



Tolland Middle School

Annual Report

2012-2013

Introduction

Tolland Middle School experienced further growth and success in the 2012-2013 school year. In a constant effort to review and refine our offerings, we introduced new classes such as our Game Maker class that familiarized students with programming, and electronic game design. To expand our Positive Behavioral Support Program offerings we introduced Merit Points, and special assemblies to recognize and reward students that go above and beyond. We reviewed our grading practices, and will introduce in the 2013-2014 school year a new mastery based grading policy that is grounded in the literature, and better for supporting student performance. We are expanding our behavioral support program and reporting by developing a new SOAR Report Card to be introduced next year that reports student progress to parents on the school's core values (safety, ownership, active learning, respect). Principal Advisory Groups were utilized to connect to students, and give them a say in the operation of the school. 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; 74 of students in the Reading Support program showed measurable growth in challenge areas reaching goal or a new comprehension level, 71% of students in the Math Support program made significant progress in Numeracy, meeting or exceeding the goals set out for them. The Academy and Achievement Labs served over 2500 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 only 1 student 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 average, and competitive with or better than districts with similar demographics as Tolland's. In addition, over 198 students

won awards in our Student Academic Award ceremony this year, many of which were Presidential Excellence Awards.

Our Professional Learning Community at TMS worked primarily on rewriting units and assessments, to align the TMS curriculum and practice to the Connecticut Common Core State Standards and to prepare us for the Smart Balanced Assessment Consortium testing. Teachers in their Interdisciplinary Teams 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.

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 and created rubrics based on the new evaluation plan that provided teachers an opportunity to review the progress of the school on performance standards related to the CCSS and SBAC standards.

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 teaching expectations, having systems of rewarding students, our monitoring and decision making structures, our and our management. 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. In addition we began a system of Merit Points this year to recognize students who go above and beyond our core values in service to the school and community. 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 continued to yield data 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 supporting cancer survivors, to animal shelters, to community soup kitchens, the military, and more.

In an effort to stay abreast of the current technological resources, and through a combination of fundraising and district efforts, Tolland Middle School has expanded the utilization of tablet computing in the classrooms. By the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year, Tolland Middle School will have twenty five 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, the expansion of our wifi infrastructure, and trainings that will be offered by TMS educators, the use of this exciting new technology will continue to expand. With over 20,000 educational applications available, many of which are free, TMS teachers will continue to capitalize on this technology to enhance student performance.

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 about 700 students to function more like 7 schools within a school of about 86 to 125 students each. We are losing 1 team in 6th grade in the 2013-2014 year due to budget cuts, but TMS remains 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 2012-2013 school year.

Curriculum and Instruction

Reading/Language Arts

The McDougall-Littel *Literature Anthology* serves as the core reading program for approximately 690 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.

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.

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.

Language arts class sizes in 7th and 8th grade ranged from 24 to 28, and 17-22 in grade 6.

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.

CCSS- Please refer to the page that follows this report for the specific actions that were taken this year and the necessary “next steps.”

Mathematics

Grade 6

The sixth grade Math course continued 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 revised the curriculum emphasis based on student needs.

Teachers were introduced to the Understanding by Design process to write new units aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The teachers and the curriculum coordinator worked on developing new assessments and units aligned to these standards. Additionally, teachers spent

PLC time working on the new curriculum including finding resources and developing performance tasks as well as fluency checks.

Grade 7

Starting in seventh grade, there are two courses offered to students. The seventh grade Pre-Algebra course used 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 continued to use multiple resources this year including the *Connected Math Project 2* and *Larson's Big Ideas Math*. The *Big Ideas Math* includes online resources for both teachers and students to reinforce classroom instruction. Teachers used more of these online resources in their classrooms this year.

Teachers were introduced to the Understanding by Design process to write new units aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The teachers and the curriculum coordinator worked on developing new assessments and units aligned to these standards. Additionally, teachers spent PLC time working on the new curriculum including finding resources and developing common formative assessments such as performance tasks and fluency checks.

Grade 8

Eighth grade continued to offer three courses this year: Honors Algebra, CP Algebra 1A, and Pre-Algebra. Additionally, twelve students, who took Algebra 1A last year, completed a new course titled Honors Integrated Algebra.

Honors Integrated Algebra

This course was designed specifically for this small group of students. The curriculum focused on the Honors Algebra topics that were not covered last year. Additionally, they were taught some basic geometry topics in order to prepare them for the Honors Geometry course at THS next year. A math blog was introduced to challenge students to think and write mathematically. This was a weekly assignment.

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.

CP1A

The primary resource used to deliver the curriculum is *Pearson Prentice Hall Algebra 1*. This year, teachers continued 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.

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 either the non-level or CP-level Algebra 1A&B as freshmen at THS.

The Math Support Program was re-introduced this year. Staffed by a certified math teacher, students were placed in this program based on CMT data from the previous year. Students had

the ability to exit out of the program if they mastered all of their goals. The chart below provides overall information about our intervention program and its impact on providing services to our children.

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
*Number of Students	14	12	11

The Math Support teacher also offered a CMT review course after school prior to the administration of the CMTs in March. This session offered test-taking strategies as well as practice problems for each grade level.

Science

As in previous years, teachers report little time in their school day to appropriately address science standards. Although each year we work to adjust the pacing guide the effectiveness and the ability of the teachers to keep pace with guide is difficult. This year, we will not be making any adjustments to the curriculum as the Next Generation Science Frameworks were released in August 2011. Performance standards were developed and released on April 8, 2013. The entire TMS science curriculum will be revised due to the changes to our present curriculum. The new framework changes the way we present science content. It includes elements of Life, Physical, Earth and Life science as well as Engineering and the process of science and takes an integrated approach to instruction. We will be working on the new framework and standards to develop new curricular units over the next few years.

The teachers report it is common for them to race through activities, treat them as a demonstration rather than a hands-on activity, or not perform them at all. This is not the way science should be taught. An extended period at least once per week would help with this issue.

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	Cells Heredity & Evolution	Salmon River FT	Apr	Salmon River, Colchester	244	35
8	6	Matter	Reactivity of Alkali Metals	Feb	TMS Gr 8 Science class	119	4

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.

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 Japan. We sent 60 drawings about American culture to a Japanese school, and they sent us their artwork demonstrating Japanese culture. Tolland Middle School's participation in this activity was featured on News Channel 30. For the Africa unit, all students made their own Kente cloth designs and participated in drum circles and African dances presented by Arts Are Essential, Inc.

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. With the Teaching American History grant completed last year, the teachers sought opportunities to continue their relationships with colleagues from other districts outside of the grant. Many resources have been shared. This year's eighth grade class also added two field trips. First, the students went to see the biopic, *Lincoln* and used the viewing to enhance their understanding of the events surrounding the Civil War and Lincoln's role. Then the classes participated in a hands-on experience at the Lowell Mills museum. This program coincided with the reading of the novel, *Liddie*, in the language arts classes that takes place in Lowell during the time of the thriving mill.

Two special activities of note were the 2013 Geography Bee and Tolland Middle School's participation in the Middle School Model UN Conference at Kingswood-Oxford School (KOMUN). Charles Perosino was the school champion in the Geography Bee for 2013 and placed 7th in the state bee at CCSU. Several students also participated in the first annual KOMUN conference. Many of the students were sixth graders, which is very promising for the future of the program. Charles Perosino and Griffin Powell won awards for their performances at the conference.

Unified Arts

The Unified Arts department has continued its tradition of whole school participation & support. This year the Unified Arts department revised curricula and implemented writing activities based on the Common Core State Standards. Each department has included at least one writing activity per quarter. In addition to curriculum revisions, the Unified Art department continues to be a focal group for school activities, whether sponsoring their own or supporting those of individual teachers and grade levels. This year's whole school accomplishments include a very successful Pumpkin Festival which included pumpkin displays, performances from the band & chorus as well as a new, popular "carnival" element. Students and their families clearly enjoyed the evening. The Variety Show, although primarily supported by the music department, also had involvement of many of the UA teachers. We worked collaboratively to make sure there was a pre-show video showcasing Unified Arts activities, produced show tickets, created scenery for the photos and provided support during rehearsals and on the evening of the event. The team was also involved in two grade 7 thematic social studies events, Holiday and Africa day.

TMS Library Media

Our school library media center supports students and teachers offering them both print and digital resources. We continue to work collaboratively with content area teachers to integrate research and support literacy initiatives. We also offer technical support to students and teachers needing assistance with school computers. Student circulation increased by 20% this year from last year! We also doubled the number of students participating in the Nutmeg reading program.

An exciting addition to our resources is the iPad cart funded through the Tolland Education Foundation. Students became proficient at using these devices to research topics in science, math and reading. They also utilized a number of apps to reinforce curriculum related math & science topics. Through the use of AppleTV, students were able to share their research findings, documenting the evidence they used to make decisions, wirelessly. This increased their motivation to participate and make sure that they had good evidence to share with their peers.

Quarterly classes with 6th grade students emphasizes "Information Literacy" teaching student show to effectively research a variety of topics given the overwhelming amount of information available. Identifying a focus for research and evaluating sources is emphasized to help students choose items that are accurate & reliable. The use of EasyBib to document their sources and create bibliographies in MLA format is also integrated with their mini-research project.

New for the 2012-2013 year was the grade 7 elective class, Web 2.0. This course focused on Web 2.0 tools that are available for creating multimedia and learning how to manage a wiki page. Each student learned how to incorporate their projects onto their personal page by either uploading the files or embedding the necessary scripting code in content specific widgets. Students were introduced to Wordle, Tagxedo, Prezi, Voki, and Animoto. They also created podcasts by recording with personal devices and incorporating sound effects and music with the digital editing program Audacity. Final projects were exported as Mp3's and uploaded to their individual pages. Students were able to integrate these programs with assignments in Language Arts and science. The iPads were also used to create short movies with iMovie. The course offered students the opportunity to be creative while developing technical expertise with Internet tools.

Music Department

The music department continued with its history of excellence at TMS. Their accomplishments include:

- Twelve TMS chorus students and six instrumentalists were accepted into the Eastern Region Music Festival.
- Music staff hosted two student teachers from the Hartt School.
- Band and Chorus entertained at the Pumpkin Festival
- Band and Chorus earned Gold awards at the Performing Arts Consultants Adjudication Festival scoring between 90 and 100 points out of a possible 100.
- Band and Chorus performed at the 8th Grade Promotional Ceremony.

- Guitar, Electronic Piano and Jam Session students performed in a talent show called "Tolland's Got Talent."
- Music staff produced the TMS Variety show that included talented students from all three grades.
- Eighth grade band and chorus students participated in a step-up concert at Tolland High School.
- Sixth Grade Chorus travelled to TIS to perform a concert for fifth graders.
- Collaboration 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.
- 7th Grade World Percussion students performed with the 7th Grade Chorus at their Winter and Spring concerts

Computer Department

- Computer Ed ventured into the realm of Game Design and Internet Safety!
- Over 20 Game Design students entered their games into competition at stem fuse.com
- A section of Intro Game Design was taught collaboratively with Art...students drew their own game art.
- Advanced Game Design will be introduced next year.
- Internet safety students learned about chat room danger through the use of e Missing game. Cyberbullying was taught in all Grade 6 classes.
- Multimedia students created a Welcome to TMS from their perspective that Guidance used with incoming 5th graders. They also created PSA skits about Cyberbullying. Prezi was introduced in this class as an alternative to PowerPoint.

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. Integrated Common Core State Standards and writing assignment per quarter.
- Participated in Pumpkin Festival, Hoops Challenge, Variety Show and other various after school activities.
- Worked with other UA team members to continue our CCSS work and to continue the growth of our SOAR program here at TMS.

Art

- ART CLUB - Every Monday after school with 25 students.
- Integrating Common Core State Standards and Curriculum revision
- Exploratory Art with History
- OPEN STUDIO HOURS: The art room is open until 4:15 p.m., daily for all students to work on art related projects.
- Displays of art work at the central office

- Creativity study with some graduate students from UCONN with grades 1,4 and 8.
- Art displays around the school

Family & Consumer Sciences

There was curriculum revision and an integration of the Common Core State Standards with an emphasis on writing. The sewing, cooking and grade 6 programs continued as in previous years.

Student Assessment

Reading/Language Arts

The Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) was administered to all TMS students (unless exempt via IEP). This instrument yields a Lexile level for each student. A Lexile is a number that represents the level of text a student is able to read with 75% comprehension. The same Lexile scale is used to determine readability of text. The CCSS refers to Lexile levels in their discussion of complex texts.

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. 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 third language arts benchmark was added to the seventh grade schedule. All four language arts teachers played a role in its design. Data has yet to be analyzed.

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. 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.

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	Grade 7	Average	Grade 8	Average
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	Score		Score		Score
Prehistory/ Mesopotamia	87% (88% in 2011- 12)	Introduction to Geography	88% (88% in 2012-12)	Developing the Nation	84% (83% in 2011-12)
Ancient Egypt	85% (85% in 2011- 12)	The Middle East (Given this year in two parts)	87% (87% overall in 2011-12)	Westward Expansion	83% (82% in 2011-12)
Ancient Greece	86% (87% in 2011- 12)	Asia	92% (91% in 2011-12)	The Civil War	85% (84% in 2011-12)
Ancient Rome	***	Africa	***	Industry and Immigrations	87%
				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.

Plans continue to incorporate SBAC style assessments into the regular schedule of social studies assessments.

Science

Teachers are continuing to administer benchmark tests at appropriate times throughout the school year. Although benchmarks are being administered, teachers report that once the benchmark is given, there is still little use of the data to guide instruction.

We continue to use our web-based benchmarking system, Mastery Manager, to input data and teachers are comfortable using the system. We will not make any further adjustments to our present benchmarking system until the new framework is in place in the district. The teachers will be working to integrate CCSS for Science and Technical Subjects during the 2013-14 school year.

Mathematics

Teachers continued to work on strengthening our assessment process. For each course, there is a common assessment given to all students for EACH unit. Additionally, in the 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 continued 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, a diagnostic assessment was given to all seventh grade students. The seventh grade students took an Algebraic Diagnostic assessment for use in eighth grade placement.

Our main focus this year was to develop 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.

Staffing

Language Arts

- Grade 6 – Twelve language arts teachers, three of whom also teach reading to all students on their team. Each language arts teacher teaches one additional content subject.
- Grade 7 – Four language arts teachers, two teachers per team each sharing one class of students
- Grade 8 – Four language arts teachers, two teachers per team each sharing one class of students
- Two half-time reading specialists provide reading support to qualifying students in grades 6-8.

Mathematics

We had one math support teacher that serviced 37 students from grades 6, 7, and 8 who were in need of Tier II and Tier III intervention.

Science

Staffing remained the same during the 2012-13 school year. There are three sixth grade science teachers, and two in both seventh and eighth grade. That will change next year due to a new team structure in 6th grade. Two teachers will be responsible for teaching all students in science. The teachers will teach only science.

All teachers report the classroom space to conduct inquiry activities is inadequate; it is time to develop a plan to modernize the science facilities at TMS. The present structure of the classrooms does not meet the needs of the 21st century learner and they are lacking adequate storage space for the many supplies & materials necessary to conduct a solid science program.

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

Reading

Sixty-six students at TMS received reading support. Eligibility is based on the student's performance on the CMT, the language arts benchmarks, and the Scholastic Reading Inventory. A student's classroom performance is also considered.

The Reading Specialists administer the Fountas and Pinnell *Benchmark Assessment System* throughout the year to determine the reading levels of students served in the program.

Zoom In, a program published by Curriculum Associates, is used six times a year as a progress monitoring tool. The Reading Specialists modified the assessments to include higher level questions, and have plans to move toward a more Common Core approach.

The instructional focus is on making inferences and drawing conclusions, determining main ideas and details, summarizing, and making connections.

The Reading Specialists are trained ELL coordinators for TMS, reporting to the Director of Curriculum. This includes communicating with parents of our ELL students and administering the LAS-Links testing each spring.

The Reading Specialists were part of every ELA CCSS team for curriculum development in grades 6-8.

The Reading Specialists met on a regular basis with the Language Arts Coordinator, Director of Curriculum, and other administrators. They, along with other district Reading Specialists and Reading Consultants met monthly to discuss the district-wide reading program.

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 At Risk of Failure Reporting have yielded strong benefits this year as parents were constantly kept informed, and students were given support. As a result, there was only 1 retention 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
- The Middle School Model UN Program at Kingwood-Oxford School (KOMUN)
- Art Link Program
- African Presentation
- Lowell Mills Trip
- *Lincoln* movie Trip

Social studies themed activities for students were used with students who do not attend the Washington D.C. trip. Students studied inventions of Connecticut and presented their findings in a multimedia environment.

Science

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

Grade 6: Highlights

- 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. In addition to sixth grade, this year the lab was used by seventh and eighth grade classes to conduct science 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.

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 one hundred salmon fry that the students raised from eggs in their classroom. One of the chillers used for raising the salmon was non-functional so we were only able to incubate 100 salmon eggs this year. We hope to repair or replace the chiller during the 2013-14 school year.
- 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, sponsored a science trip to Florida for 14 eighth grade students. This trip replaced the annual trip to Bermuda which became difficult to carry out due to changes at the BIOS station and the complications of international travel. Both students and teachers brought back glowing reports of the Florida trip. The chaperoning teachers intend to repeat the trip with a new group of students during the 2013-14 school year.

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.

Parents and Community

Language Arts

- The reading specialists attended and participated in district reading meetings with reading personnel from BGP and TIS.
- 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. This summer all students are asked to read Wonder. This endeavor promotes TMS as a community of readers. This text was also selected for its valuable connections to the PBIS program and SOAR values.
- Tolland Public Library offers a summer reading program.
- Students are made aware of the **Governor's Summer Reading Challenge**.

Mathematics

For those students in math support, parents receive quarterly update letters. The letters explain their child's progress towards their goals by showing pre and post assessment data.

Additionally, letters continue to be sent home to inform parents of their child's mathematics course recommendation for the next year.

Tolland Middle School Goals for 2013-2014

Reading/Language Arts

Grade 6

- Create assessments and Part 3 of the template for created units.
- Take and discuss the Grade 6 SBAC Practice Test.
- Continue writing three more units.
- Follow CCSS/Next Gen/SS 2-13-14 Action Plan presented to administrators in May 2013.

Grade 7

- Analyze data for piloted spring assessment.
- Create assessments and Part 3 of the template for created units.
- Take and discuss the Grade 7 SBAC Practice Test.
- Continue writing four more units.
- Follow CCSS/Next Gen/SS 2-13-14 Action Plan presented to administrators in May 2013.
- Evaluate current ELA materials for relevance to new curriculum.

Grade 8

- Create assessments and Part 3 of the template for created units.
- Take and discuss the Grade 8 SBAC Practice Test.
- Continue writing four more units.

- Follow CCSS/Next Gen/SS 2-13-14 Action Plan presented to administrators in May 2013.
- Evaluate current ELA materials for relevance to new curriculum.

Social Studies

- Develop a series of assessments that measure student growth regarding CCSS standards and the SBAC assessment to pair with the common unit content assessments already given.
- 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.
- Establish a “Current Events” after school club that will lead to participation in the second annual KOMUN conference.

Science

During the 2013-14 school year, science teachers will be reviewing the Next Generation Science Framework in depth. Before any curricular changes occur, the entire framework will be evaluated by committees of science teachers to determine how Tolland will implement the newly released science performance standards. We anticipate during the 2014-15 school year, unit development will take place. We are approaching the Standards with caution until it is approved by the State of Connecticut Board of Education. Work during the 13-14 school year will result in a plan for implementation of the Framework.

- Specifics of the NexGen plan
 1. Analyze Next Generation Science Frameworks- the performance standards that were released in April, 2013 are based on this framework. The framework is filled with specific details about the required content and skills needed to have the ability to meet the performance standards as published.
 2. Monitor the state of adoption of the Framework and Standards by the CT State Board of Ed. Begin to plan for implementation of the standards across our district, specifically at TMS outline a course of study for students to have access to the required standards. The new framework includes similarity to what we do now but depending on the specific state requirements we may have to re-think science grade-level offerings/unit sequences at TMS.
 3. Map out a (multi-year?) plan (including PD needs, content changes, unit development schedule, and budgetary implications) of implementation based on what develops in 2013-14 at SDE
 4. Use as much time as possible with the grades 6-8 science teachers during PD days. half-days and full-day release days with substitute coverage.

- 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, and CCSS reading and writing standards can be integrated into science instruction.
- 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. Start to collect middle school textbook samples that reflect the content and skills reflected in the NextGen Science Framework.
- 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.
- Science coordinator will present model lessons/co-teach with science teachers using science process/inquiry.

Mathematics

- Implement the new CCSS curriculum in grades 6, 7, and 8 (excluding Honors Algebra)
- Finish writing the CCSS units in grades 7 and 8 in order to implement later in the year.
- Become more familiar with the released SBAC items and develop more performance tasks to use in each course.
- Write the grade 8 Honors Algebra course aligned to the CCSS.

Closing

Tolland Middle School ends this year with a new grading structure, new teacher evaluation plan, new enhancements to our PBIS programs, further development of our Instructional Rounds practices, an expansion of our Rtl offerings for next year (with a new “Academy” planned this year), and newly developed Common Core State Standards based units and assessments. We have made monumental progress this year thanks to our coordinators, teachers, and teams. Our students are demonstrating clear growth, and strong performance. We are excited all that was accomplished this year, and look forward to the 2013-2014 year.