



Tolland Middle School

Annual Report

2011-2012

Introduction

Tolland Middle School experienced a great year of stability and growth for 2011-2012. The adoption of the seven period rotating schedule was a great success, allowing students to experience most classes at different times each day. The World Language program, although now part of the specials rotation, had a very successful year and a number of students moved into the high school prepared for higher level language. Principal's Breakfasts, the first week of each month, yielded great conversations, cooperation, and sharing with the community. Sports and Clubs, after-school enrichment activities, and field trips, all enriched the student experience. Our Response to Intervention Programs, Professional Learning Communities and Connecticut Common Core State Standards efforts, Instructional Rounds, Positive Behavioral Support Programs, technological innovations, and TEAMing structures yielded positive results in student performance, and the overall student experience, at Tolland Middle School.

Our Response to Intervention programs at Tolland Middle School are effective; 84% of students in the Reading Support program showed measurable growth in challenge areas, and nearly all students in the Math Support program made significant progress in Numeracy. The Academy and Achievement Labs served over 2000 student work sessions both during and after school. Our Homework Club and Red Folder programs also supported students who had trouble with work completion. Individualized student plans or EIPs (Educational Intervention Plans) were implemented for students who struggled academically and/or behaviorally and due to the success of these programs, Tolland Middle School had no students retained this year. The success of these programs is evidenced by the strong academic performance of our students, and student performance on the CMTs that is far above the state, and competitive with or better than districts with similar demographics as Tolland's. In addition, over 144 students won awards in our Student Academic Award ceremony this year, many of which were Presidential Excellence Awards winners.

Our Professional Learning Community (small data teams) at TMS utilized data driven decision making, evaluating benchmark assessments, Connecticut Mastery Testing, Degrees of Reading Power (DRP), EOY (math assessments), international testing results, behavioral analysis BASC (Behavior Assessment System for Children), and many other data points to identify student populations that experience challenges, and devise strategies and plans to help the students overcome those challenges. Nearly all PLC teams demonstrated measurable increases in student performance, and those that did not, reviewed the data and interventions and made improvement in their processes for the coming year. As we embark on our efforts to assimilate the CCSS (Common Core State Standards) into our curriculum and practices

here at TMS, next year's PLCs will be reorganized to harness the data driven process to inform and help execute the CCSS efforts.

As a continuation of our ongoing process of consistently reflecting and reviewing our own performance as professional educators, TMS educators sustained our program of Instructional Rounds. This approach is based on the research of Elizabeth City, Richard Elmore, Sarah Fiarman, and Lee Teitel (*Instructional Rounds: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2009). Instructional Rounds emulate a process in the medical community of taking teams of professionals on "rounds" to view each others' practices, and in our case, classrooms. The Instructional Rounds teams at TMS were trained to objectively observe and look at all practices and data, and to help diagnose a specific problem (called a "problem of practice") identified by the team that requested the Instructional Rounds observation. We held Instructional Rounds for all grades at TMS this year.

The PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support) program was very successful this year at TMS. An outside organization (SERC) independently reviewed our processes giving TMS ratings of 100% for meaningful systems of reporting, and nearly 90% for management of the program. The TMS PBIS program is unique from other programs, however, in that we extended our efforts to include Community Service blocks, a positive outreach effort to the community. We have letters of thanks from the United States Military, many charitable organizations, cancer organizations, Tolland Food Pantry, nursing homes, State Police Troop C, shelters (like the Tri Town Shelter) and many more. These organizations have new reasons to know, and appreciate, the students and schools in Tolland. Students continued to know and appreciate the TMS core values of Safety, Ownership, Active Learning, and Respect and participated in many "SOAR" activities from assemblies, to weekly incentives, to school and community projects. A qualitative review of the program yielded a universal sense that these efforts had made a positive impact on student attitudes, behavior, and performance, at TMS. A small example of this was the many student initiated service activities, from Dodgeball fundraisers to food drives. Student organizations like the TMS Service Corp and the Student Council executed service projects as well, the latter doing so well in a "Stuff the Bus" fundraiser for disadvantaged youth that they won a free *Hot Chelle Rae* concert for the school!

In an effort to stay abreast of the current technological resources, TMS reached out to the PTO and Tolland Education Foundation this year – and was generously supported by these organizations. Through a combination of fundraising and district efforts, Tolland Middle School has begun the process of utilizing tablet computing in the classrooms. By the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, Tolland Middle School will have thirteen teachers trained and using tablets, with a mobile cart of 20 or more tablets available for classroom use. This coupled with additional grants, the utilization of our TMS user group, and trainings that will be offered by these educators, the use of this exciting new technology will become ubiquitous at TMS. With over 20,000 educational applications available, many of which are free, TMS teachers will be able to capitalize on this technology more than any other previous opportunity.

Finally, Tolland Middle School remains a true middle model school. The TEAM structure at TMS allows for all of the structures most valued and tied to student performance outcomes. This model allows the relative large middle school of over 730 students to function more like 7 schools within a school of about 86 to 125 students each. TMS is a model of the kind of school structure supported in literature like *Turning Points*, and *Turning Points 2000*. It is because of the TEAMing at Tolland Middle School that PLCs, PBIS, Instructional Rounds, and EIPs are possible. Tolland can be proud of its middle school and the education it provided in the 2011-2012 school year.

Curriculum and Instruction

Reading/Language Arts

The McDougall-Littel Literature anthology serves as the core reading program for approximately 735 students in grades six through eight. This is a reading strategy-based program that continues the development of the same reading strategies taught through the Houghton Mifflin Reading program in grades K-5. Students read, analyze, and respond to a variety of fiction and non-fiction selections in the anthology. This core program is complemented with a variety of classic and contemporary novels and literary works. Teachers design and incorporate questions modeled after those on the Connecticut Mastery Test into classroom discussions and in assignments.

Sixth grade reading teachers utilize a variety of grouping patterns for instruction. This promotes a more “differentiated” approach to the teaching of reading as students are making their literature choices, teachers are ensuring that the books students are reading are appropriate for the student’s reading level, and small group lessons are based on students’ needs. Reciprocal teaching and literature circles are the primary structures for this small group reading instruction.

Teachers use a variety of strategies for teaching the main types of writing – narrative, expository and persuasive. Most teachers utilize strategies from the Empowering Writer’s program. The Six Traits Approach to writing instruction and assessment is used by several teachers as well.

This year, writing instruction was split between teachers. Prior to 2010-2011, every sixth grade teacher taught reading and language arts (writing process, grammar, and spelling), and the four seventh and eighth grade language arts teachers taught a block of language arts (reading, writing, grammar, spelling). Due to budget reductions, this structure resulted in the fracturing of language arts instruction. Research on the effective strategies for the teaching of language arts supports an approach in which there is one teacher who teaches language arts, rather than having one teacher teach reading and one teaching writing.

A direct result of the split in language arts was an increase in class size in the language arts classes. Class sizes ranged from 24 to 28. This is unsatisfactory for the teaching of language arts. Group work is constrained due to the size of the classroom and the number of students. Furthermore, teachers find it very difficult to keep up with the paper load of the discipline.

A writing curriculum map was created and distributed in the fall to encourage consistency in instruction between and across grades, as well as to ensure that all students in the grade had opportunities to write a variety of pieces.

The Scott Foresman *Everyday Spelling Program* is used in sixth grade classrooms. Every student has a consumable book. A formal spelling or vocabulary program does not exist in grades seven or eight.

Seventh and eighth grade language arts teachers unpacked the five strands of the ELA Common Core State Standards for their grade: Reading Literature, Reading Informational Text, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. The three sixth grade reading teachers unpacked the Reading strands for their grade level. Reading support teachers participated in the unpacking process.

All language arts teachers, except for the 6th grade teachers, viewed a workshop on text complexity presented to the THS ELA department. Understanding text complexity is considered one of the major shifts of the CCSS.

Mathematics

Grades 6, 7, and 8 were provided with additional math technology resources this year. These additional resources were uploaded to the Common drive so that teachers can access them from their desktop

computer. Each math textbook used at TMS comes with software to enhance the curriculum. With the use of SMART Boards, teachers have new, innovative ways to address content.

Grade 6

The sixth grade Math course continues to use the *Connected Math Project 2* as its primary resource. However, teachers began using Larson's *Big Ideas Math* as an additional resource. The *Big Ideas Math* includes online resources for both teachers and students to reinforce classroom instruction. Just as in past years, we have revised the curriculum emphasis based on student needs.

Teachers were introduced to the Common Core State Standards during the fall. The teachers and the curriculum coordinator looked at this year's curriculum content and talked about changes that will be made in the future. Additionally, teachers have spent PLC time working with the curriculum coordinator to unpack the grade 6 CCSS for Mathematics. Teachers will need to finish this unpacking process and begin to develop assessments and units based on the CCSS.

Grade 7

Starting in seventh grade, there are two courses offered to students. The seventh grade Pre-Algebra course uses the Prentice Hall *Pre-Algebra* book as its primary resource. The curriculum was modified to ensure that students were exposed to more geometry concepts.

The Math 7 course used a new supplemental resource this year. In addition to the *Connected Math Project 2* resources, Larson's *Big Ideas Math* was introduced. The *Big Ideas Math* includes online resources for both teachers and students to reinforce classroom instruction.

Teachers were introduced to the Common Core State Standards during the fall. The teachers and the curriculum coordinator met numerous times to unpack the grade 7 CCSS for Mathematics. Next, teachers will begin to develop assessments and units based on the CCSS.

Twelve seventh grade students were given the opportunity to take CP Algebra 1A this year. These students navigated a modified schedule in order to take this primarily eighth grade course. Next year, these students will have a special course designed to fit their mathematical needs and prepare them for Honors Geometry at THS in ninth grade.

Grade 8

This is the second year of our restructured eighth grade math program. Last year, two new sections were introduced, Honors Algebra and CP Algebra 1A (in addition to Pre-Algebra).

Pre-Algebra

The primary resource used to deliver the curriculum is Prentice Hall *Pre-Algebra*. This course provides the foundation needed for students to enroll in CP Algebra 1A&B as freshmen at THS

Honors Algebra 1

The primary resource used to deliver the curriculum is Larsen *Algebra 1*. It is a quick paced, rigorous course that challenges students to synthesize numerous mathematical ideas together. Upon successful completion of this course, students will take either CP or Honors Geometry at THS.

CP Algebra 1A

The primary resource used to deliver the curriculum is Pearson Prentice Hall *Algebra 1*. This year, teachers worked to better align the CP Algebra 1A course with the same CP Algebra 1A course that is taught at the high school level. Students at both TMS and THS were presented the same curriculum and completed the same assessments, including a midterm and final exam.

CP1A is the first half of Algebra 1 and students complete the second half (CP1B) at THS. We have seen very positive results this year as a result of offering this course at TMS.

Science

The budgetary issues that necessitated the second change in the schedule in three years had an adverse effect on science instruction. The current schedule, while allowing double periods for LA, leaves only one period for Science and other subjects, and this makes it challenging to conduct hands-on activities. Activities end up being spread across several days, and the set up and break down time of materials is hard to accomplish in one period. This makes demonstration of some concepts, rather than activities, more frequent. This is not optimal for science instruction. An extended period once a week would help. Due to budgetary constraints, there was no summer curriculum work offered to the teachers. Carolyn Tyl, science coordinator, presented several activities. The summaries are listed in the following table.

Grade	# classes	Unit	Title	Date	Location	# students	# adults
7	10	<i>Cells Heredity & Evolution</i>	Salmon River FT Assembly	Apr	TMS Auditorium	242	10
8	1	<i>Matter</i>	Make it Real	Mar	Mrs. Harger's room	6	4
8	10	<i>Energy, Force & Motion</i>	Airplanes, Force and Speed	Oct/Nov	New England Air Museum	245	6

Science teachers in grades 6-8 worked together to unpack the Common Core State Standards related to science. They spent several professional development days together discussing the meaning of the standards and what they meant about reading and writing in science. The next step will be to analyze how the CCSS will be implemented in science classes.

In August of 2011, the Next Generation Science Framework was released to the public. The new framework takes a new approach to science teaching integrating Earth, Life, Physical, Space and science process into a cohesive unit. The frameworks are structured with "cross-cutting themes" such as patterns, structure and function, and cause and effect. The themes are revisited throughout the entire framework. We are awaiting the release of the Next Generation Science Standards which will give us more specific information about the content that will be taught in each grade

Social Studies

Sixth grade students learned about ancient history from the founding of civilization through the fall of Rome. The sixth grade team worked together to provide students with a consistent social studies experience regardless of the teacher. In addition, teachers focused on providing nonfiction reading strategy instruction for students. Curriculum writing in order to align with the new state social standards is being planned. Some erasing of topics no longer part of the standards has occurred.

The seventh grade curriculum is World Cultures and Geography, specifically focusing on the Middle East, India and China, and Africa. Each unit emphasizes how the geography influences the people of the region, the culture and beliefs of the region, and the interconnectedness of countries around the world. Some erasing of topics no longer part of the standards has occurred in order to align with state standards. Students on both teams participated in Art Link, a global project that is designed to provide students with an expanded awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the lives of their peers in another country.

This year our students shared their artwork with students from Jordan. We sent 60 drawings about American culture to a Jordanian school, and they sent us their artwork demonstrating Jordanian culture. For the Africa unit, all students made their own Kente cloth designs, participated in a drum circle presented by Dennis the Drummer, and enjoyed an African storytelling presentation by Dr. Mama from ECSU.

The eighth grade U.S. history curriculum began with the issues facing the newly formed United States after the Revolutionary War. Students learned about the birth of the United States, the growth of the country during the 1800's, and finished their study with World War I. This curriculum aligns with the 5th grade and the 11th grade United States history curriculum. Both 8th grade teachers participated in the Teaching American History grant through EASTCONN again this year. This program provided top-notch professional development to teachers of American history. Eighth grade teachers attended three after-school workshops and three full-day trips to local areas of historical interest. Both teachers plan on participating in the summer institute at the end of June.

In addition, the middle school social studies teachers spent some afternoon professional development time meeting with the high school social studies department in an effort to align instruction vertically between grades 6 and 12. This meeting was very productive and both schools have requested additional time to meet in the future.

Unified Arts

Art

- ART CLUB - Every Monday after school with 25 students.
- INTEGRATING CORE CURRICULUM: 6th grade
- Exploratory Art with History
- OPEN STUDIO HOURS: The art room is open until 4:15pm. daily for all students to work on art related projects.

Music

- Fifteen TMS Chorus students were accepted into the Eastern Region Music Festival. Twelve sang in the mixed chorus and three were in the treble chorus.
- Staff hosted three music major students from UCONN every Friday during the second semester. They observed, taught choral warm-ups and assisted keyboard and guitar students.
- Staff directed the TMS school musical, 101 Dalmatians.
- Collaborated with the Library Media Specialist to create an online Guitarist Research Wikispaces Project for 8th Grade Guitar Elective classes. Students utilized the database *Biography in Context* for their research.
- Recruited, rehearsed and directed 6th, 7th & 8th graders in a Pep Band.
- Created and implemented a daily Music Therapy class for students with special needs.

Family and Consumer Sciences

- **Costume and Prop Committee**- worked with 8 students after school- it should be highlighted that everyone on Unified Arts Team worked with the music department to stage the 101 Dalmations play.

- **Culinary Arts Advetntures**-15 students, grades 6-8 participated in this after school, week long, class exploring Culinary Arts.
- **PBIS Committee**-member of this committee for 2 years and did summer curriculum work last summer.
- **Community Block**-facilitated two activities, one for Seniors at Christmas. The homeroom made muffins for shut-in baskets. The second one benefitted the Kitty Angels adoption agency; we made cat beds for the adopted cats.

Library Media Center Highlights 2011-2012

The Library Meets Technology: Moving TMS into the 21st Century

We have made a big transition from being a keeper of a physical space and objects to becoming a 'virtual' resource for the entire school community. While we still offer print resources to support students and teachers we have also cooperated with numerous teachers across many subject areas to integrate technology.

- Students have completed research projects using iCONN.org and used this information to create many different projects including wiki pages to demonstrate their learning.
- Teachers have also learned about many web 2.0 resources available to increate technology integration.
- Through the student-generated TMSNews wiki, school events, curriculum projects, athletics and other topics of interest are being shared through student writing, photos and videos via the web.
- The media center was also the recipient of a Tolland Education Foundation grant to fund a multimedia computer station. This station has afforded the school community unique opportunities to create multimedia projects such as the student news wiki, musical compositions, and student videos.
- The Nutmeg Book Award program has also attracted many readers to the library as they have the opportunity to read excellent books and then to vote for the book of their choice to be recognized as the Nutmeg Award winner. Thanks go to the PTO for sponsoring the book purchases for this program.

Computers

- Created teaching material and student worksheets for a new course this year, Grade 6 Unified Arts Computers. The focus of the class is Internet Safety.
- For our PLC group (focus on math measurement skills based on CMT scores), I edited (from last year) our Pretest and Post test for Grade 7. I worked with our new math coordinator, Melissa McKee to set up our test in Mastery Manager. I copied and coordinated/organized the test materials for the UA teachers giving the tests.
- Assisted supervising students for the costumes for the spring musical *101 Dalmatians*.

Technology Education

- Successfully developed new curriculum for the UA Construction class and continued to develop the UA Transportation, UA Manufacturing, Robotics, What is a Business and Wood Technology classes.
- Participated in Pumpkin Festival, Hoops Challenge, 101 Dalmatians and other various after school activities.
- Worked with other UA team members to continue our PLC work and to continue the growth of our SOAR program here at TMS.

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Student Assessment

Reading/Language Arts

Reading and language arts benchmark assessments are administered two to three times a year. The reading comprehension benchmarks in grades 6, 7, and 8 include multiple choice and open-ended questions. Questions are aligned with the language arts standards and are developed using question stems used on the Connecticut Mastery Test. Teachers utilize rubrics and anchor sets to correct the open-ended responses. Grammar is assessed through an editing and revising assessment resembling the CMT.

A *Response to Literature* assessment is one of the end-of-the year 8th grade language arts benchmarks. Students respond in writing to the same four questions asked on the CAPT. Their responses are scored using the CAPT rubric and a district created anchor set. These tests are given to the ninth grade English teachers in the fall.

Writing benchmarks are administered in September, January, and May and take the following forms – Grade 6 – Expository and Persuasive, and Grades 7 and 8 – Persuasive Writing. The state rubric for scoring the writing prompts is utilized in order to predict student performance on the CMT as well as to inform instruction. Anchor sets are used as benchmarks for each of the score points on the rubric.

Middle school students who are two or more years below grade level are given the Developmental Reading Assessment in lieu of the regular language arts benchmark. These students do respond to the writing prompt.

The Language Arts Coordinator administered diagnostic reading assessments to individual students upon the request of a guidance counselor and/or teachers.

Social Studies

Benchmark assessments were given at the conclusion of each unit in grades six, seven, and eight. Some of the benchmarks in all grades were “tweaked” or revised during this year. These modifications were made based on past student performance and new standards. Teachers used the data on a regular basis to understand their students’ performance. The following table shows benchmark results from all three grades:

Grade 6	Average Score	Grade 7	Average Score	Grade 8	Average Score
Prehistory/	88% (80% in	Introduction to	88% (87% in	Developing the	83% (83% in

Mesopotamia	2010-11)	Geography	2010-11)	Nation	2010-11)
Ancient Egypt	85% (86% in 2010-11)	The Middle East (Given this year in two parts)	1-92% 2-82% (88% overall in 2010-11)	Westward Expansion	82% (84% in 2010-11)
Ancient Greece	87% (89% in 2010-11)	Asia	91% (89% in 2010-11)	The Civil War	84% (86% in 2010-11)
Ancient Rome	***	Africa	*** (88% in 2010-11)	Spanish- American War	*** (83% in 2010-11)
				World War I	***

***The data for the assessments has not been compiled yet because the assessments have not been given or entered into Mastery Manager to date.

Science

Teachers are continuing to administer benchmark tests at appropriate times throughout the school year. We continue to use our web-based benchmarking system, Mastery Manager, to input data and teachers are becoming more comfortable using the system. Science teachers are still in the process of learning how to fully utilize the data entered on Mastery Manager to impact instruction, and the product itself may be replaced with one that makes this process more straightforward. We will not make any further adjustments to our present benchmarking system until the new standards have been released.

Mathematics

A great deal of work was done this year to strengthen our assessment process. For each course, there is a common assessment given to all students for EACH unit. Additionally, in the seventh and eighth grade mathematics courses, there are common benchmark assessments given after every 2-3 units. This data helps to show student content retention and helps teachers monitor student progress. In the sixth grade math program, students continue to take a beginning of the year, middle of the year, and end of the year assessment in order for teachers to see progress for the year.

In addition to these assessments, diagnostic assessments were given in seventh and eighth grade. All seventh grade students took an algebraic diagnostic assessment for use in eighth grade placement. Additionally, all Honors Algebra students took an Honors Geometry placement exam for use in THS Geometry placement. This exam was modified this year to include two sections: an Algebra section and a Geometry section.

Next year, we will work on developing assessments that align to the CCSS as well as the Standards for Mathematical Practice. These assessments will be implemented in the 2013-2014 school year.

With the unfortunate elimination of the math interventionist position this year, we were unable to provide sufficient Tier II and Tier III support. The Math Development Program course used the ALEKS computer program to address those students who were identified as at risk or below grade level with their mathematical skills. There were two of these courses offered at each grade level with a limit of 6 students per class.

Staffing

There were no major changes in staffing in the 2011-2012 year. The sixth grade had three teams, comprised of four teachers each. Seventh and eighth grades had two teams each grade, with five teachers each. The school has three physical education teachers, one school psychologist, two school counselors, two nurses, nine special education teachers, twenty-one paraprofessionals, six custodians, three secretaries, one assistant principal, and one principal.

School Facilities

Custodial tracking forms continue to be utilized and have been very successful. Planned maintenance projects and timelines have helped make the transition effort a success. The custodial staff is working hard to make TMS a safe and clean environment.

Student Support Services

The Early Intervention Project model continues to see success. Many students were given individualized help and modifications that would have otherwise not been provided. At TMS, the EIP is the pre-referral process. The TMS Guidance Department is core to its overall success and they continue to work hard to make a difference in the lives of the students. Through Principal Grade Meetings, the Rachel's Challenge program, Career Day and various support programs the guidance department works hard to provide support for our students to tackle not only academic, but social and emotional challenges as well. Our Scientific Research Based Initiatives and RTI programs such as the TMS Academy, Achievement Lab, Homework Club, and Failure Reporting have yielded strong benefits this year as parents were constantly kept informed, and students were given support. As a result, there were no retentions this year.

Student Activities

Social Studies

There were several special activities that students were involved in this year in the area of social studies, including but not limited to:

- The Washington D.C. Trip
- Geography Bee
- Art Link Program
- Dr. Mama and Dennis the Drummer

Plans are underway to provide social studies themed activities for students who do not attend the Washington D.C. trip next fall.

Science

There were several special activities that students were involved in this year in the area of science.

Grade 6: Highlights

- All science teachers continue to learn more about their SMART Boards and ceiling mounted projectors. All teachers report high interest by their students.
- Students completed state embedded lab, "Dig In" within the Ecology Unit. This lab is part of the Grade 8 science CMT.
- Teachers and students used the dedicated science lab facilities during the year to conduct experiments on plant growth and to learn the basics of scientific equipment used in their classes.

Because the room is away from the regular classroom space for sixth grade, the room is not used as much as it should be. Next year, we plan to use it for sixth, seventh and eighth grade laboratory experiments.

- Many students received privileges for using the on-line version of their science text. The on-line version is interactive. The subscription was included with the purchase of our new textbooks. We will have access for the next three years without an additional charge.
- The entire grade level visited the Connecticut Science Center in June.

Grade 7: Highlights

- All students completed the State CMT embedded lab “Feel the Beat” within the Cells, Heredity and Evolution unit. This lab is part of the Grade 8 science CMT.
- The entire 7th grade class participated in a science field trip titled The Great Salmon Release. Our science coordinator organized the event where students participated in several different science activities as they toured Salmon River State Park with their classes. The highlight of the day was releasing two hundred salmon fry that the students raised from eggs in their classroom. This year we were able to procure a second tank and chiller, so both 7th grade teams raised the salmon in their science classrooms.
- Many students received privileges for using the on-line version of their science text. The on-line version is interactive. The subscription was included with the purchase of our new textbooks. We will have access for the next three years without an additional charge.

Grade 8: Highlights

- In October, students participated in a custom-made lesson developed, presented and funded by the New England Air Museum. Students studied the forces involved in flight.
- All students completed the State CMT embedded lab “Shipping & Sliding” within the Work, Energy & Motion unit. This lab is part of the Grade 8 science CMT.
- Many students received privileges for using the on-line version of their science text. The on-line version is interactive. The subscription was included with the purchase of our new textbooks. We will have access for the next three years without an additional charge.
- The two eighth grade science teachers, Cindy Foster and Sharon Petsa, continue to sponsor a science research trip to Bermuda. This year, twelve 8th grade students accompanied them.

Mathematics

The curriculum at TMS provides teachers and students the opportunity to apply mathematics concepts routinely through daily instruction, investigations, and in class projects and activities. These activities align with classroom lessons and instruction.

The seventh grade students applied their mathematical knowledge during their Salmon River field trip.

Parent and Community

Language Arts

- Parents have immediate access to their child’s grades via Power School.
- Quarterly narrative progress reports are sent to the parents of students who receive reading support.
- Summer reading assignments are offered to all incoming 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. Although not, required, they are strongly recommended.

- Tolland Public Library offers a summer reading program.
- Students are made aware of the **Governor's Summer Reading Challenge**.

Mathematics

A meeting was held for the parents of those seventh grade students who were enrolled in the eighth grade Algebra IA course this year. The purpose of the meeting was to inform parents of their child's options for the next school year and to answer any questions they had.

Letters were sent home to all eighth grade Honors Algebra students to inform parents of their child's score on the placement exam and the course recommendation for the next school year.

Tolland Middle School Goals 2012-2013

Reading/Language Arts

- Because of the division of the language arts, it is essential that teachers continue to work towards instructional consistency and integration within the language arts program.
- Unpack ELA standards with the 6th grade language arts teachers.
- Provide teachers with professional development on writing workshop and the Six Traits Approach.
- Investigate the CCSS units of study and pacing guides (created by CSDE) for possible adoption in grades 6-8.
- Begin writing units of study to be implemented in 2013-2014.
- Revise questions on benchmarks and classroom assignments to ensure they are text dependent and represent an appropriate level of rigor (according to the DOK matrix.)
- Evaluate the degree to which students are reading informational text across the curriculum. According to the CCSS, 55% of what students read should be informational in genre.
- Evaluate the degree to which students are writing informative and argumentative texts. The CCSS expects 70% of writing tasks to be in this category.
- Provide time in the schedule for the reading support teachers to discuss data with the classroom teachers.
- Provide an opportunity for the reading support teachers to share pertinent program information, such as selection criteria, with the entire staff.
- Inform parents about the CCSS and its implications. Go to <http://engageny.org/resource/shifts-for-students-and-parents/> to view an excellent resource.

Social Studies

Develop a series of assessments that measure student growth regarding CCSS standards to pair with the common unit content assessments already given.

- Include a consistent plan for inclusion of modified benchmarks in data collection on Mastery Manager for all grades.
- Continue to develop common formative assessments to track student progress before benchmarks.
- Continue to develop rubrics and anchor sets for benchmarks at all grade levels.
- Continue the process of matching assessments and new standards (state and Common Core) to the social studies standards for inclusion on a standards-based report card.
- Continue the alignment of rigor and standards from grades 6-12.

Science

During the 2012-13 school year, science teachers will be reviewing the Next Generation Science Standards when they are released in late 2012/early 2013. Before any changes occur, the entire framework will be

reviewed by committees of teachers to determine how Tolland will implement the standards. We anticipate the 2013-14 school year is where the bulk of the work will take place.

- Meet in grade level/PLC teams to review curriculum and instructional practices. Use student work and data from assessments (using DP5 process) to determine student instructional needs.
- Meet with Gr. 6-8 science representatives to continue to review curricular issues. Discuss how more inquiry can be implemented.
- Concentrate on lab safety practices, including having students work only in pairs in the lab.
- Continue to purchase enough supplies so that all students will have an appropriate science process education.
- Develop common formative assessments at each grade level.
- Provide PD for science teachers on content and science inquiry, and the impact of the new framework on the curriculum.
- Determine lab space needs and meet regularly to address science safety practices.
- Have science coordinator present model lessons/co-teach with science teachers using science process/inquiry.

Mathematics

- Hire a full time math support teacher to address the Tier II and Tier III needs of students
- Focus on alignment to the CCSS (Common Core State Standards).
- Continue work on CCSS – develop assessments, create units, incorporate the Standards for Mathematical Practice.
- Pool the mathematics resources together to find ways to deliver the CCSS.
- Develop a Honors Integrated Algebra course that challenges the eighth grade students who were enrolled in Algebra IA this year.

Closing

Tolland Middle School is a strong educational institution. As TMS finishes this year, we are showing positive growth in student academic performance, the culture of the school, and the school's outreach and community involvement. In addition, our focus on Scientific Research Based Initiatives, Professional Learning Communities, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, Instructional Rounds, and Standards Based Reporting have provided a strong philosophical foundation, sound practices, and sound research methodologies that are yielding advances in student learning. Our students are demonstrating academic and social growth. As we look to next year, we will be working with a new schedule and will continue to refine existing programs and develop new opportunities. Our research and reflective practices will continue. We are excited about the coming year, and optimistic about the opportunities that the future will provide.