

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

CLARK-WILKINS SCHOOL DISTRICT

October 21, 2019

Anna Parrill Principal

Clark-Wilkins Updates:

October has been very busy. It's hard to believe we have already been in school for over nine weeks. NWEA testing is done and the first reporting period is right around the corner. This is an exciting time as we move towards a standards-based reporting tool. Change is exciting, but it can also be very stressful and that is why the focus of our Collaborative Team Time this month will be on Empower, grading and reporting comments. Each building has Empower lead teachers serving as the conduit and support for the new learning. While teachers had some opportunity to talk about the new reporting tool at Open House, the parent conferences along with weekly teacher communications have been happening regularly since school started.

Clark-Wilkins has been invested in the PTA Booster Fun Run this month. The actual Fun Run is October 24th in the front of Wilkins. Each grade level will have an hour to run 30 plus laps per student. Along with this being a fitness fundraiser, it is also a character-education program that tackles topics like honesty, gratitude, perseverance and more during the program's daily short videos around a Wild West Theme. If we reach our goal of \$20,000, the PTA will be able to support a rock-climbing wall at Wilkins and an Outdoor Classroom at Clark. I am appreciative of the dedication of our PTA and the willingness of the staff to be 'all in' to support this endeavor. If we are successful, I will be slimed on October 25th in the front of Wilkins with the support of the Amherst Fire Department and the bucket truck in order for the slime to have a BIGGER splashing effect.

Goals and Objectives for 2019-2020

I. To create a positive, healthy and risk-taking school culture:

As we have crowned our mascot Hootie with the support and votes of the entire student and staff contingency, we are on the path with our OWL expectations. The now minted "Culture Club" is rolling out expected OWL behaviors in all areas of the students' day: bus, recess, classroom, cafeteria, hallway, bathroom and assemblies. We have already successfully planned, practiced, watched videos and implemented expected assembly behaviors. On Wednesday, October 16th, we had our first successful assembly with over 600 K-4 students entering, participating and leaving the multi-purpose room all having met expected behaviors. I had several members of the PTA and multiple staff members come to me to express how impressed they were with the students' respectful behavior. This will be our continued plan for implementation in the other areas. We will continue to model the desired behaviors, practice, offer visual supports, and praise as we tackle OWL behaviors.

Our focus in November will be behavior expectations in the cafeteria and on the bus. We have continued to meet with the bus company to have a shared understanding of the collaboration and communication channels between the school and bus company. We are collaborating on a new referral form that is more in line with the new school form. To kick off National Bus Safety week (October 21st – 25th, 2019), the guidance and administrative team took the opportunity to get on each bus to review our expected OWL behaviors for bus safety. Each bus was provided a visual of the OWL expectations to post and review regularly. Together, students, parents, teachers, school bus operators, and school administrators can join forces to reinforce the importance of school bus safety. The school team and bus company will continue to collaborate to reduce the number of bus referrals.

The staff has fine-tuned the dismissal process and students are getting on all buses and home 15 to 20 minutes earlier than the start of the year. The students are also getting on the buses with a calmer demeanor, which we are also hoping will diminish the bus write-ups. The bus drivers will also be given Owl stickers and Owl shout-out forms in order to acknowledge those students that are exemplifying OWL behaviors.

The cafeteria continues to be an area of focus. During some lunches, we have up to 145 students in half of the multi-purpose room with Physical Education happening on the other side. These are obviously the most challenging lunches with high noise levels. In general, we want to make sure everyone has plenty of time to eat and in a pleasant atmosphere. The Culture Club is exploring ideas of how to address this objective. We are going to be creating a video with the staff demonstrating appropriate lunchroom behaviors. We are exploring the idea of having a quiet portion of the lunch with quiet music and background videos of fish or nature so that there is time for all students to have a mindful, less loud and chaotic lunch, which can cause many kids and staff anxiety and stress.

The Culture Club will be moving forward with our positive behavioral expectation acknowledgements this month. Now that our mascot is named, we are getting Hootie stickers. All staff, including bus drivers, will have these stickers readily available to acknowledge those students that are exemplifying OWL behaviors. They are kind, respectful, showing perseverance and a Growth Mindset, or did something that Hootie would be proud of to make our school a more positive and kinder place. When an adult sees a student with a sticker, it is our job to engage the student in explaining how they earned the sticker to reinforce those behaviors. We will also have Owl Shout out forms that will be filled out and turned into the office. We will choose several to read over the morning announcements. These shout outs again exemplify students and staff being good citizens at Clark-Wilkins. The committee is still working on what our monthly recognition will look like. We are hoping to have the stickers and shout outs ready to go November 4th. We will share information with parents so that they can reinforce these efforts at home.

The Principal's Council is in full swing. Next, we are adding the 3rd and 4th grade student council in November which will be facilitated by two staff members. In addition, I have two staff members that will be leading the Recess Rangers. These will be selected 4th graders who will be trained in an after-school format and then be able to work with the younger students at recess, to help encourage play and sportsmanship. Next up will be Bus Buddies that can help some of the younger students struggling with expected behaviors on the bus. In the area of enrichment and getting students involved, we would then look to start a Recycling Club, Coding Club, Art Club, Theater Club, and Sports Club to name a few. Stay tuned as we continue to grow our student leadership programs.

II. To build and leverage positive risk-taking within a collaborative school community that prioritizes and embraces student-centered decision-making.

In the past month numerous activities have been underway in support of this ongoing initiative.

During staff meetings on September 25 at Wilkins, and October 9th at Clark, our revised behavior form was reviewed. Staff participation in simulations and discussion of typical behavioral occurrences enhanced their understanding and use of the form. The data obtained via these forms is entered into a data collection system. Ongoing review and analysis of the data reveals patterns, and aids in the development and implementation of strategies to promote a positive school culture.

Our newly formed Teacher Leadership and Culture Clubs have representation from every grade level across both buildings. A key focus of these groups is to unify and have common language between the two buildings around expected student behaviors. These energetic groups have been busy brainstorming and finalizing our 'OWL' expected behaviors: O – Our bodies are safe, W – We are responsible, and L – Listen and respect others. Committee members are in the process of developing 3 or 4 explicit expectations for all areas of a student's day – bus, recess, cafeteria, hallway, playground, and bathroom. Along with this, the Culture Club is setting up positive behavior systems to include daily Owl shout outs, stickers to acknowledge positive owl behaviors, etc. The committee will continue to explore additional ways to acknowledge students monthly. When we are all said and done, we will share, post and have an assembly to help parents review these expectations at home.

The Teacher Leadership group will be meeting once a month to tackle building level concerns and problem-solve areas of need and interest. During our first meeting, we discussed Open House. With 91% of parents attending, it is quite a success however, the staff is still looking for a different way, or time to talk with the parents about curriculum, reporting, and what will happen in the upcoming year. The team is still pondering how to address this in the beginning of the year, while not losing what we are already doing. Secondly, some of the areas that we will be tackling this year are WIN time, scheduling, student placement, and supports/interventions. This group addressed the assembly behavior and expectations. This is also the group that I go to if I have a question that I need staff representation to answer in a timely fashion. Their role is to report back with their teams. This team can also bring problems to the table that need attention.

The Principal's Council is up and running with twelve, newly appointed 4th grade students. Their excitement and energy are fantastic! They worked diligently to prepare for a school-wide vote to name our school mascot. Through their leadership, ballots were distributed to all classrooms, collected, counted, and tallied. All students and staff voted on Friday, October 11th. We are pleased to announce the winner..... Hootie!

Revisions to our busing procedures have focused on streamlining our dismissal process. Through planning and concerted efforts of students and staff we have refined systems in place to get our students to the bus more efficiently and in a ready-to-ride mindset. In collaboration with the bus company, we will continue to work on reinforcing expected behaviors on the bus, behavior form documentation procedures, professional development for the drivers, and other issues as they arise.

The Incident Command System (ICS) team came together to share processes, procedures and expectations for the buildings. This is yet another example of unifying our two buildings in a positive and effective way.

III. To create structures and supports to build an effective Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)

The RTI team has continued to meet on a weekly basis to refine and practice the use of newly established paperwork and protocols to best work collaboratively to improve the referral and planning process for tiered interventions for students. We have recruited several classroom teachers to sit on this team regularly in order to ensure all disciplines have a voice. This team will present to all staff on MTSS and conduct a fishbowl simulation of an RTI referral meeting utilizing the new paperwork and protocols on November 6th. We look to continue to leverage district wide teams and resources in our efforts to strengthen the MTSS process. Natasha Kolehmainen, District Curriculum Administrator, will be organizing regular meetings with district-wide building leadership representatives to this end. As we continue to look at multi-tiered systems of support, we will delve deeper into tier 1 universal instruction in the classroom and strengthening our tier 2 and 3 supports and services. On the October 8th, professional development late start, Assistant Principal for Student Services, Kristin Morgenstern, worked with special educators and related service providers to begin exploring their roles as interventionists at all levels of MTSS. The team discussed providing consultation, education, informal observation, and push-in support in classrooms, as possible tier 1 supports for classroom teachers.

Social emotional learning at tier 1 will be a primary focus as we continue to move forward. At this point, all classroom teachers have been trained in Responsive Classroom. In addition, teachers in grades 1 through 4 have been provided with the Second Step social emotional learning curriculum for implementation throughout the year. Each grade level kit includes developmentally appropriate lessons under the headings of skills for learning, empathy, emotion management and problem solving. At Clark, the school counselor delivers this instruction in all pre-K and kindergarten classrooms. Teachers reinforce the learning in their daily classroom structures with the support of the counselor. At Wilkins, many teachers are implementing the Second Step curriculum during their morning meetings. Additionally, the school counselor has been working to deliver the supplemental Second Step Bullying Prevention unit to all classrooms in grades 1 through 4. This effort should be completed across all classrooms at Wilkins by January 2020.

In the past, classroom paraprofessionals expressed a strong interest in obtaining training and more information regarding Responsive Classroom practices. Interested staff signed up and participated in a district sponsored full day Responsive Classroom training on November 1st. On November 4th, we were very fortunate to have Nicole Donner, Professional Development Designer from the Center for Responsive Classrooms, visiting Clark-Wilkins to conduct observations and provide feedback/coaching to staff as they implement Responsive Classroom practices. We will continue to explore ways to provide additional social emotional learning opportunities to our students.

Facilities, Finance, and Operations

Grade	October	August	September	Average Class Size
PK3	18	16	16	9
PK4	22	21	21	11
K	97	97	97	19
1st	142	144	144	20
2nd	128	130	130	21
3rd	141	142	142	20
4th	139	138	138	23
Total	687	688	688	

Upcoming Events

- Oct. 22 Fun Run CRAZY HAIR DAY
Wilkins Fire Safety Presentation Day
- Oct. 23 Fun Run WILD WEST DAY
Alger/Kidder Parent Conferences
Bevilacqua Picnic lunch/walk to town library
Staff Meeting - Clark
- Oct. 24 – Nov. 1 Book Fair
- Oct. 24 Fun Run – WEAR FUN RUN T-SHIRTS
Parent Conferences 3:30 – 7:30
- Oct. 25 Fun Run PAJAMA DAY
Vaupel/Wright/Chazanoff/Murrell Conferences
- Oct. 28 Vaupel/Wright/Chazanoff/Murrell State House/NH Historical Society
- Oct. 29 Alger/Kidder State House/NH Historical Society
- Oct. 30 Grade 2 Birds of Prey
- Oct. 31 Clark Halloween Parade
Clark-Wilkins Halloween Parties