2022 Annual Report of the Principal

Mohawk Trail Regional School

Feedback and Communication

Starting in January of 2022 I established routes for feedback and communication from all MTRS stakeholders. These included bi-monthly drop-in hours, a student advisory group, as well as quarterly *How are we doing*? Surveys to students, families and staff. These ongoing structures continue to provide opportunities for community members to give immediate feedback on what goes on at MTRS. In addition to the Local Educational Committee and the Outdoor Advisory Committee, these mechanisms also provide input into both the school and district improvement plans.

Barr funding and Innovation

In October of 2022 MTRS received $160,000 from the BARR foundation. This represented the final payment for the grant awarded to support the continued redesign of Mohawk Trail Regional School. This payment has allowed us to continue to implement new initiatives and curricular programming to redesign the school experience for all students. Over the course of the past two years, students, staff, and community members have engaged in professional development and working groups in order to implement the new Trailblazer Model; Most recently seven teachers attended a site visit at Casco Bay School district to help inform and refine our model of teaching and learning:

*Mohawk Trail Regional School is tailoring the most innovative work in the field of education to fit our rural district as we design the Trailblazer Model. We are building on the best of what we have while challenging the status quo to make education relevant and meaningful for our students. They will acquire 21st century skills while pursuing their individual passions, as they blaze a trail to graduation. Students will lead their own learning, break down the boundaries of traditional classes, and learn by doing. Experiences at MTRS will move our students beyond textbook knowledge. They will use research to solve real problems, intern at local businesses, design independent projects, and take courses at local colleges. In return, our community will flourish from the increased partnership with our school. MTRS graduates will be curious, adaptable, independent, and motivated citizens who seek to do good work in the world.*

The Trailblazer Model has six key focus areas: high quality instruction, advisory and social emotions learning, communications and community outreach, distributed leadership, portfolios and equity. This model engages all stakeholders in a transformational school experience including:

* Internships and work study opportunities, on campus and off
* Interdisciplinary courses such as STEM, Bioethics, Artglish, and American Democracy
* Social Emotional Learning supports including: Advisory model for all grades 7-12, site based therapeutic services, and college and career planning
* Portfolio of student work
* Senior Capstone project culminating with a site based internship
* Community outreach including a Trailblazer Community Group comprised of staff, parents, students and community members that meets several times a year

We have continued to partner with national education organizations: Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC) and EL Education. NGLC and EL Education have been working with MTRS teachers and administrators to transform classrooms to be more student-centered and to develop rigorous and diverse ways in which students can demonstrate their learning. In addition, EL Education continues to assist teachers in the development of interdisciplinary, hands-on activities that will engage students in rigorous community-based projects. NGLC and EL have continued to support our Instructional Leadership Team and Portfolio Working Group to develop a comprehensive portfolio model and to prepare students to drive student-led conferences. Teachers will continue to guide students through the compilation of an individualized portfolio that demonstrates who they are as a learner and goals they set for themselves. NGLC and EL will also work with teachers to develop assessments that connect to 21st century skills and the real world.

In addition to EL Education and NGLC, MTRS has partnered with Firefly Worldwide Inc and their founder and CEO Cheyenne E. Batista. Ms. Batista continues to work with the MTRS Equity Council in their implementation of an anti-racism strategic plan with a focus on curriculum, communication, and policy.

Culture building

We continue to make significant community building strides as we “come back” after COVID-19. This intention is personified through the three slogans in the entry lobby at MTRS:

* I am part of this community
* I can contribute in a positive way
* I will be accountable for my words and actions

We continue to focus on relationship strengthening and community building through our advisory program in 7-12 as well as regular student-led whole school assemblies on Wednesday mornings.

Distributed leadership and District-Wide structures

A number of staffing changes have been made in service of continuing to promote and support the Trailblazer model of distributed leadership and increased Social and Emotional Learning student need: The school admin team was reconfigured to provide greater student culture support through the role of Dean of Culture. In addition, the role of Athletic Director was enhanced to be District Athletic Director in order to focus on the growth and promotion of sports in the district as well as a specific intention to have students continue to remain at MTRS in grades 6 and 9, the point at which they might change schools and districts.

Distributed leadership continues to be evident through the work of the teacher based Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and their work in designing and delivering staff PD on Standards Based Teaching and Learning development as well as piloting Student-led Conferences.

Academic structural changes have also come about as a result of a continued focus on student need, distributed leadership and helping support students returning to school from COVID-19. In the current school year, these include the creation of the role of a District Literacy coordinator to help support the district focus on literacy and Middle school staff as they piloted El and Wit and Wisdom ELA curriculum.

College and Career Supports

MTRS continues to focus on supporting students taking their learning beyond the classrooms. This is evident through the links that the Work based learning and Internship coordinator makes with Capstone students in grade 12 and also through the 7-12 project week in the late Spring semester.

In addition to our continued dual enrollment relationship with Greenfield Community College (GCC), we are pleased to be a partner in their Incubator grant, intended to increase student attendance in higher education in Franklin County. 2022/23 will see plans to work with GCC to provide more early college opportunities for MTRS students in grades 7-12.

Finally, we are incredibly grateful for the help and support of the Mary Lyon Foundation who secured a $28,000 donation specifically to build a College and Career speakers center in the library. This was officially opened at the Open House in September

Tiered Student Supports

In addition to our Mohawk Trail Separate Classroom and Vocational programs, this year we are piloting a new program as part of our tiered intervention support for some of our learners. Bridge for Resilient Youth in Translation (BRYT) program provides clinical support and academic coordination services for students who are reintegrating back into full time education after missing extensive learning due to health, medical or life transition challenges.

Field Trips

While transport costs are still challenging, we continue to look at innovative ways to provide students with learning experience outside of the classroom. To date this year, teachers have led field trips to the following locations:

Smith College, GCC, UMASS Amherst, Springfield College, Amherst Art Museum, Boston Aquarium.

Technology

This year has seen the district transition to SUZOR for software, hardware and school data management. Additionally, MTRS has invested $130,000 in 34 Cleartouch devices for teaching and learning in all specialist classrooms.

Community Involvement

We continue to be thankful for parents and care providers for their active involvement in MTRS life through the Local Education Committee (LEC) and also the newly formed Outdoor Advisory Committee (OAC). The former is a great way to have family input and feedback on school improvement planning and the latter has been instrumental in providing community voices on how we continue to seek to use teaching and learning spaces and environment as effectively as possible. The OAC has been vital to helping develop our outdoor classroom and in helping the district with its solar panel project at MTRS.

Other community wide opportunities such as Open House, the Celebration of Learning and the Mohawk Trail Athletic Association (MTAA) organized Spring Fling continue to imbibe MTRS with positive community spirit.

Music and Theatre

We are really pleased with the resurgence of music and drama at MTRS in the past year. As well as a spring musical in 2022, *Bits of Broadway*, and a district Spring concert, Fall of 2022 saw two performances of *Axe of Murder,* our Winter play.

Athletics

The Mohawk Trail Athletic Department has gone through a restructuring process in FY23 by hiring Ashfield’s Greg Lilly to assume the role of District Athletic Director. In contrast to previous Athletic Directors, Mr. Lilly is now responsible for overseeing Mohawk Trail’s athletic programs district wide, K-12. This change was made to ensure the health of our high school programs by investing time and resources into the sustainability of our youth and feeder programs.

This past fall, our West County Youth Soccer program had 187 participants from grades K-6 from our elementary schools. These are unprecedented numbers for a youth sports program in our district. Much of the credit for such high participation numbers goes to Ashfield’s Tina Miller and Buckland’s Jake Thurber, along with dozens of other coaches and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to give our students every opportunity to succeed on the pitch.

This winter also saw never before seen participation numbers in our Hilltown Basketball League! The district was able to field a total of 15 teams between our three elementary schools, Hawlemont, and New Hingham Elementary. All told, there were 158 elementary students playing hoops this past season. Also, for the first time in 4 years, Mohawk Trail was able to field a 5th and 6th grade Suburban travel team, coached by Shelburne’s Fred Redeker and Buckland’s Tim Budrewicz. This group had the opportunity to travel all over Western Massachusetts and face an extremely high level of competition.

At the Middle and High School levels, our athletes and teams have been struggling with low enrollment numbers. However, this has not prevented them from succeeding at the absolute highest level! Participation levels for athletics at Mohawk Trail are WELL above state and national averages and should remain that way for the foreseeable future.

This past fall, our Middle School Football team enjoyed an UNDEFEATED season, while also getting the opportunity to play night games under the lights on Pollard Field for the first time in history! In addition to this, our Volleyball, Girls Cross Country, and Boys Cross Country teams all qualified for the MIAA state tournament. All told, 7 of our 8 fall teams came away with winning records!

This winter is also shaping up to be one for the record books! Both our Boys and Girls Alpine Ski teams are looking to continue a 40-year tradition of dominance on the slopes. The Boys are well on their way to another league championship, while our Ladies are poised to repeat as STATE CHAMPIONS!

Another bright spot for the Mohawk Trail Athletic Department is the Girls Middle School basketball team! They suffered only two losses on the season while playing a schedule against high school competition! The future is very bright for our ladies.

With the end of the pandemic, The Mohawk Trail Athletic Association has also seen a resurgence, and is always looking for volunteers to help coordinate its many fundraising efforts. The MTAA is the district’s primary athletic booster, and aids our student-athletes by purchasing uniforms, athletic equipment, and anything else that our teams need to help them succeed! The future of Mohawk Trail Athletics is very bright, and our entire athletic family is working tirelessly to ensure it stays that way!

Student numbers

At the mid-point of the 2022-2023 school year, student enrollment in grades 7-12 is 286. Current enrollment numbers for middle school include approximately 73 students in seventh grade and 68 students in eighth grade. Enrollment for ninth grade is 42 students;10th grade with 36 students; 39 members of the Junior class, and 26 MTRS seniors. We have 4 students enrolled in our post-graduate program.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Buckland

Principal