

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TEAM CONFERENCE

May 23, 2012

Belmont High School

Conference Schedule

12:00-12:30	Set-up your exhibit and 1 st session presentation Student volunteers are available to assist you.
12:30	Opening Comments BHS Field House
12:30-3:00	Exhibits – BHS Field House See pages 4-8 for a listing of exhibits by table #. <i>A PLT member will be at each exhibit to share findings and answer questions.</i>
12:45-2:55	Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Session 1, 12:45-1:10• Session 2, 1:20-1:45• Session 3, 1:55-2:20• Session 4, 2:30-2:55 See pages 2-3 for information and location. Advanced registration is required for presentations.
3:00	Closing Comments Please complete the conference evaluation form.

Session 1 Presentations

12:45-1:10

Location	Presentation	Facilitator
Room 112	Leaving the Comfort Zone: Increasing student speaking on foreign Language Immersion Days Investigating ways to encourage students to speak exclusively in the target language on Immersion Days	Amy Sánchez
Room 113	Science Students: What are they thinking? Developing strategies to increase students' ability to express their critical thinking skills in writing. (middle school science)	Rebecca Green
Room 114	The Social Studies Textbook: structuring independent learning Tired of re-teaching everything the students read the night before? Want to spend more class time on higher level thinking and application? Come see how we adapted our textbook homework to encourage independent learning and modified our in-class routines to assess student learning.	Amanda Snow
Little Theater	Enhancing Instruction in Elementary Classrooms Using Technology Our focus was on looking at how to enhance instruction in elementary classrooms using technology. Our initial goals included inventorying the current classroom technology in Belmont, including hardware and software. We also focused on the rationale for the use of specific software applications. Our efforts also were to determine the effectiveness of the current inventory of classroom technology. Our overall goal was to utilize what we discovered mainly through inventory and survey data to help impact instructional expectations in the future in Belmont.	Tricia Clifford

Session 2 Presentations

1:20-1:45

Location	Presentation	Facilitator
Room 112	Identifying and Quantifying the Achievement Gap in Mathematics between African American/Black Students and the Aggregate Student Population Do you realize that in our district there is an achievement gap in Mathematics between the African American/Black student population and the aggregate student population?	Patty Soliozy
Room 113	Models and Approaches to Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning in our School Community We have explored the relationship between interest in interdisciplinary learning and current teaching practices at Chenery Middle School. We have made recommendations for enhancing interdisciplinary teaching opportunities at Chenery.	Kristen Ripley
Room 114	Writing in First and Second Grade Using 6 +1 Writing Traits Come explore writing with first and second grade teachers. Do you ever feel like students dislike writing? Would you like to find ways to motivate and empower your writers? If the answer to these two questions is yes, then the 6 +1 writing traits approach will not only inspire your student writers it will change how you view writing.	Karen Curran
Little Theater	The Power of Communication: Teaching Oral Communications Skills to High School Students In a rapidly changing educational and commercial environment, communication skills – often deemed “soft” skills – are becoming more important than ever. Yet, schools have not adequately addressed this need through formal curricula. Students will need to develop sound oral communication skills for virtually every aspect of their lives, from acing a college interview to landing that first job and even securing a life partner!	Josh Goldfine

Session 3 Presentations

1:55-2:20

Location	Presentation	Facilitator
Room 112	<p>Investigating Best practices for Maximizing Student Understanding of Lab Activities</p> <p>A group of high school science teachers evaluated whether students were able to maintain their understanding of lab objectives and concepts in order for teachers to make recommendations and/or modifications to the labs.</p>	Suzanne Lijek
Room 113	<p>Butler School Family Friends Program</p> <p>This is a continuation of a PLT from last year where the METCO Family friends program was re-established at the Butler school. Our focus this year was on supporting the newly established program and passing the leadership roles on to the PTO. The program was well received and we learned about some interesting, non-traditional ways that busy, working parents are connecting and communicating outside of school.</p>	Connie Page
Room 114	<p>Butler Fourth Grade Reading Curriculum</p> <p>The fourth grade teachers worked on documenting their literacy curriculum- by creating a curriculum documents that includes the a) Enduring Understandings b) In-Depth Content Area Studies with a scope and sequence c) Literature and Texts and d) Assessments. As we documented the curriculum, we noted the ways in which the curriculum aligns with the Common Core and the Massachusetts Frameworks. Come by and take a peek at our curriculum!</p>	Faythe Beauchemin

Session 4 Presentations

2:30-2:55

Location	Presentation	Facilitator
Room 112	<p>Improvement Plan for Targeted Learning/Team Time</p> <p>Targeted Learning, formerly known as Team Time, is a time period that with structure and clear expectations has potential to be highly beneficial for students. In this PLT we explored ways in which to make this time more effective so all students' needs are met.</p>	Jill MacKinnon
Room 113	<p>Social Studies Research Projects</p> <p>This presentation is about incorporating Common Core writing standards (2 and 8) with social studies projects in the fourth grade. The research-based projects target the regions of the United States and require students to gather, organize, and present information in several different formats to develop and strengthen their informational writing skills.</p>	Kristin Knutson
Little Theater	<p>Student and Staff Perspectives: What It's Really Like to Learn and Work at BHS</p> <p>Learn what 400 students and 73 staff members had to say about what it is like to learn and work at Belmont High School, what we're doing well, and the steps we can take as a community to make it better.</p>	Amanda Rei

Table Number	Exhibit	Facilitator
1	Inside The Mind of The Artist Come see a short film of kids talking about their creative thought process during art making. If students had the opportunity to articulate their thought process while making art will this help students better understand the creative process?	Cathy Larkin
2	Teaching Music Through Performance Using creative methods of instruction to improve student performance in targeted areas of musicianship.	Arto Asadoorian
3	The Accommodating Truth "2-4-6-8, how do we accommodate?" The truth is that Chenery Unified Arts teachers may teach as many as 950 students over the course of the school year. The truth is that it is challenging to meet the individual needs of so many learners. The truth is, when realistically accessible and manageable, several accommodations can be used in Unified Arts classes to improve the learning outcomes for students on IEP's and 504's.	Monica Frender
4	Teaching Kids to Sing In our culture, singing skill is widely believed to be something you're born with or without. In reality, however, everyone with the ability to speak can also learn to sing well and in a healthy way. The elementary music teachers are on a quest to teach every single child in the BPS to use his or her singing voice in a healthy and fulfilling way. This year, we implemented a method in 4th-grade music classes called Teaching Kids to Sing by Kenneth Phillips. This method teaches each student to use his or her body, breath, ear, voice, and song to become successful singers. Our PLT explores the value of this program relative to our existing elementary music curriculum with an eye towards standardizing some aspects of vocal pedagogy within the district.	Craig McMahan
5	Come Play Again A revised and expanded Social Skills Checklist for Developmental Ages 12 months-5 years	Nancy Smock
6	School Connectedness Identifying students who are struggling to "connect" and facilitating opportunities to build relationships and attachment to the school community.	Joe Quinn
7	Freshman Academic Survival Guide We have developed a small brochure and curriculum that focuses on note taking, organizational and test taking skills for current 9th graders. We are using four history classes (CP & H) that will receive the taught curriculum by the teachers and two classes that do not receive the curriculum. We have a pre and post survey and will look at third quarter grades as well.	Jim Brown
8	How to Fill A Bucket: Introducing Common Language and Revamping Recess Expectations Our PLT is in the process of implementing a school wide positive behavior system. We have started by introducing common language at school wide monthly assemblies and establishing common rules, expectations and consequences for recess.	Samantha McFeters
9	Burbank Core Values: Love of Learning, Respect, & Well-being Picture the core of an apple...what do you find? Why, the most important part, of course—the seeds that grow into the very essence of its being. The core values of the school hold our essence as well. At Burbank we used school-wide assemblies to teach our 3 core values: Love of Learning, Respect, and Well-being. During these assemblies, we incorporated music, PowerPoints, stories, skits, and school-wide initiatives to develop common language, expectations, and values for a way of being that enriches the environment in which we live and learn.	Heather Blake
10	Classroom Games and Student Motivation Do you like to play games? Want to increase student motivation? How about increasing assessment scores while you're at it? Come and check out our PLT's exciting results!	Fiona Crimmins
11	Managing Challenging Behaviors using ABA and CBT Fact sheet for district staff to learn more about ABA and CBT principles to target challenging behaviors	Kim Elßön

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12	<p>Record Keeping in RtI RtI has been a valuable focus in education recently but how do we keep track of all the forms, students, and assessments? Building on last's PLT work in creating a Kindergarten math structure, we have created a web based data folder to store and manage RtI information. This folder contains all the related RtI forms, progress repots, graphs, and permission slips associated with RtI.</p>	Cristina Roof
13	<p>Scope and Sequence: Developing a Third Grade Literacy Curriculum Map Third grade teachers and coordinating specialists worked on revising their current literacy curriculum by aligning it to the Common Core. Throughout the process, the team made revisions and modifications to the curriculum while staying true to their belief that "reading is thinking."</p>	Brian Bisceglia-Kane
14	<p>Incorporating Technology in the Writing Process The majority of students are more engaged in the writing process when they use technology. How can teachers incorporate technology into their current writing curriculum? Our group explored ways to engage students in the writing process through the use of technology.</p>	Meaghan Clow
15	<p>How To Implement the Common Core the "Write" Way The Kindergarten team along with a Reading Specialist from Wellington teamed up to create a writing unit that will meet the needs of new Common Core standards adopted by the district.</p>	Lindsay Letourneau
16	<p>Picture This! The use of mental imagery in order to improve student's language and reading comprehension skills including: main idea, identifying relevant details, sequencing, retrieval/recall of information, and inferential thinking. Our focus was on the use of the Lindamood-Bell "Visualizing and Verbalizing" program with elementary students, grades 1-4 within a small group setting.</p>	Lauren Pisano
17	<p>Just the Facts: Teaching Students the Tools of Nonfiction Reading Our Professional Learning Team designed a mini-unit to improve students' comprehension of nonfiction text, preparing them for strong content-area literacy, MCAS evaluations, and the new Common Core Curriculum. The unit addressed three aspects of the standards: using the features of nonfiction to better understand text, comparing different sources for their relevance, and comparing a print and multimedia presentation of information.</p>	Caitlin Corrieri
18	<p>Student Self-Assessment in the English Classroom One of our mission statement's goals is that students will learn to "work independently...monitor, define, prioritize, and complete tasks without direct oversight." The advantage of self-assessment "is that learners are better able to set realistic goals and direct their own learning" (Bullock 2010). In an attempt to increase student self-awareness of the quality of their work, we created several tools to support students in self-assessing their work, specifically in writing, giving presentations, and online journaling.</p>	Alicia Safier
19	<p>Teaching Students to Collect, Analyze, and Represent Data In Global Leadership and AP Economics, two social studies electives at Belmont High School, students are frequently asked to examine data in different forms. This is an important real world skill that many students will utilize in college and/or their career. Based on anecdotal evidence, we knew that that our students struggled with this skill, so we collected data in the form of student work in order to refine our understanding of the problem. After analyzing this data, we created additional lessons / assignments to collect more data. From this data we created new lessons and created a rubric to assess this skill.</p>	Bryan Corrigan
20	<p>This We Believe: Media Literacy Education is Essential for Today's 21st Century Learners Today, 8-18 year-olds devote an average of 7 hours and 38 minutes to using entertainment media in a typical day – more than 53 hours a week. Because of rate at which they consume media, students must develop the skills necessary to think critically about all forms of media to make sure that they can access, evaluate, and synthesize these media to become educated and productive citizens of the future.</p>	Peter Tausek

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21	<p>Lessons and Organizers: Improving Written Responses to Literature</p> <p>We built on last year's PLT work on improving children's written responses to literature (with a specific focus on MCAS open responses). This year we continued our PLT by researching more specific lesson plans and strategies (rather than just organizers), and a time line for a gradual release of scaffolding to aid students in responding to a variety of texts.</p>	Michael Williams
22	<p>Research & Writing in 8th Grade Humanities</p> <p>In an attempt to integrate more consistent research & writing skills in the 8th grade social studies curriculum, this PLT focuses on skills that are essential and in line with the reading & writing standards for literacy. The goal is to create integrated research & writing assignments that use common language, common skills, and shared resources between Social Studies & English Language Arts.</p>	Adam Zilcoski
23	<p>Bringing Cultural Responsiveness to Belmont High School</p> <p>Based on the results of a Faculty/Staff survey and targeted research, we have highlighted the need for more culturally responsive curricular and extracurricular activities. The work of this PLT provides resources and suggestions for integrating culturally responsive content and activities into an academic classroom as well as a future Student Advisory environment.</p>	Gabrielle Garschina
24	<p>Cross-Disciplinary Learning</p> <p>Eight high school teachers from five different departments came together to investigate how interdisciplinary curriculum and teaching can enhance student learning, understanding, enthusiasm and engagement.</p>	Josh Streit
25	<p>4 Links</p> <p>"4 Links" are graphic organizers that strive to increase student understanding of math content. Examples of the use and creation of "4 Links" sheets into different levels of high school content will be displayed— Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Pre-Calculus.</p>	Seema Shah
26	<p>Pilot of fifth grade geometry and measurement units in three different math texts</p> <p>Our PLT compared three fifth grade math curricula including Everyday Math, Envision, and Think Math. We looked specifically at the geometry and measurement units in each text. We then evaluated these curricula based on six different criteria including the presence of on-line components, manipulatives, visuals, enrichment and re-teaching opportunities, and ELL supplements. We then discussed how these resources might help to address the needs of our "needs improvement" students.</p>	Dori Pulizzi
27	<p>Assessing Math Concepts</p> <p>Have you heard the buzz about Kathy Richardson Assessing Math Concepts? Learn how these assessments and materials were used in second grade classrooms with the goal of improving students' number concepts.</p>	Pat English-Sand
28	<p>A Math Unit that Truly Measures Up!</p> <p>The Burbank 4th grade team and Curriculum Specialist Katie Contario have gone the "extra mile" to create an exciting 4th grade math measurement unit filled with specific lessons matched to state and Common Core standards and MCAS test items. Each measurement concept is taught using Smart Board activities combined with hands-on manipulatives and a 'ton' of independent practice. Enjoy!</p>	Cliff Gallant
29	<p>Improving Math Reference Sheets at CMS</p> <p>Students asking you the same questions over and over...and over? Give them more independence and build their confidence by using our math reference sheets. We developed sequential reference sheets for grades 5-8, based on the common core curriculum standards anticipated for 2012-2013. These sheets are intended for everyday use and also as an MCAS accommodation in years to come. Be the first to obtain a set for your classroom!</p>	Becky Moyer

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30	<p>Improving Upper Body Strength and Endurance With technology on the rise, upper body strength and endurance has been on the decline. How could we as Physical Education teachers help the fitness levels of our students? Our PLT group created a variety of warm up and fitness activities to implement within our classes striving to improve upper body strength and endurance. We assessed our students to see if upper body strength and endurance improved from these activities by a monthly push up assessment.</p>	Katie Cook
31	<p>Effects of Exercise on Student Focus in Classroom Instruction Based on recent research regarding the benefits of exercise on learning and engagement, this team implemented short bursts of heart-rate-heightening activity in the classroom and tracked student response. Data was collected on student focus, participation and assessment results.</p>	Kate McCabe
32	<p>Eating Healthy Using My Plate Food Model Students at the high school, middle school and elementary school level were provided information on the My Plate Food Model. Out with the old food pyramid model--the USDA is now recommending the food plate model as a way to guide Americans to eat healthy. Our intervention was to teach students about the new model and to encourage students to be more mindful of the foods they are eating.</p>	Jeanine Shaughnessy
33	<p>Improving students' Interpersonal and Presentational Communication Skills in a Foreign Language A group of foreign language teachers of various languages pooled ideas and effective practices for providing speaking opportunities for students of various levels of language.</p>	Rebecca El-Gamel
34	<p>Language Based Learning Disability Pre/Post Assessments This PLT researched and then administered five reading comprehension assessments to students with Language Based Learning disabilities (LBLD) to choose a pre/post assessment tool to track the growth of LBLD students.</p>	John Sullivan
35	<p>Aiding the Aides Come learn about how we can successfully collaborate with teachers and aides in order to improve student learning.</p>	Becky Tannenbaum
36	<p>Special Education Professional Development The focus of the Special Education Professional Development group was to review the district's model of professional development provided to support services for Special Education students. The focus targeted what types of PD are provided, how PD topics are chosen, how needs are assessed, and what types of structures exist to support and track all of these variables.</p>	Ken Kramer
37	<p>Positive Behavior Intervention Support at the Daniel Butler School Praise or Punish? Modifying student behavior to improve school climate.</p>	Ted Trodden
38	<p>Building Reading Motivation in Kindergarten We focused on improving student reading motivation and excitement in our kindergarten students. Using a reading interest inventory, we determined that students were not feeling excited about reading compared to their many other interests. We developed a list of books, lessons and activities in order to improve student motivation in reading. We reassessed students at the end of the year and were able to have some success in improving students reading attitudes.</p>	Kelly Hiltz
39	<p>Can We Persuade You? - 3rd Grade Persuasive Writing Unit You should come and see a persuasive writing unit we have developed based on the new Common Core Standards for writing in third grade.</p>	Suzanne Pomponio
40	<p>Scope and Sequence: Butler School's First Grade Literacy Curriculum Map for Reading First grade teachers aligned our current reading curriculum to the Common Core with an emphasis on the following literacy skills; phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. By doing this, we produced a literacy curriculum map that future teachers can implement.</p>	Lauren O'Brien
41	<p>Grade 2 English Language Arts Curriculum Mapping Creating curriculum maps that align the Grade 2 Houghton-Mifflin literacy program with the Massachusetts Common Core Curriculum Frameworks.</p>	Jennifer Mathews

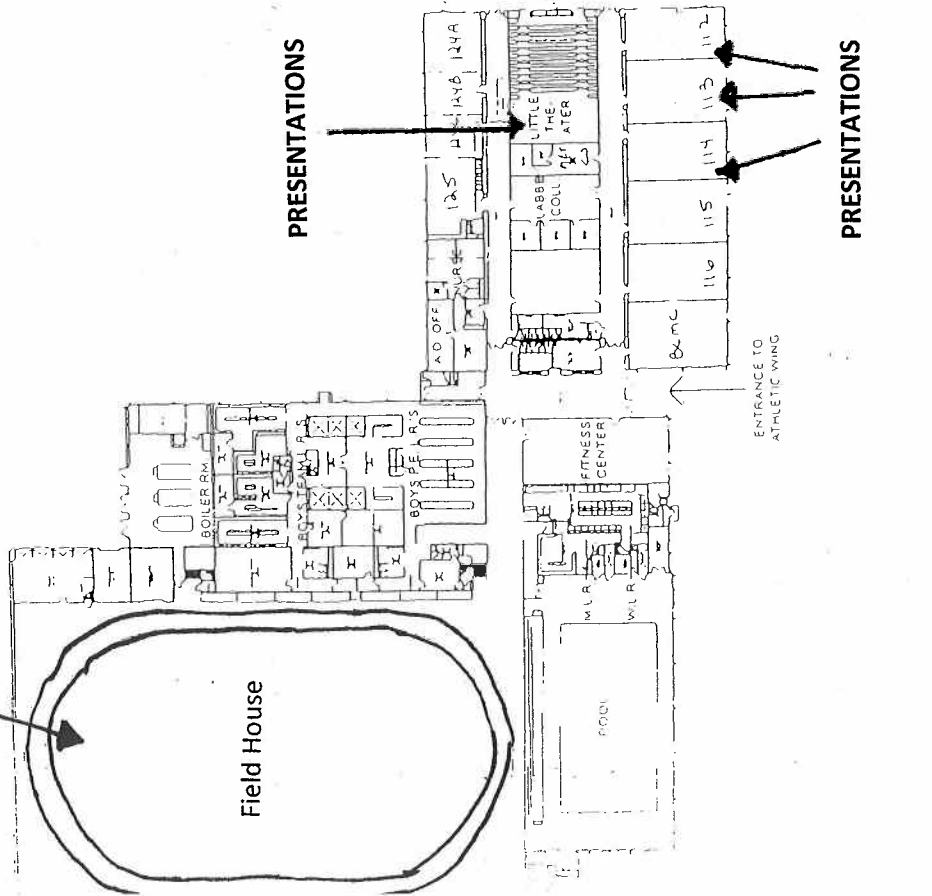
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42	<p>Hooked on Conventions Do you see the same punctuation, capitalization, and grammar mistakes in your students' writing time and time again? Would you like your students to become more independent proofreaders? These are the questions we explored.</p>	Janet Flaherty
43	<p>Response to Intervention - Literacy For the second year, our PLT focused on using RTI Reading Skills Groups to reduce the number of Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. Data was used to keep track of student progress and growth throughout the year.</p>	Mary MacDonald
44	<p>All the Classroom's a Stage: Using Performance Assessment to Measure Higher Order Thinking Classroom performance is a dynamic and engaging way to reinforce student collaboration, creativity, flexibility, critical thinking, and articulate expression. On a blustery September day, five English teachers joined forces to harness the power of performance in their curricula by observing and learning strategies from each other.</p>	Lisa Hurtubise
45	<p>Kindergarten Literacy Curriculum Time Table Aligning Kindergarten Literacy Scope and Sequence to the Common Core Standards.</p>	Ellen Payne
46	<p>Second Grade Writing Realistic rubrics for second grade writing by wonderful Wellington women! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precise personal narratives • Interesting informational pieces • Lyrical letters • Outstanding opinions </p>	Becky Reilly
47	<p>Implementing Reading "RTI" in the Middle School Classroom How do we address the needs of Tier II (weak, but not the kids on Ed Plans) readers within our regular education classrooms in the 5th and 6th grades? Are there quick, accurate "screeners" to identify weak readers early on in the school year? What teaching strategies will help weak readers make progress? These are a few of the questions our PLT addressed this year. Results were sometimes inconclusive, but we'll share what we tried.</p>	Laura Tracey
48	<p>Number Concepts in the Classroom First grade teachers set out to determine the most effective way to use Kathy Richardson's assessments and related activities within the first grade classroom. Teachers discuss the organization of materials, data analysis, intervention cycles, student progress and overall effectiveness.</p>	Erin Gillies
49	<p>Curriculum Quality Assurance Ensuring a consistent, quality curriculum is a critical part of our work as educators. Through this PLT, we analyzed the effectiveness of the current model of curriculum oversight.</p>	Lindsey Rinder
50	<p>Belmont and the Massachusetts Teacher Evaluation System Over the course of the past year, the Teacher Evaluation LLT has explored, discussed and analyzed the DESE's new "Model System" of teacher evaluation. This work has laid the groundwork for a joint-task force of BPS administration and BEA leadership charged with making recommended changes to the "Handbook for Evaluation of Unit A Personnel" in the Unit A Contract. In addition to its review of the Model System, the Evaluation LLT has conducted surveys of the districts identified as early adopters by the DESE regarding their experiences with the Model System, examined software developed to assist in the management of artifacts generated in the by the evaluation process, studied rubrics developed for educators who are not classroom based, and identified a list of documentation that could be used by teachers as evidence of proficiency in the Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice.</p>	Mike Harvey

Belmont High School 1st Floor

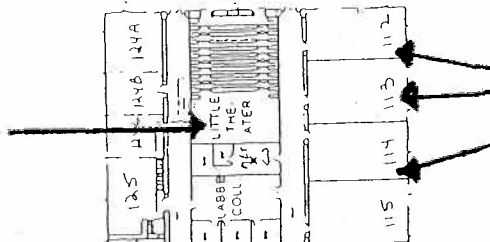
EXHIBITS



Field House



PRESENTATIONS



PRESENTATIONS