Science and Engineering Showcase at Harvard University. Plans are beginning now to improve this experience for next year’s 8th graders.





STEM Program Development

Cambridge Public Schools district applied to participate in a year-long STEM Integration program developed by The STEM Education Center at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), which is a focused program for school and district leaders. We are excited to share that Cambridge was chosen to participate in the program.

As part of the program, the STEM department will work with WPI to:

- Develop and administer a program based on best practices that include, but are not limited to:
 - A review of successful STEM integration models;
 - Analysis of school/district strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and needs;
 - A process for developing STEM goals and outcomes;
 - STEM curricula and technology resources;
 - Identify STEM funding and partnership opportunities;
 - The development of a strategic plan for implementing STEM in your school/district.
- WPI will provide STEM education and evaluation experts to coach and advise the district team.

Considering all the great work happening city-wide in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, we are excited about the opportunity to work with experts in the field to develop the best program for our students, and expand partnerships with the city in developing our students for future career pathways in STEM.

Visual and Performing Arts Update



Visual and Performing Arts: A Year of Stellar Performance

2014-15 saw more than 100 performances and exhibitions by students. Upper School students from all five programs came to the high school to participate in Chorus, Band, and Orchestra Festivals where they had the opportunity to meet high school players/singers, hear each other play, and perform in a large ensemble piece together. Upper School students also participated in workshops in the arts (including visual arts) on one of their early release days. Each elementary school offered at least two concerts as well as numerous visual art exhibitions. All City Chorus and Band offered two concerts, and the All City Chorus performed a world premiere of *We All Were Born* at the graduation of the Harvard Graduate School of Public Health. Each upper school offered at least three concerts, two exhibitions, and a play/musical. The RAUC musical was original, written by teachers and students together. CRLS drama presented *The Addams Family* musical in the fall to more than 3,000 family and community members, went to the Finals of the Massachusetts High School Drama Festival with *The Elephant Man*, as well as presented one act plays in the spring featuring underclassmen. The dance program offered two full-length concerts, each including pieces from visiting professionals and student choreographers. High school musicians performed in four major concerts, two piano recitals, two chamber music recitals, three jazz concerts

at clubs in Inman Square, three A Cappella concerts, and various other events. The Memorial Day Parade this year saw 90 CRLS and CSUS students marching to represent the hometown. Visual Arts students won 49 awards in the Scholastic Art Awards: 11 Gold Keys, 16 Silver Keys, and 22 Honorable Mentions. Eleven of these went on to Regionals and three were recognized with National awards – an extremely unusual accomplishment for a single high school.





**Visual and Performing Arts:
New Coordinator**

We are excited to share that we have hired a new coordinator for the Visual and Performing Arts. Mr. George Simpson will start next August. To prepare for a smooth transition, he and Dr. Koury have already spent a week in district together. George comes to us with an extraordinary background in teaching and leading in the Visual and Performing Arts. His latest position was Principal of the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts for six years. Prior to that he was on the faculty and was Director of the Roland Hayes School of Music, a city-wide music school in Boston for nine years. He was Founding Director of the Berklee College of Music Preparatory School for seven years, working with middle-schoolers. He is fully certificated and licensed in Massachusetts and holds a Masters Degree from Boston University. He holds two Bachelors degrees: one each in Education and Music from the University of Western Ontario. He sits on several boards and holds many honors, including Principal of the Year from the Los Angeles Administrator's Association and the Award of Honor from Berklee College of Music. We are excited and fortunate to have him lead the VPA department into the future.



World Language Updates

K-12 World Language teachers will convene for summer workshop days at the end of June to continue in their efforts to develop units using the Understanding by Design (UbD) model, with all work uploaded to the district's new Aspen Curriculum Mapping tool. This curriculum-mapping tool provides educators with access to all district curriculum, easy lesson planning tools, and the ability to connect students with online learning opportunities. K-12 World Language educators have worked on UbD units during in-service and meeting time throughout the year. Our efforts are focused on stages 1 and 2 across each of the languages offered.

A group of students, parents and educators from Vassal Lane Upper School will depart soon for a week-long trip to Cuba. Teachers and

parents have spent countless hours throughout this year fundraising and organizing myriad details for this exciting adventure. The trip has been spearheaded by a VLUS Spanish teacher who is originally from Cuba.

The 8th Annual Heritage Languages Summer Institute was held at Harvard the first week of June

2015. Based on our ongoing commitment and innovative work in heritage language education, CRLS World Language educators were invited to showcase our progress as part of a panel presentation. Next year CRLS will expand its offering of heritage courses to provide further support in those specific skills areas that tend to be challenging for heritage speakers. Through





our summer institute participation and our ongoing collaboration with the Instituto Cervantes at Harvard, we have developed contacts with the National Heritage Language Resource Center that have helped us to develop more enriching curriculum for all heritage speakers including students transitioning from our immersion programs to the high school.

CRLS will offer a sixth language choice next year: American Sign Language. The hiring process is currently underway, with curriculum development to take place over the summer. Students are very enthusiastic about the new language offering, and we have a number of highly qualified applicants.

The World Language Department has been invited to submit an application this summer to the Council

on International Education (CIEE) Global Navigator Scholarship program. The program provides extensive scholarships for language, service and content area programs for high school students to study abroad in 16 countries during their summer break. CIEE is a non-profit organization with a special grant funded by a philanthropist. CIEE guarantees \$20,000 in summer scholarship funds each year if we are accepted into the program.



The World Language department continues its membership in the Foreign Language Acquisition Network (F-LAN) with the annual meeting scheduled next month in Utah. F-LAN provides curriculum and professional development support for our elementary Chinese and Portuguese immersion programs. F-LAN is an organization funded by the National Security Education Program (NSEP) through a Flagship K-12 grant and led by Brigham Young University and the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) to develop and improve Chinese and Portuguese language instruction throughout the US. Through our participation in F-LAN we have learned about emerging trends in immersion and World Language education and we have continued our work with national experts such as Gregg Roberts and Mimi Met.



Instructional Council Focus: Equitable and Excellent Instruction

This school year, the Instructional Council, which is a team made up of all district coordinators and program managers, focused our collective energies on how WE can ensure Instructional Equity in every classroom, everyday in the Cambridge Public Schools. After looking at our district data, we had to take a step back and ask the questions: what is equitable instruction, do we all share the same definition of it, and if we do, if we took collective ownership of ensuring it happened in all classrooms across the district, could we propel CPS forward in a way we have not yet seen? This conversation goes beyond closing achievement gaps based on standardized tests, but really gets into belief systems and ensuring that “equity consciousness” is alive, visible, and operationalized in every aspect of our work.

Why is this important? The National Coalition for Equity in Education summed it up well when they said,

“Educators are an important force in helping many people overcome the effects of societal bias and discrimination, but schools also serve to perpetuate the inequalities and prejudices in the society. Thoughtful action with regard to curriculum, pedagogy, and school policies and organization is necessary to overcome the effects on people and institutions of a long history of prejudice and discrimination.”

So, we set out to read and learn together, and come to consensus of what the three to five most important practices that need to be present in every classroom for equitable outcomes to occur. Through our work, we developed as a team and created a sense of clarity around what equitable instruction is. We also realized as a team that we have the collective ability through our practice to ensure equity for all students. Another important realization that we came to was that we needed to broaden this understanding and establish consensus with building administrators so we can enter into next school year with collective commitments around how we will work together to ensure ALL students in Cambridge have equitable and excellent instruction in every classroom, everyday. Our June meeting, facilitated by Gene Thompson Grove, was a tremendous step forward in bringing the district leadership together and providing us with the focus to impact teaching and learning for the 2015-16 school year.

