

**Regional School District 14
Towns of Bethlehem and Woodbury**



*News from Our Schools
March 8, 2010*

Topic: How Can We Help All Students Achieve at High Levels?

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In classrooms throughout Region 14 students display a wide range of learning abilities. Most of our classrooms are heterogeneously grouped and include students who are capable of mastering the curriculum with relative ease, and others who require additional time and practice to learn new concepts. One of the greatest challenges facing teachers on a daily basis is addressing the range of abilities in any classroom.

While there are important individual differences among students, each is capable of continued learning and progress. All educators - classroom teachers, administrators, guidance counselors and specialists - share responsibility and accountability for student achievement. Fortunately, there are classroom practices that we know impact student learning. My purpose in writing today is to share with you some of the practices intended to help all students achieve at high levels.

At the district level, we must be certain to provide high quality curriculum and instruction. For the past four years this has been one of our primary goals in Region 14. We introduced a new Language Arts Curriculum in grades K-8 in September 2007. After using the curriculum for two years, we conducted a curriculum audit last spring, asking teachers to complete a survey designed to provide information on how useful and effective they had found the curriculum. The results were compiled by Region 14's Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator, who is currently using the survey results to modify the curriculum at every grade level to better meet the needs of teachers and students.

Since September, high school English teachers and the school's administration have revised and updated curriculum in grades 9-12. At every level, K-12, we are identifying curriculum benchmarks or outcomes all students are expected to achieve by the end of that school year. These benchmarks are referenced regularly by all educators. Similar work is taking place in all subjects.

With a strong curriculum, teachers are working toward common goals (benchmarks) and all students receive instruction in the same core competencies. The final piece of the puzzle involves designing a comprehensive assessment plan with common assessments and regular progress checks so teachers can determine if students are, indeed, learning. Using the assessment results to guide instruction, teachers can closely monitor that all students are achieving at high levels.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Cronin, Ph.D.

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Superintendent of Schools