



# Watertown Public Schools

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Principals, Curriculum Coordinators and Central Office Administrators wrote the various sections of this report. This report was submitted to the town in February 2011.

## The Schools

### Watertown High School

Watertown High School completed its 161<sup>st</sup> year of operation in 2009-2010. Punctuating the academic year, 176 students celebrated their graduation on June 4, 2010 at Victory Field. This year, the commencement ceremony doubled as a celebration of the combined 262 years of service of eight retiring Watertown High School staff members. Headmaster P. Michael Noftsker retired after seven years of leadership in that position. Additionally, housemaster Michael McDermott, as well as two curriculum coordinators and four faculty members retired after many years of service to the community. Along with these retirements, Dr. Ann Koufman, Superintendent of Schools, announced the hiring of incoming headmaster Steven Watson, and the continuing restructuring of the leadership of the high school. The outgoing administration leaves the high school after presiding over several years of increased technological integration in school instruction and operations, expanded commitment to partnership with the middle school, and the introduction of several innovative course offerings.

Mr. Watson and Associate Headmaster Annmarie Boudreau begin their tenure at Watertown High School amidst significant change. The school is making efforts to renovate academic programming to respond to both changes in 21<sup>st</sup> century education and an expansion in the range of students we see through special education. As a result, we are growing our courses in applied academics, offering classes such as Engineering by Design, Introduction to Medical Careers, and Journalism and Community Media. We also are expanding special education programming, supplementing our current language-based and other classes and supports with new programming for overage students and a growing Integrated Support Program for students with a variety of social and emotional needs. This expanded programming allows us to serve a broader range of youth, making Watertown High a more fully inclusive community school. In response both to teacher retirements and new special education programming, we hired eleven new teachers, who bring significant experience and enthusiasm to our students. The school also planned for a number of classroom moves and renovations to prepare for new programming and staff and improve the quality of current instructional space.

Academically, Watertown High School has maintained its focus on raising achievement for all students. While offering a robust mix of challenging course work, including significant AP and Virtual High School programs, we have also increased supports for struggling learners, including the addition of a reading teacher, MCAS preparation courses, and smaller course sizes and tutoring for many of our students. Our students have consistently outperformed state averages for both passing and proficiency in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), while continuing in recent years to see modest rises in performance against that benchmark. Our academic coordinators – Jennifer Montgomery for English, Dan Wulf for mathematics, Vera Larkin for science, Kraig Gustafson for social studies, Arlene Shinker for special education, Rob Stergis for English as a second language and world languages, Donna Ruscekas for health and physical education, and Barbara Gortych for assessment and guidance – all serve as either 6-12 or K-12 coordinators, helping the high school better integrate its work with that of the other schools in the district. In particular, we continue to examine students' transition from middle school to high school, both in terms of academic readiness and choices around ninth and tenth grade staffing and programming.

Our coordinators also continue to partner with the superintendent's office and faculty on extensive technological integration into instruction and a wide variety of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning initiatives. English teachers are examining contemporary brain research and appropriate curriculum and assessment design that engage all learners. Our partnership with Watertown Community Access Cable is giving students access to high quality media resources. Science teachers utilize advanced laboratory equipment to enable students to think and work as developing scientists. Increased technology in math classrooms helps students better visually engage with challenging problems. Students begin to think like engineers, physicians, and entrepreneurs in a variety of applied courses. Many of Watertown High's strong traditions in teaching and learning continue as well. After a foundation in U.S. history, students explore a wide range of themes in compelling upper-class social studies electives. They demonstrate skills in research, literary analysis and composition through the completion of their senior thesis projects. They play instruments, sing, paint, and develop websites in a variety of fine and performing arts classes. And they build, cook, design, and engage in a number of other hands-on skills in career and technical education courses.

Our challenge is pulling together this wide range of learning experiences into a cohesive experience for students, one that prepares them for today's higher education and rapidly changing economic and professional climate. We also need to maintain this momentum, expand options, and adjust to moderate growth in student enrollment, and do so in a challenging fiscal environment. Watertown High School has also continued to interact with feedback from our accrediting agency, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, as we prepare for a full review with them in 2014.

Beyond formal academic initiatives, Watertown High School is aware of the significant work in school culture that is necessary to nurture children into young adults and provide them with a safe and engaging culture that fosters investment in school and the high academic achievement. Watertown High School has maintained a strong athletic

program, adding lacrosse to its other nineteen varsity sports programs. Foremost amongst the many achievements of individual athletes and teams was another Division 2 state championship title for the field hockey team. The school also continued to offer a variety of other extra-curricular activities. Highlights included student performance of the musical *Grease* and a regional competition victory for the robotics team.

The high school continues to reach out and involve parents and families through means both traditional and novel. Our back to school nights, parent-teacher conferences, college fairs, school site council and PTSO meetings, and morning coffees give parents the opportunity to meet with school staff and engage in the process of supporting their children and participating in school improvement and oversight. Additionally, expansion in use of the high school's website, under the leadership of webmaster Dan Dressler, provides the community with a more current and broadly accessible form of information and communication. Teachers also continue to learn how to use online grading software, a tool that when in place will provide students and parents will real-time access to student grades throughout each academic term.

Going forward, Watertown High School still has significant work to do in order to continue to support increased achievement for all students and to enhance a more positive and nurturing school climate. Initiatives in the coming year include those involving a school mentoring program, anti-bullying, and improved attendance. Watertown High School has been a center of education and training for its community's youth and a source of pride for the whole community for many years. Even in these times of tremendous change and challenges, the school plans on continuing in its finest traditions of strength and expanding to be an institution of excellence and transformation.

### **Watertown Middle School**

Watertown Middle School remains committed to challenge students with rigorous curriculum and instruction, support all students who are having difficulty in school, provide students with engaging enrichment opportunities, promote a positive school climate that caters to the needs of the early adolescent, and connect with parents and other members of the community.

The administrative team of Principal J. Kimo Carter and Assistant Principal Jason Del Porto is now in its sixth year at Watertown Middle School. Our four grade 6-12 curriculum coordinators, Jennifer Montgomery in English, Dan Wulf in mathematics, Kraig Gustafson in social studies, and Vera Larkin in science, are working hard to align our curriculum with the high school's so that students will have seamless academic transitions each year, particularly from eighth grade to ninth grade. Our new coordinators, Arlene Shainker in Special Education and Barbara Gortych in Guidance and Testing, are also helping with this process and have been terrific additions to our school.

MCAS scores continue to rise in most areas for a sixth straight year. We were not able to completely meet all Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards; however, we continue to make substantial progress toward all AYP goals.

We have also received recognition from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as one of 36 Title I schools in the Commonwealth whose Limited English Proficient students have made excellent progress in the MCAS and MEPA standardized tests. With this distinction, we have received a significant grant for our ESL program and are working to share our best practices with other schools in the area.

However, at Watertown Middle School, mastering the skills measured by the MCAS is not the only aim of our educational philosophy. We also have very strong in-school and after-school enrichment programs that allow students to explore new topics and showcase their talents in a variety of areas. This year we are continuing with expanded choice in enrichment classes for seventh and eighth grade students. Students can take advanced art, band, orchestra, chorus, newspaper, robotics, theatre production, or video production as electives. We are also expanding after-school opportunities with the help of the district's new PEP grant. Watertown Middle School has a brand new fitness center and our interscholastic sports are as strong as ever. We also have numerous after school clubs such as the D-team, community explorers, cross country running, the mural club, and gardening.

We believe that part of our academic success is attributed to the emphasis we have placed on three areas for the past six years. First, we have spent much time, energy, and resources on reading with the goal of making sure all of our students are proficient readers by the time they enter high school. Reading is the gateway subject for everyone, and it is very difficult for students to do well in high school and college without a solid literacy background. We will continue to teach reading to all middle school students until they reach proficient levels.

Second, we have worked on making our academic support programs more accessible for our struggling students. Our academic assistance classes, which continue to be open to any student who is having difficulty in school, provide students with the fundamental skills necessary for academic success. Likewise, our school-wide binder system has significantly helped many students organize their time and materials. We would especially like to recognize our partners at Staples Print and Copy Center for providing standardized boxes of school supplies for all of our students. Our after school library learning lab continues to be an extremely successful option for students who need help on their homework.

Finally, we have expanded our spectrum of services available to special education students. This year, we have successfully augmented a substantially separate program for students on the autism spectrum. Combined with our learning support program, our integrated support program, and our language-based instruction, this program allows Watertown Middle School to offer a full range of special education programs that can accommodate most disabilities.

In addition, staff, students, and parents are working together to provide a much more positive school culture for students. We are emphasizing our mascot, the eagle, along with a simple and concrete "recipe for success": A Watertown Middle School Eagle

**SOARS** (**S**upporting others in **S**uccess, **O**wnership, **A**chievement, **R**espect, and **S**ervice). We are celebrating student success in a variety of ways, including a success token system where students can earn redeemable tokens when a staff member finds them demonstrating one of the SOARS attributes.

This year we are also focusing on bullying and teasing education, particularly for students who are bystanders. Along with assemblies and programs for students and parents, we are developing and implementing a curriculum called “Let’s Get Real” to help students who witness bullying and teasing to be part of the solution by informing an adult. Finally, our peer mediation program is growing in strength and popularity. Led by our guidance department, our peer mediators are trained to help students resolve conflicts with one another.

We continue to receive a huge infusion of technology in the school. This year we have added a brand new computer lab, two small laptop carts of 12 laptop computers each, and a set of iPod Touches. Teachers are working hard to incorporate technology into their instruction, and we will continue to update our hardware and software to meet the technology demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Watertown Middle School is making a concerted effort to communicate with parents and reach out to the community. We are spreading the word about upcoming events in a number of ways: through automatic phone messages, our new “Watertown Splash” student newspaper, a much more extensive web site, and most importantly, constant active communication via phone or email by our faculty to parents regarding their children.

Our commitment to community service remains strong. We held a Coats for Kids drive this fall. Last spring, our Pennies for Patients drive earned over \$25,000.00 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Homerooms have created Thanksgiving baskets for families in need, a group of students is working with Perkins School to create Braille playing cards, and students are serving the community in a variety of ways and recording their hours to meet their community service expectations.

Everyday we are striving to make Watertown Middle School a school that the town can be proud of, and it is a credit to the whole Watertown community – staff, parents, students, and other community members – that we have made so much progress.

## **Cunniff Elementary School**

### **Mission**

The Cunniff School provides a supportive and challenging learning environment to maximize academic achievement, social responsibility and lifelong learning by attending to the intellectual and developmental needs of all individual students.

### **Who we are**

The current enrollment at the Cunniff School is 285 students. This number has ranged from a low of 260 three years ago to a high of 290 during FY 2011. The School serves

Grades Pre-K to 5<sup>th</sup>, with two classes per grade level from Grade 1 to 5, two Pre-K/K classes and one full kindergarten class.

- Male Students: 139 Female Students: 146
- Special education: 47 students enrolled in specialized programs
- English Language Learner students: 30 students (11%) with many different languages spoken in the homes
- Low Income: 76 students receiving free or reduced lunch (26%)
- Class size: Range of 19 to 24 students with an average of 23 students per classroom

### **Administration**

The Cunniff School office is staffed by one full-time principal and one full-time secretary, although the secretarial position is staffed only during the school year. Parent volunteers copy our school newsletter every other week for inclusion in student backpacks, and these news letters are now being posted online. The additions of a Principal's blog and general announcement to our website, as well as multiple, rich teacher website links, are reducing the need for paper copies at Cunniff.

### **Class-based Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

In response to the district focus on anti-bullying and in keeping with district commitment to implement the Caring School Community social curriculum for our elementary students, Cunniff opened the school year with a series of assemblies on ways to identify, to avoid, or to prevent bullying in our school. In this context, students were encouraged to remember the four watchwords selected by the faculty as the theme for the year: Respectful, Responsible, Ready and Safe. This theme was also introduced to parents as part of the Back to School Night presentation, and the repetition of our watchwords has become part of the school's morning routine as a way of reminding all students of these Cunniff values.

District-wide Task Forces in Mathematics, Early Reading (Grades K-3) and Intermediate Reading (Grades 3-5) continue to investigate, recommend, and support the implementation of well-researched programs in our curriculum. The Think Math curriculum is now in its 6<sup>th</sup> year at Cunniff, and the implementation of the programmatic changes recommended last year by the K-3 Reading Task Force is underway in those early grades. The Task Force for Intermediate Reading has begun its work this fall and plans to make recommendations for curricular modifications and improvement by the late spring of 2011. Meanwhile, teachers at all grade levels at the Cunniff are focusing considerable attention on ways to improve student writing. We believe that professional conversations, a closer examination of student work and deliberate sharing across the school of successful strategies for student writing will both improve student writing and enhance performance on standardized tests, such as the MCAS. Even more importantly, this work will better prepare our students to be effective communicators in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In addition to Task Forces dedicated to improving instruction in mathematics and reading, the district Task Force for Elementary Science continues its work this year. This Task Force is exploring literature and technology that support the science goals

articulated in the State Frameworks, as well as inquiry-based projects that bring the program to life for our young scientists. We anticipate recommendations from this Task Force regarding curricular modifications and instructional materials later in the school year.

On the instructional side, teachers across the school are continuing to explore the idea of small, flexible group instruction as a way to meet the needs of more students in the general education population. This strategy, often referred to as “Response to Intervention,” includes the expectation that the work of these small groups will be tailored to the specific needs of the children in the groups. Teachers in Grades K-5 are utilizing some activities that match the target areas of weakness from our Think Math program and from the Reading Programs suggested for use by the Early Reading Task Force. Other experiences and materials within the mini lesson are an essential part of our Guided Reading protocols in Grades 3-5. Most importantly, regular collegial conversations at each Grade level focus on sharing student learning data and strategies that best support our many learners.

This year, the Cunniff School is particularly interested in expanding our children’s ability to develop a Global Perspective in the elementary grades. Although this initiative is still in the beginning stages at this writing, Cunniff teachers are making plans to connect our work within the school to the larger world. Contact has been established with the Perkins School to explore such ideas as bringing volunteer student readers to visit our classes and establishing class-to-class exchanges. Other teachers have been in touch with the Watertown Senior Center and are developing ways of including older residents in activities at the school and with the children. On a more global scale, talk is underway to connect classes at the Cunniff with children in schools in both Mexico and China in order to share both life-styles and problem-solving skills with children around the world.

### **Educational Technology**

Cunniff continues to stress technology as a 21<sup>st</sup> century tool for creativity and collaboration. During the summer, ELL students from the Cunniff participated in a pilot project using iTouches to enhance language skills. Interest in the use of this device has continued this fall. To this end, teachers across the school have designed similar projects and the school has purchased an iTouch cart for the library. In addition, teachers at each grade level continue to maintain class websites where they regularly post student projects. Many of these projects are built with free web-based applications such as VoiceThread, PowerPoint, Prezi, Xtranormal and Animation-ish. Teachers also post student work in the form of digital audio and visual files captured using flip cameras and Audacity, a recording tool available free of charge on the Internet. This year, several Cunniff teachers are enrolled in a Watertown Professional Development course that will prepare them to use the Internet based program Gizmos as a tool for adding “virtual” experiences in scientific inquiry to our instructional program. In mathematics, students continue to use FASTMATH to support the development of automaticity in math facts during school.

This year, the Cunniff PTO has funded the addition of Study Island, a web-based review program similar to FASTTMath that can be used at home. We will be implementing this resource for our students in Grades 4 and 5 this winter. It is our belief that the additional focus and practice on MCAS skills in both ELA and Mathematics provided by Study Island and the ability this program offers to target the needs of individual children will result in stronger performance by Cunniff students on many important measures.

### **Staffing**

Early in the summer, Dr. Cynthia Crimmin joined the Cunniff team as the new principal. We also saw some adjustments in general staffing, both in the summer and during the fall. Job shifts, temporary reassignments and leaves of absence meant that we welcomed a new Library, Media and Technology teacher and a new Grade 3 teacher to our team. Additional shifts in staffing and population resulted in the hiring of a new Special Education teacher, a part-time Music teacher, a new Grade 5 teacher and a new Physical Education teacher. We also added a part-time ELL teacher for our growing English as a Second Language population. Finally, the loss of our Special Education team leader meant the reassignment of our Occupational Therapy teacher and the hiring of a part-time COTA (Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant) to take over part of those duties. Despite considerable shifting in staff, the tone of the school remains exceptionally positive, and the teachers, with the help of instructional support staff, maintain their commitment to deliver engaging, creative and academically challenging lessons to all our students each day.

### **Guidance**

The single guidance counselor at the Cunniff School serves the school community in many capacities. As a key member of the district Data Task Force, the guidance counselor coordinates the multiple data points collected by the staff for each student and shares this information with teachers and administration during the General Education Team (GET) meetings that she also chairs. These meetings function as triage meetings to discuss children who may need additional support, both within and outside of classes. During these discussions, the guidance counselor also utilizes her psychology background to suggest instructional strategies to support the cognitive profile evident in testing data. As a follow-up to many of these GET meetings, Guidance conducts the pre-referral process, often completing components of the psychological testing that make up the IEP referral process, and ensuring that all state time tables are followed. The guidance counselor also coordinates and supervises the implementation of the digital assessments (Measures of Academic Progress) that are administered to all students three times a year.

Emotional and social issues are also the purview of the guidance counselor. In conjunction with the school social worker, the guidance counselor supports families from the time their child enrolls in the school to the point at which their child either graduates or transfers. She helps identify students and families in need of emotional or social support and provides either individual or small group counseling or referral. She is also instrumental in issues of student discipline, peer conflicts, or other crises.

Lastly, the guidance counselor sits on many leadership teams, working closely with the principal in grade level teacher meetings, interview teams, and scheduling and placement discussions. She has also contributed to administrative meetings that have led to significant changes in the general running of the school.

### **Behavioral Support**

Behavioral and social issues at the Cunniff School are also supported by the services of the school social worker. This position provides proactive programming, respite, consultation and crisis intervention for the many students, with and without learning disabilities, who experience difficulty regulating emotions and behavior throughout the day. In addition, the social worker supports families in establishing behavioral expectations for students and reinforcement protocols that transcend the school day and strengthen the home-school connection.

As is the case with the school guidance counselor, the social worker is a key player on most administrative teams.

### **ELL**

The size of our English Language Learner and First Language Not English populations continues to be a significant feature of the Cunniff School Population. This year 11% of our students have limited English language skills. In addition to supporting the academic and personal growth of students identified as needing help with English language skills, our ELL staff works closely with the general education staff, with our Reading specialists and with Special Education teachers to design and deliver lessons that will benefit children formerly in the ELL groups. While strategies to enhance the learning of these children are appropriate for all our students, the focus on this kind of lesson planning means that this vulnerable population continues to receive the academic support it needs in all our classes.

### **Before and After School Programs**

Cunniff's after-school activities offer a variety of enrichment experiences for our children beyond school hours. With activities ranging from the high quality after-school care provided by the Voyager Program to Courses for Kids and the Cunniff Kids News, our children have the opportunity to hone skills learned in school and to explore areas of interest that fall outside the scope of the regular school day. Similarly, before school, children can choose to participate in Jump-Rope Club or the more general Fitness Club.

### **Health**

Health issues at the Cunniff School are managed by the single, full-time school nurse.

### **Conclusion**

As has been mentioned in previous town reports, the Cunniff School prides itself on offering an educational experience that prepares students personally and academically for their futures. We challenge ourselves to maintain a high level of academic rigor while still respecting the needs of the individual children in our care. Critical to this process is the belief that families need to partner with the school to support our children. At its heart

February 3, 2011

Cunniff is a community where each child and each family is made to feel welcome, heard and valued.

## **Hosmer Elementary School**

Those within the Hosmer school community work hard to meet the high standards of our mission statement: “Hosmer is a place where we are respectful of ourselves, others and our school; responsible for what we say, do and learn; hardworking by doing our best with determination; and, successful by showing what we know and learn every day.” The students, staff and parents of the Hosmer School strive to demonstrate these core values everyday.

The Watertown Public Schools seek to provide a learning environment for all students which promotes academic achievement, social competencies and good citizenship. Because we recognize the need for a coherent and consistent program focused on building positive relationships within our school community, the Hosmer, Cunniff and Lowell Elementary Schools are implementing the Caring School Community program.

**The Caring School Community®** (CSC) program is a nationally recognized, research-based K–6 program that builds classroom and school wide community. In a Caring School Community, students learn to take responsibility for their own learning and behavior. They also learn the values of fairness, helpfulness, caring, and respect.

We appreciate the financial support of the Watertown Education Foundation, Watertown Community Foundation and the Miller Tracy Children’s Foundation in the purchase of Caring School Community materials. Through a grant initiative teachers received training in the implementation of this program.

The Hosmer School cares about student achievement and works collaboratively with Hosmer staff and district teams to define and implement best practices for standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Student performance data is used to develop differentiated instruction plans and programs to meet the needs of all students. The Building Based Data Team has been expanded this year to support teachers in this process and in the implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) protocols.

According to 2010 MCAS data, our 4<sup>th</sup> grade growth percentiles have consistently increased over the past 3 years. In 2010, 56% of our 4<sup>th</sup> grade scored proficient in English Language Arts compared to 38% in 2008, indicating an 18% increase in the number of students reaching proficiency. In Mathematics, 48% of the students scored proficient compared to 36% in 2008.

Adequate Yearly Progress is an accountability measure under the *No Child Left Behind Act* to determine progress in meeting the national goal for all students to be proficient in Mathematics and English Language Arts by the year 2014. Although we have demonstrated consistent improvement in our students’ MCAS performance, we did not

reach our AYP goals in Mathematics and English Language Arts this year. These goals are difficult to attain and get harder each year. We will continue to work hard to meet our AYP goals for all students and all subgroups in all subjects.

The early childhood programs across the district have maintained accreditation status under the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children since May 2009. We are proud of the efforts our teachers have put forth in maintaining current standards of best practices and meeting new standards presented by NAEYC. Participation in our early childhood programs continues to grow with approximately 50 PreKindergarten students and 100 preschool students. The Hosmer School has two PreKindergarten classes this year with a total of 28 students.

Technology resources continued to increase at the Hosmer School in 2010. Availability of computers in classrooms for students has been enriched with mobile laptop carts for students and wireless access throughout our school. We are investigating resources to support a second computer lab at the Hosmer School. With large and increasing enrollment needs, an additional lab is needed to support MAP assessment and instructional support. Teachers use technologies to support instruction in all academic areas.

Focused professional development enhances our teachers' ability to use these tools to improve teaching, learning, and communication. Teachers are using Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) to assess reading and math skills, FASTT Math, Reading A-Z, RazKids, and Rain Forest Math. Our faculty continues to identify and employ new digital tools for instruction.

Building stronger home-school-community partnerships is a district and school-based goal. Hosmer has addressed this by instituting "Co-Principal Coffees" featuring a focused topic such as enrichment opportunities, progress reports, parent conferences, or school safety. The PTO has also implemented a weekly newsletter on the school website. Newsflashes are used to notify parents of newsletter postings and upcoming events.

With the support of the PTO and Site Council, Hosmer parents collaborate with the school to enrich school life for all members of our community, providing enrichment clubs for students beyond the school day, family activities to build community, and resources to support student achievement. The PTO has allocated funds to support curriculum materials for science, books for the library, a sound system for performances, display boards for art exhibits, and technology resources like Study Island for MCAS prep. The Hosmer School is fortunate to have a hard-working, dedicated and generous parent community that takes pride in our school.

The Hosmer School is committed to the health, safety and well-being of our members and our environment. We recycle paper and plastic, and make every effort to use digital resources for communication to reduce our carbon footprint. We work closely with Safe Routes to School Committee to promote the Walking Wednesday Program. Our physical education teacher provides a Jump Rope Club and Fit Club before school with parental

assistance. Each member of the Hosmer Community strives to demonstrate respect for learning in our diverse community and to be responsible for achieving success every day.

## **Lowell Elementary School**

### **Lowell School Mission**

The Lowell School, with the active involvement of its families and neighbors, seeks to provide a supportive learning environment, which fosters academic excellence, encourages individual and collaborative endeavors, and promotes social responsibility and respect for diversity. We seek to support students in developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will serve them well in their lifetime. This requires all the abilities to effectively engage and contribute to society as they know it, and the imagination and sense of activism to change it for the better.

### **Who Are We**

The Lowell Schools current enrollment of 396 students has fluctuated within the last 3 years from about 375 to 402. The school serves students in PK through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

- Male Students: 217 Female Students: 179
- Special education: 61 students enrolled in specialized programs
- ELL students: 52 students (13%) with many different languages spoken in the homes
- Low Income: 110 students receiving free or reduced lunch (25%)
- Class size: Range of 17 to 27 students with an average of 22 students per classroom

### **Administration**

The Lowell School currently has one full-time principal and one full-time school secretary. We do our best to adequately serve the students, families, and faculty and staff efficiently and effectively. A continued, concerted effort to “go paperless” has reduced consumption and labor involved in copying and distribution.

### **Class-based Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

The district introduced a new curriculum and expectations in vocabulary for kindergarten through grade 3 students this year. Professional development has been, and will continue to be, focused on curriculum implementation and effective use of resources. We are currently finalizing reading assessments in all components and creating reading workshop management resources. It is anticipated that at some point in the year the K-3 Reading Task Force will complete its charge and refocus efforts on the acquisition of writing skills and language usage.

In SY 2010-2011, the district was fortunate to be able to implement a new social curriculum K-5. With the combined, generous financial support of the Watertown Education Foundation, the Watertown Community Foundation and the Miller Tracy Childrens Foundation, we have been able to purchase “Caring School Community”. The Caring School Community (CSC) program is a nationally recognized, research-based K-6 program that builds classroom and school-wide community. The district was also able to secure a grant for the professional development services to support implementation.

The Caring School Community program focuses on strengthening students' connectedness to school—an important element for increasing academic motivation and achievement and for reducing drug use, violence, and delinquency. The U.S. Department of Education has recently highlighted the Caring School Community program's research base and effectiveness.

This past year, school budget challenges resulted in the reduction of one classroom teacher at the Lowell School for the upcoming 2010-11 school year. In addition to the reduction of staff, we experienced an increase in kindergarten registrations over last year. Our guiding principles of reasonably sized, self-contained classrooms at the primary level, maintenance of instructional integrity and academic opportunities for all, influenced the allocation of resources.

In order to achieve the above priorities, the following configuration was created.

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Number of Classrooms</b>	<b>Anticipated Class Size</b>
PreK- K (multi-grade)	1	19
Kindergarten	3	20
K-1 (multi-grade)	1	19
1 <sup>st</sup>	2	20
2nd	4	20
3rd	3	19

We also reorganized the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade program into what is called “modified parallel block scheduling”. In essence, the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade students were organized into 5 multi-grade homeroom classes. All academic classes regrouped, with more teachers assigned to the grade levels during Reading/English/Language Arts and Mathematics. This structure has allowed us to better meet the needs of all students and maximize the use of support teachers. An informational session was held in August provide information to parents on the how the program would work for 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **Educational Technology**

Our computer lab was outfitted with beautiful new IMacs this summer! Several laptop carts are now in circulation at the Lowell School and are being heavily utilized. NetBooks provide additional access and flexibly within the learning commons and classrooms. Flip cameras, document cameras, and LCD projectors are also in constant demand.

In addition, the IT teacher performs a variety of vital functions at the Lowell School. She is integrally involved in the development of our Primary Learning Support program as the use of technology in student learning increases. The IT teacher plans and prepares curriculum materials and projects with self-identified classroom teachers and specialists to explore new resources, innovate on past practices and enhance teaching and learning. This current year the IT teacher has taught fourth grade math, too!

Weekly visits to the school library are accomplished in grades PK, K, 1, 2, and 4/5. Our librarian also works tirelessly to maintain our library and develop resources, as well as to meet integration needs of classrooms.

### **Special Education**

The district continues to encourage the individual schools to serve as many children within the district as is possible, based on need, capacity and financial responsibility.

The Team Chair Leader is effective and efficient in managing the process of meeting all legal requirements (laws and regulations) to serve our special education population. The Chair also assists in the challenges of managing both personnel and materials responsibly. We are very proud of our array of programming options to best serve our students at the Lowell and the Chair's leadership in their development has been greatly appreciated. The Special Education programs include:

#### *Comprehensive Inclusion Support Program*

For students with complex needs requiring substantial, extended periods with a special educator (1:1 or small group), and in-class support to engage in curriculum, our CIS programming has evolved. This program also provides consultation and direct service in social /emotional and behavioral regulation issues.

#### *Language Based Partial Day Substantially Separate*

For students with significant language based learning disabilities a program is in place to provide intensive partial day instruction to develop essential reading and writing skills. Our hopes of expanding the program to meet continuing needs at 4/5 were not realized this year due to budget constraints.

#### *Primary Learning Support Program*

PLS has been developed and implemented to meet the physical and academic needs of students with neurodevelopmental disabilities. It is a district-based program providing integrated services and supplemental educational experiences, along with tailored curriculum.

#### *Specialized Instruction*

A special educator provides specific instruction for students with learning disabilities in accordance with the plans outlined in student IEPs. The schedule is a hectic one, and requires the teacher to move from class to class, and from grade to grade, to meet the needs of all students on the caseload.

### **Student Services**

An array of services is available to students and families when needed.

#### *Reading*

The reading department has been undergoing continued re-identification. The need for reading intervention continues to grow. Given that reading is a gateway skill to all future learning, it is critical that we build a robust response system for children who experience difficulty.

### *Guidance*

The guidance role is complex and diverse in its reach. There is a class-based instruction component that address all aspects of violence prevention, i.e. tolerating difference, conflict resolution, and bully prevention. Guidance also conducts the pre-referral process. All state assessments, including proctor training, coordination of accommodations, scheduling, and materials management are handled by guidance. From January to June, Guidance serves new students and their families through both the kindergarten registration process and the transfer process to and from the school. The counseling aspects of the role are called upon daily, often without advanced notice. Guidance is called upon regularly to respond to child and family crises, consult with parents about home or school issues, and address peer. Teachers often seek out consultations with our guidance counselor when challenges emerge around individual students. The guidance role is also involved in many other school functions, such as placement, team meetings, safety planning, and the development of protocols and new processes.

### *Behavioral Support*

Many students, with and without learning disabilities, experience difficulty regulating emotions and behavior throughout the day. The behavioral support program, along with guidance and contracted services from the Academy for Physical and social development, provides proactive and responsive programming, respite, consultation and crisis intervention. Contracted services from the Academy for Physical and Social Development have been invaluable.

### *ELL*

The Lowell is comprised of children with a wide variety of cultural and language backgrounds. Two ELL teachers currently provide services to the school both in and out of the classroom, as well as family education and support.

### *Health*

We are fortunate to have a very engaged school nurse and 1.5 PE teachers. Overall health monitoring and education are critical to serving the whole child.

## **Departments and Programs**

### **Athletics Program**

The overriding mission of Watertown High School Athletics is to achieve excellence in every aspect of our program. We aspire to help our students be the very best that they can be. We strive to help develop our students athletically, academically and socially. Many lessons are integrated into the athletic experience, such as being a member of a team, setting goals, working hard to achieve those goals, making a commitment, and learning to get along with others. We also encourage our students to be active in the community, participating in many community service projects.

Watertown High School Athletics conducted a Pre-Season meeting with parent/guardians and their student-athletes in grades 9 through 12 to increase student and parent/guardian awareness of school, athletic and Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association rules. The high school Athletic Trainer educated all on the dangers of concussions.

We also continue to make progress in bringing back softball as a sport for girls in the Watertown athletic program. A team competed at the varsity level in the spring of 2010. A junior varsity lacrosse team for both boys and girls began in the spring of 2010. Lacrosse will compete in the spring of 2011 at the Varsity and Junior Varsity levels/

User Fees were implemented for the 2009-2010 school year due to budgetary issues. An annual fee of \$175.00 for athletics and \$25.00 for clubs was set at the high school level. A \$25.00 fee was started at the middle school as well. Due to budget issues, this year user fees were increased at the middle school level to \$100.00 for athletics.

In 2010, the athletic program featured many highlights. The girls' field hockey team won the state championships. Numerous student-athletes had individual athletic success as well. Watertown had many Middlesex League All Stars and *Boston Globe* and *Boston Herald* All Scholastic athletes as well.

Watertown competes in the Middlesex League. A major change in the league structure was voted in 2009 and will go into effect in the fall of 2011. This structure will split the league into two conferences which should help the smaller schools such as Watertown to remain competitive. We are also increasing efforts to coordinate the high school and middle school athletic programs.

For these and many other reasons, Watertown High School feels great enthusiasm and optimism regarding our athletic programs. We have much to celebrate, and strongly believe the best is yet to come.

### **English Department (6-12)**

The English departments at Watertown Middle School and Watertown High School are continuing to work on aligning curriculum and improving achievement of students in grades six through 12. Guided by the state's English Curriculum Frameworks, teachers in each of these grades emphasize core skills including reading, writing, listening, speaking, and research and information-literacy skills. The middle school provides additional developmental support to help students succeed both emotionally and academically in adolescence, and the high school teachers work to instill greater and greater levels of independence and self-efficacy in students as they near graduation and adulthood. Both schools also offer remediation in reading, specialized classes for students with language-based learning disabilities, sheltered classes for English-language learners, tutoring and academic assistance.

#### *Professional-Development Focus*

The primary focus of professional development this year is the study of brain research and its classroom application through Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Teachers in

grades six through 12 are working together in study teams to learn about the recognition, strategic, and affective neural networks and to translate this knowledge into effective classroom practices by providing students with multiple means of representation of content and curriculum, multiple means of action and expression of knowledge, and multiple means of engagement.

Examples of projects include the following: One group is working on better meeting the needs of students who struggle with executive function; these teachers will develop explicit strategies for students to learn how to break projects into discrete tasks and better plan for the completion of those tasks in order to complete whole projects successfully. Another group of teachers is working on identifying and compiling multi-sensory and multimedia examples of literary terms and concepts so that students have many more sensory access points to understanding and remembering key terms and concepts. A third group is adapting their assessments so that students have many more options of demonstrating their proficiency and content knowledge; for example, a current assessment requires that students create a slideshow and oral presentation. Students may still choose that option, but teachers are exploring expanding the options to an array of Web 2.0 tools that facilitate web-based sharing and collaboration. Still another group is working on a project to extend a research-paper assignment to include a Web 2.0 presentation component so that students express their knowledge both in formal analytical writing and in a technology-based medium.

These study teams will meet periodically as a large group in order to share their work and collaborate on instructional challenges and improvements. Additionally, teachers will share their instructional products with each other in order to maximize the learning and introduction of new strategies to raise student achievement and increase engagement.

Teachers are also working independently on training initiatives. Summer study groups included work on Writers' Workshop, instructional strategies for English-language learners, curriculum development in humanities, and reading strategies for struggling readers. Teachers are also taking Primary Source and university courses on topics like Web 2.0 in the classroom, cultural traditions of other countries, scholastic journalism, and Advanced Placement instruction..

### *Curriculum Focus*

Students in the middle-school grades continue to focus on reading and writing and on studying English and social studies in interdisciplinary humanities classes. Featured projects and events in the sixth grade include storybook research and writing, poetry writing, and the performance of original scary stories. Each year the seventh-graders write memoirs, study Greece and Rome, read novels like *The Giver*, and present scenes of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; and the eighth-graders immerse themselves in the *Facing History and Ourselves* curriculum, which includes an introduction to the literature and history of the Holocaust and its implications. Eighth-graders also study literature, culture, and geography of Ancient China, the Middle East, and Europe. The middle-school Humanities experience culminates with a community-oriented civic-participation

project called “Choosing to Participate.” Eighth-graders also enter the Martin Luther King, Jr., essay contest sponsored by the World in Watertown.

The middle-school English/Language Arts program also provides additional options to improve students’ reading skills. Specialized reading teachers provide extra classes for students with language-based learning disabilities and for students who will benefit from more intensive reading instruction. Additionally, teachers at all levels work closely with the middle school’s ELL teachers to maximize the academic success of ELL students.

At the high school this past year, students continued their focus on analytical reading, expository and persuasive writing, and communication skills. Core texts include *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Crucible*, *Hamlet*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Of Mice and Men*. Students also receive extensive training in English-oriented research and analysis skills, which culminate in the Senior Thesis Paper. The STP, written in steps over the first semester, requires students to demonstrate their proficiency in academic research, analytical thinking, research note taking, outlining, critical analysis, and source citation. The high school offers college-prep and honors courses in grades 9-12, and elective Advanced Placement courses in grades 11 and 12. Seniors may also take Humanities or Contemporary Literature for their senior English course.

The student newspaper *The Raider Times* continues to be published quarterly, and now *The Raider Times* student journalists are developing a web presence as well. Community members may view current issues by clicking the link on the WHS homepage to view a digital version of the newspaper. Students in the English department also publish *Word Painter*, the school’s student-produced journal of creative writing and poetry. Writers’ Ink writing club provides another outlet for student writers. Club members held their first poetry slam in December, and they meet regularly to write and work on projects.

### **Mathematics Department (6-12)**

At the middle school, all three grades used the Impact math curriculum purchased during FY09. The 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders have used only this curriculum while at WMS, and this past year the 8<sup>th</sup> graders entered into their second year with the program. Students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade took either in Algebra I or 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math. The Algebra I curriculum was supplemented with a traditional Algebra I text. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math curriculum maps were revised to line up more directly both with each other (made easier with the Impact curriculum) and with the Commonwealth’s Curriculum Frameworks for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. This was done to provide more cohesive preparation for Algebra I.

Most students enrolled in 8<sup>th</sup> grade math during FY09 entered the high school Algebra I program in FY10, with a few moving on to Geometry L1. Students who had been enrolled in Algebra I in 8<sup>th</sup> grade took either Geometry L1 or Geometry H for FY10. The MCAS scores from the May 2008 testing were consistent at the high school, with 83% of the students achieving proficient or better on their first attempt on the exam and 50% of the students scoring in the Advanced category. At the middle school, Grades 6 & 7 saw a slight increase in math scores (68% and 56% Proficient or better, respectively), and grade eight experienced a small decrease (49% Proficient).

Secondary math staffing saw only two changes in the 2009-2010 school year. David Meuret replaced Chuck Garabedian at Watertown High School, and Ann Palermo joined the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade team, replacing Evelyn Fuchs who, in turn, replaced Anne Paoletti in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade.

Professional development programming in the math department continued to thrive. At the beginning of every department meeting, teachers worked on a math problem, and then moved into work on common assessments and what it means to assess in general. The department also worked together on Technology in Practice professional development. Teaming up with the Science department, they explored problem solving and skill development with Excel. Some of the time was devoted to discovering potential uses of the program as a demonstration tool, working on problem sets designed to highlight advanced tools and formulas. The rest of the work involved the development of skills to be taught chronologically beginning in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

The Focus on Math (FoM) grant, funded by the National Science Foundation, has continued to provide opportunities for professional development. The Watertown High School math teachers attended seminars in Chelsea, Lawrence, Arlington, Waltham, and at Watertown High. The Math Department hosted the 7th Annual Math Fair in the high school library, with 76 projects and 127 students participating. Watertown contributed eight posters to the annual Math Expo hosted by FoM at the Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation in Waltham. The partnership has been extended for an eighth year. Karen Trenholm successfully completed her second year as Watertown High School's first and only Virtual High School (VHS) teacher. She once again taught AP Statistics online, replacing one of her courses at Watertown High School. In exchange for her teaching time, Watertown High receives 25 student spots per semester for our students to take online courses.

Students in advanced math courses once again sat for a challenging national math exam, the American Math Competition (AMC). All did well, and one qualified for the next exam (the American Invitational Math Exam (AIME)). For the second year in a row, students in the honors Algebra and Geometry courses at the middle school took the AMC-8, the middle school version of the tests given at the high school.

At the end of the year, the department bade goodbye to Phil Wolfson (retired) and David Passeggio (the new Math Coordinator at Walpole Middle and High School). They will be missed.

## **Science Department (6-12)**

### **Introduction to Biomedical Careers**

A new course, taught by Stephen DiBenedetti, was instituted in the fall of 2010 for junior and senior high school students who interested in pursuing a career in the biomedical sciences. The course, designed by Dr. Nancy Oriol, Dean of Students at Harvard Medical School, and Ms. Julie Mowshenson, nurse/educator, is a semester long program which includes alternate, weekly visits between Mt. Auburn Hospital and a simulation center

(robotic patient). Students meet for one hour with a medical/health professional at Mt. Auburn who explains the purpose of the unit, walks them through it and ends the tour of the unit with a discussion of the educational requirements needed to work in that specialty.

The students also have the opportunity to collaborate with a doctor at a simulation center for emergency medical trainers in Belmont. The life-like robotic patient at the center is programmed to show signs of distress and the students, working along with Dr. Daniel Kornish, evaluate the patient, diagnose the condition and then prescribe a course of treatment. The learning experience combines traditional content taught by Mr. DiBenedetti, hands-on-clinical cases with the robot, and on sight career exploration at Mt. Auburn Hospital.

### **Middle School Science Curriculum**

The middle school science curriculum continues to be revised; grade six will now concentrate on Astronomy, Earth Science and Ecology; grade seven on Life Science; and grade eight on Physical Science, including forces and motion and introduction to chemistry.

Teachers in grade 6-12 met periodically to evaluate the content, skills and assessments used at each grade level in order to develop better progressions from one level to the next and to establish a uniform laboratory report format and correcting rubric.

### **The Ecology of Bonaire**

Mr. George Buckley, retired Watertown Science Coordinator, returned once again to the high school in order to organize his yearly ecological tour of the coral reefs of the Bonaire Marine Park in the Dutch Caribbean. Twelve students spent a week snorkeling and scuba diving in the crystal clear water of the reefs encircling the island. They learned first hand about the truly stunning array of reef fish, the coral that make up the reef and the importance of maintaining this beautiful ecosystem.

### **MCAS Science Exams**

All high school students must now pass one of the three MCAS Science Exams in order to graduate from high school. The three exams are *Introduction to Physics, Biology* and *Chemistry*. In the spring of 2010, 179 students took the exams; 40-*Introduction to Physics*, 2-*Chemistry* and 137-*Biology*. 95% of the students taking the exam passed.

### **Social Studies Department (6-12)**

The secondary social studies curriculum was reviewed and modified to align with the state-mandated frameworks, to support district, school and departmental goals, and to prepare students for success in the 21st century. The teaching staff addressed curriculum improvements, both in content and pedagogy, and continues to assist in the structural reorganization of the social studies department.

The teachers in grade 6 geography, grades 7 & 8 humanities, and grades 9-12 social studies actively participated in the evaluation of content revision, the scaffolding of

student skills, and the coordination of assessment techniques across the curricula. Towards this end, teachers have worked together to complete curriculum mapping, to integrate technology into every lesson, and to participate in varied professional development opportunities.

High school teachers who are certified to teach United States history, along with elementary teachers in grades 3 and 5, remained actively involved in the third year of the five-year Teaching American History grant funded by the United States Department of Education. Through content-based professional development as well as through lesson studies, workshops, and the Gilder Lehrman Summer Seminars, teachers improved their instructional skills and their historical knowledge.

In the third year of departmental reorganization, the English Language Arts and Social Studies departments consolidated their professional development programming under the heading of Research and Information Literacy Skills. In conjunction with the district's technology specialists, teachers crafted various projects and lesson studies which empower students to find, identify and analyze information. Information from ongoing assessments is being used by the departments to revise and refine the content, scope, and skills being taught in the middle school.

The social studies department's integration of technology into both instruction and assessment is ongoing. Teachers continue to create and use classroom websites, blogs, and various curriculum software. At the high school, the Social Studies and library Mac labs serve as the nerve-centers for cyber-learning. The 9th grade US History students used the resources of the Media Lab and recording equipment to produce learning units for the use of future classes. At the middle school, mobile laptop carts enable teachers to bring technology to each student's desk.

In grade 6, students study World Geography, emphasizing cultural as well as physical geography. The curriculum includes the study of Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia. In grade 7, students study ancient civilizations, including the Egyptians, Israelites, Greeks, and Romans. Their first unit, "How do we know about the past?", introduces the study of physical, oral, and written sources and develops students' skills of observation and inference through archaeology. In grade 8, students start with a "Facing History and Ourselves" unit which uses the study of the Holocaust to explore fundamental historical questions and themes. The curriculum then broadens to include ancient China, the Middle East, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. The year culminates by introducing students to civic responsibility with the "Choosing to Participate" unit.

In grades 9 and 10, students engage in a rigorous, two-year program in United States history. The curriculum monitors successful student learning through data-driven analysis of common assessments, implementation of lesson studies, and utilization of coordinated curriculum and tests. Curriculum is designed to impart understanding of the crucial concepts of American history while preserving each student's curiosity and personal interest in our nation's story.

In grade 11, students interact with an experiential curriculum in world history which refines the broad topics of cultural diversity, political institutions, and global humanitarian issues. A core focus of the course is the study of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and their role in shaping the world. Some world history students received community service credit for their humanitarian efforts.

In grade 12, students selected from a variety of courses, including law, civics, psychology, and economics. These courses connect soon-to-be graduates with numerous community resources such as the Project Youth Program, the annual State Government Day at the State House, the Voice of Democracy essay contest, the Massachusetts Bar Association, and the Student Advisory Council to the Massachusetts Board of Education. The high school also sent two students to GBRSAAC (the Greater Boston Regional Student Advisory Council) to discuss school citizenship and rights.

The social studies department worked with a number of nationally-known curriculum resources in the past year. The Pathways to China Program offered students the opportunity to learn about Chinese culture and possibly travel to China. Project Citizen provided materials and hosted competitions on civic education. Watertown's own Primary Source offered courses in content specific curricula as well as instructional resources and travel opportunities. The Bill of Rights Institute conducted seminars on individual rights. Additionally, social studies teachers maintained a close relationship with Watertown organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Watertown Citizens for Environmental Safety, the Historical Society of Watertown, World in Watertown, the Armenian Library and Museum of America, the Watertown Rotary Club, and the Watertown Town Council, as well as the Margaret Bainbridge Scholarship Foundation, Watertown's Veterans Services liaison, and various religious and secular organizations.

Students have been provided opportunities to reach out to the community as well. In January 2010, the department oversaw the World in Watertown's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Competition at both the middle and high school. The winning student essayists were invited to read their essays at the annual Unity Breakfast in January. The newly-formed Haiti Club organized a number of fund-raisers including a student-faculty basketball game. Invisible Children Club sponsored an assembly open to the school about the Ugandan civil war. A committee of students has followed up with a series of fundraising and awareness activities.

In all social studies classes, both students and teachers continued to work together to master content while cultivating critical thinking skills in an effort to become intelligent and well-informed citizens. Instruction and curricula strive to broaden student achievement and to lay the foundation of life-long learning where every student discovers knowledge and applies this knowledge toward personal success.

### **World Languages (6-12)**

The World Languages Department of the Watertown Public Schools provides courses in Spanish, Italian and French in grades 6 – 12. The goal of the program is to provide

students with the skills to function successfully in the target language. Students are provided with instruction in listening, speaking, reading and writing. An awareness and understanding of other cultures and peoples is also emphasized.

The World Languages Staff collaborated during department professional development in order to align curriculum and instruction in grades 6 – 12. The sequence of courses was reviewed in order to strengthen the developmental focus of the World Languages Program. A new textbook series was also purchased for the Italian program at Watertown High School.

The World Languages Department continued to integrate technology and digital resources into the curriculum. World Languages staff participated in courses such as Technology in the Foreign Language Classroom and Virtual Field Trip. WHS also experienced expanded use of the language lab. Students created multimedia and web-based projects in a number of different World Languages classes.

The World Language Task Force is exploring how to introduce world languages to grades K – 5. The overarching goal is to have a K – 12 World Language Program in place in the next several years. The Task Force researched different world language models and visited programs in other districts. A recommendation for a world language program model for the elementary level will be developed by June 2011.

### **Assessment and Guidance K – 12**

Assessment and Guidance encompasses three main service areas in the district: 1) district-wide regular education assessment which is the cornerstone of data gathering around academic progress, 2) psychological assessment which is part of the IEP/Special Education eligibility process, and 3) guidance services extending from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### **General Education Assessment**

Watertown uses Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to assess academic achievement three times each year for all elementary and middle school students, as well as some high school students. The coordination of the testing process, the analysis of the data by school-based teams, and the sharing/use of this information to guide curriculum development and instruction is a key component of ensuring data-driven instructional practice. Further, the analysis of this data is coordinated with MCAS scores and additional classroom-based assessment measures to further understand student growth and achievement.

#### **Special Education Assessment**

Districts are mandated to assess students in a number of areas as part of the Special Education eligibility determination process. Psychologists in the district complete these assessments each year for this purpose. The Assessment and Guidance Department provides consultation around test supplies, storage and procedures to all disciplines involved in assessment (OT, PT, Speech and Language, Special Education).

### **Guidance Department**

Guidance counselors play a key role in K-12<sup>th</sup> grade in enhancing school climate, providing a vital communication link with parents, and counseling students each day. Additionally, they manage the MAP and MCAS assessment process and preside over both General Education Teams (GET) and Section 504 meetings. They also are essential in implementing the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Additionally, at the High School, they are extensively involved in the college application process, the administration of various exams (PSAT, SAT, AP) and in overseeing a legion of local scholarships.

### **Educational Technology Department (K-12)**

The Educational Technology Department is comprised of Library Media teachers, Educational Technology teachers, and Technical Services. The Educational Technology programs are designed to help students become independent learners, transform information, think creatively, problem solve, and communicate effectively. This year various curriculum and technology initiatives enriched student learning and faculty development. Initiatives include:

- Continuing to implement professional development Technology-In-Practice mini courses for faculty and helping to design online TIP classes
- Continuing to support faculty planning and teaching with various curriculum and technology integration projects and digital resources especially relating to Universal Design for Learning
- Seeking and relaying to teachers media rich, state of the art lesson plans from free sources like Thinkfinity, Thinkquest and Teacher's Domain
- Seeking and installing excellent educational applications to our district's new iPods
- Using Measures of Academic Progress to assess student learning gains and to differentiate instruction
- Continuing to renovate School Libraries into Learning Commons
- Offering updated and relevant collections of resources in both print and non print formats
- Partnering with innovative companies, such as FableVision, WGBH, and EnableMath
- Updating classroom, school, department, and district websites
- Expanding and improving high speed Internet access
- Deploying iPods and new computer hardware and software
- Continuing to deploy student laptop carts for classroom use and installing replacement batteries

This year the Educational Technology Department is developing the next stage of the district's innovative technology plan, called "Literacy21." New and emerging technologies are enabling innovative education and fostering a rich educational environment for all our students. Our Literacy21 Plan is driven by four key concepts that are changing and improving teaching and learning:

- The Internet is the invention
- Students are creators and contributors
- Teachers and students have a globalized curriculum where students talk with each other world-wide, and teachers share and learn from colleagues anywhere
- Educators need a professional community to think together and improve practice

Visit the Watertown Public Schools website, and the Teaching & Learning webpages in particular, for more information about how technology supports, enables, and enriches our curriculum and classroom practice.

### **English as a Second Language Program (K-12)**

The Watertown Public Schools has a comprehensive educational program for English language learners (ELLs). The goal of the program is to provide students with the skills to function successfully in an English speaking environment. There are two components to how ELLs are educated in the school district. The first component is English language development (ELD). ELD instruction facilitates proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing in social and academic settings. Teachers holding ESL licenses teach ELD in district schools.

The second component of the ESL program is sheltered English instruction (SEI). The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires that content and classroom teachers of ELLs provide instruction in SEI in order to work effectively with these students. SEI is an approach for helping ELLs learn required subject matter while at the same time promoting their English language proficiency.

In order to develop the knowledge and skills to teach SEI, teachers of ELLs are expected to participate in the following four categories of professional development:

- Second Language Learning and Teaching
- Sheltering Content Instruction
- Assessment of Speaking and Listening
- Reading and Writing in Sheltered Content Classrooms

In response to this mandate, professional development programs that address the four categories of knowledge were provided for district staff this past year. These professional development programs included out of district courses offered by EDCO Collaborative as well as courses taught in district schools.

The ELL Department staff continued to work on English language development (ELD) curriculum during professional development days in the school year and in a summer workshop. The ELD curriculum includes a scope and sequence, content-based units and curriculum mapping. It is differentiated for students at different levels of English proficiency and is integrated with English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes for English Language Learners (ELPBO).

Expanded ELL programming was implemented in 2010. A sheltered English immersion kindergarten class for ELLs at Hosmer School began in September 2010. A sheltered English math class for ELLs at Watertown High School was implemented, and a tutor was employed to work with newcomer ELLs at Watertown High School.

### **Fine and Performing Arts Department (K-12)**

The visual arts program continued to expand both its traditional media and technology enhanced art program. Enrollment remained robust in the advanced studio arts classes, preparing student portfolios for collegiate art school admissions. The advanced computer design/web design program at WHS, led by Dan Dressler, has used state-of-the-art software, to prepare students for potential careers in the digital graphic arts. Watertown students have continued to win awards at the annual Globe Scholastic Art Competition. Examples of student art are available for viewing online, both on the district website and on classroom websites.

The Watertown Art Show at the Watertown Mall continued to be a wonderful opportunity for students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 to display their artwork to the community. The Watertown Mall has traditionally provided support in working collaboratively with the schools on this project.

The music program continued to expand its offerings and examples of student performances are posted on teacher websites. The music program has also seen increasing participation in the instrumental and vocal ensembles at the Middle and High School levels. The high school, middle school and elementary school music programs presented concerts to enthusiastic audiences in May and December, as well as at the annual Bandarama Concert in the WHS Gymnasium in March. Several WMS students were selected, through competitive audition, for Massachusetts Music Educators Association Eastern District Junior Music Festival. Additionally, the music ensembles and choruses performed concerts for members of the Watertown community at several venues throughout the year.

Music teachers at all levels have made extensive use of the hand-held digital recorders, one for each building in the district. In addition to recording student presentations and classroom rehearsals and activities, teachers used the recorders for individual performance assessments and to upload student performances onto classroom websites for student homework and practice.

The WHS ensemble groups undertook several collaborations this year, including WHS Full Orchestra performances at Bandarama in March and at the Heritage Music Festival in New York City in early April. In addition to the Full Orchestra, the Women's Chorus, the A Capella Choir, and the String Ensemble all competed at the Heritage Music Festival in New York City, all winning Silver medal awards.

The 7th-8th grade band combined with the 7th-8th grade string orchestra to create a Full Orchestra numbering over 60 players. Together, the band and string orchestra performed

successfully at both the Spring and Winter Concerts, as well as at Bandarama. Last year, Art Wallace created another music ensemble, the Middle School Stage Band, who wowed audiences with their blues, swing, and rock playing in the fall and spring concerts at the Middle School and at Bandarama for the whole district. This year, the high school band has also launched a Stage Band program, building on the success of the initiative at the Middle School.

The number of performers in the Middle School chorus program, directed by Abigail Cordell, continued to rise to all-time highs. Members of the Girls' Select Chorus won high honors at a music festival in Agawam, MA in the spring. The elementary choruses, under the direction of Sara Patashnick (Hosmer) and Anthony Spano (Lowell and Cunniff) continued to increase participation. During the school year the choruses from the three elementary schools performed at the all-elementary concert at the WHS auditorium in June, and at building-based concerts in December. The Hosmer chorus also sang during December at the Watertown Mall. The Kid's Cafe and the Art/Music Extraganaza at the Hosmer School are additional avenues for students to perform and display their work.

The drama program presented several highly successful shows including, "Grease" directed by Abigail Cordell and WHS Chorus Director Dan Wulf. The Fall saw a successful play production as well, directed by Middle School teacher Abigail Cordell.

The Middle School drama program has gone through a resurgence. Middle School performers performed in two musicals, "High School Musical" performed in March, 2010 and "Once Upon A Mattress" performed in November, 2010. Also the Middle School's new Theatre Production enrichment class staged, "Lockers" and a set of student produced and directed one-act plays in Spring, 2010. All theatre productions were directed by Abigail Cordell.

The Fine and Performing Arts (FAPA) Department continued to devote professional development time and resources to its long-term Curriculum Articulation Project, creating documents and unit plans demonstrating how FAPA curricula are conforming with state frameworks and building on prior student skills and experience.

### **Physical Education and Health Department (preK-12)**

The Physical Education Department offers a comprehensive curriculum in grades PK-12. The curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the NASPE Standards and is reviewed on a regular basis.

The major focus of the physical education and health department has been assessing the effectiveness of the PE/Health curriculum as it relates to the student outcomes identified in our Grade Level Outcomes. Our department concluded that students currently receive minutes on activity below what is recommended by the state.

Watertown's Physical Education Department received the Carol White PEP grant in July, 2009. This 3 year federal award of \$919,000 (including In-Kind Match) has given the

WPS District the opportunity to improve the fitness levels of all students K-12 by 25%, improve activity levels of all students by 25%, improve fitness testing scores by 25% and provide the department with 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum, technology and teaching strategies. An extensive professional development plan has begun based on the district PD schedule. In addition, all of the members of the PE/Health department attended the State PE and Health convention (MAHPERD) in November. Donna Ruseckas, Coordinator of the PE/H Department and President of MAHPERD 2009, assisted in the planning of the convention.

Students at the elementary level receive 40 minutes of physical education and health education 2 days a week. Health education is integrated into the physical education curriculum and is mostly activity based. New programs focusing on increasing levels of activity include a Geo-fit curriculum, new traverse climbing walls, HR monitors in grades 3-5), Project Adventure elementary equipment, and snow shoes.

Students have learned the significance of heart health and activity. The Physical Education Program (PEP) Grant has given students additional opportunities to be active before school. Teachers are able to facilitate more programs due to funding that includes morning skill-based sports and recreation games and exercise/fitness sessions. The PE teachers have also volunteered time to run Jump Rope for Heart activities in the morning one hour before school.

The Middle School physical education program assessment revealed that the curriculum emphasizes student fitness. Although students receive 45 minutes of PE three times per week, student fitness data revealed that on average many students fell below fitness standards. In response to these results, we have augmented our focus on fitness. Health education is also integrated through the PE teaching schedule in grades 7 and 8, where students receive health education in a classroom setting. Grade 6 health has been taught by guidance staff in order to reach more students and to integrate violence prevention education.

The PEP grant provided the Middle School PE curriculum with additional Project Adventure offerings and low element, Geo-fit curriculum additions, ping pong tables, heart rate monitors, snow shoes and a new fitness center that is part of the daily PE teaching station and after school program. Additional grant funding provided after school programs 4 days per week, giving students greater opportunities to stay active. by participating in programs such as project adventure, cooking healthy, pong, running club, and volleyball.

The physical education program at the high school has moved significantly into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by introducing students to new skills and engaging more students to be active both during and outside of physical education class. New activities in the curriculum include Geo Fit-dance, speedminton (racket sport); Omnikin (a European Activity that promotes teamwork); golf, and new fitness activities for project adventure. Heart rate monitors have also been added. We continue to integrate fitness education through the use of the fitness center, where students learn to develop their own fitness plan.

The PEP grant funding replaced all old and broken cardio equipment in the fitness center with spin bikes, elliptical machines, treadmills, rowers and other strength training pieces. While fitness testing results indicated the need for students to improve upper body strength and cardio capacity, new fitness equipment has begun to make a difference in these areas. Professional development and the commitment of the PE staff has shown that students are learning how important it is to be active and to maintain fitness levels. This information has been obtained through student surveys and teacher assessments.

Health education for Grade 9 is in line with current health state standards; Teenage Health Teaching Module is the curriculum we use. The PE/Health Department continues to integrate new technology in our teaching and learning; this technology infusion has been supported by the ongoing professional development of our instructors. Students regularly use laptops for research and projects are required to use power point for presentations. Steve DiBenedetti participated in professional development opportunities that prepared him to improve the current health curriculum, including drug and alcohol awareness and sex education.

The Physical Education and Health Department assesses the fitness of students twice a year and administers a student survey that measures personal fitness habits, PE education experiences, and nutrition. The data from these surveys showed that student fitness and activity time is improving and that teachers are offering a more challenging, fun and rigorous curriculum.

### **Student Services (PreK-12)**

Student Services Programs are designed to integrate all the services that support student growth and development. Watertown provides a comprehensive array of programs and services from pre-school through grade 12 including: early childhood education, adult and community education, nursing, and special education.

#### **Early Childhood Education**

The Watertown Public Schools currently host four programs that support young children and families. The programs begin by focusing on family education and support for the parents of children birth to age four through the Watertown Family Network. As children reach preschool age the district continues the support and involvement of families through the Parent Child Home Program, the Community Partnerships for Children Program, and the Early Steps Preschool. Each of these programs involves families and their young children, and the programs work in conjunction with local community agencies and businesses.

#### **Nursing**

The school setting offers unique opportunities for children to learn healthy behaviors through education and to receive easily accessible, comprehensive health services. Each school has a full time school nurse. The school nurses are a liaison between home, school and community regarding health concerns of students. The goal is twofold. First, we want to encourage healthy behaviors through education programs and mandated health

screenings to prevent health issues from arising. The second goal is to assess the chronic health needs of students and treat their acute needs so that students can reach their educational potential.

### **Community Education**

Watertown Community Education is a self-sustaining program of the Watertown Public Schools. It includes Adult and Community Education evening classes, the Before School Program at all three elementary schools, Courses for Kids at the elementary schools, the Hosmer Extended Day Program, the Cunniff Voyager Program, the Lowell Extended After School Program, after school activities at the Middle School and Summer School Programs for children Pre-K through grade 12. Our mission is to provide high quality out-of-school-time programming that supports engagement in learning, positive youth behavior and promotes life-long learning.

The Adult and Community Education Program provides exciting, low-cost learning opportunities designed to answer the needs and interests of Watertown's diverse adult population. The Adult Program provides courses for working people and professionals, people new or returning to the work force, newcomers to the United States, people of all ages who seek a fun, active alternative to their usual evening routine. The Program offers courses in a wide range of subjects including ceramics, drawing, watercolor, beading, mosaics, computer basics, Zumba, floga, hula hooping, body revival, yoga, belly dancing, tap dancing, ballroom dancing, golf, aerobics, African drumming, estate planning, tree and scrub pruning, introduction to genealogy, financial aid, green insulation, getting organized and the History of Watertown.

Watertown Adult Education coordinated the *seventh* Town-wide Yard Sale in May 2010 in which over one hundred families participated. By popular demand this is now a much-anticipated annual community event.

The Before School Program offers quiet supervised activities for children Grades Pre-K through Grade 5 before the regular school day begins.

The Extended Day Program provides safe and enriching after school care for children Grades Pre-K through Grade 5 until 6:00 PM daily. Our program supports cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. The daily schedule includes homework time, gym or outside exercise time, computer time, and arts and crafts. In addition, the Program offers coverage for early release days, full day programming for February and April Vacations and 8 weeks during the summer. The Program also offers an emergency drop off service at both Before and Extended Day for parent/guardians who may have a commitment or an urgent matter to attend to on an occasional basis.

Enrichment activities vary from year to year but often include community service projects, nutrition and exercise workshops, puppet shows, face painting and special programs such as live animal shows and pony rides! Our end of the year family night was a fractured fairy tale drama production. Our instructors offered a variety of clubs during the year, such as poetry and painting, famous artists, Spanish club, athletic club, yoga,

raconteurs, book clubs, jewelry, what's up with the weather, junior staff club, bulletin board club, journal club, money matters and even a Red Sox club! Each club created a video or poster and our parents were invited to visit the clubs with their children. We continued our community service outreach to the Women's Lunch Place in Boston, Warm Up America and the Afghan Project

Special Events in June, children in grades 3-5 at the Hosmer Extended Day Program were chosen by WGBH to participate in hands-on activities in their Time to Invent Club. Activities included making a chair from re-cycled materials.

Courses for Kids is an after school enrichment program offered at the elementary schools that provides classes such as hands-on science, drama, drumming, chess and karate and languages. Robotics was added this year.

The Watertown Middle School offers enrichment clubs, such as the art mural club and the gardening club. This year we continued the Learning Lab for after school homework support and added a Community Explorers Club. This summer the Middle School students participated in a very successful program entitled Fit for Life. It was a combination of nutrition education and fitness training.

Watertown Community Education also provides an exciting Summer Program that helps families plan a summer full of enjoyable, varied, and meaningful activities for their children. Summer Explorations Program once again offered an 8-week, full day project-based learning program for students entering kindergarten through Grade 5. Academic courses for students graded 6-12 are designed for students who wish to improve a low or failing grade. The curriculum is geared toward building skills as well as meeting credit requirements and is based on the individual needs of the students enrolled.

Watertown Community Education is committed to building partnerships that meet the needs of the adults, families and children in Watertown.

## **Special Education**

The Watertown Public Schools provides a variety of services designed to address the needs of identified students who have a disability and require special education services.

### Integrated Preschool Program (Hosmer Early Steps Preschool)

Integrated multi-aged classrooms are staffed according to the individualized needs of the students. The curriculum is designed to fulfill goals and objectives for pre-school students in their social, emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development. A collaborative team approach is utilized in this program that involves: special education teachers, instructional assistants, consulting psychologists, occupational, physical and speech therapists. Parental involvement is critical to the success of this program. There are several instructional models including; half day and full-day programming, discrete specialized services, consultation to parents and community providers, and developmental screening. The Preschool Intake Review Team screens and assesses children aged three through five years based on a referral from early intervention

programs, the medical community, parents or others. The Preschool staff works closely with the elementary principals and staff to assure smooth transitions and continuation of appropriate support services, once a child is age eligible for classes in the elementary school.

## **Inclusion**

### **Elementary Schools**

These program services are provided by the special education teachers at each of the three elementary schools. Students who receive services include those on IEPs. Students receiving these services typically have a diagnosis of a specific learning disability. In this program, teachers provide in-class support with some discrete out-of-class support in the areas of literacy and math. Development of instructional strategies, organizational skills, motivation, responsibility, and self-advocacy skills are emphasized. Specific social and emotional skills are addressed as needed. Students receive individualized instruction based on their evaluations/consultation with classroom teacher as an ongoing activity. Related services such as speech and language, counseling and occupational and physical therapy may also be included.

Professional development, support and time to collaborate will be provided to team members working in the program. Ongoing home-school communication is built in to provide support and consultation.

Teachers provide ongoing work with all students to promote the understanding of disabilities and strategies to help all diverse learners engage with peers.

### **Middle School**

Inclusion services are designed for special education students with moderate to significant needs to who are able to manage the grade level curriculum but require modifications across the curriculum areas. Students are assigned inclusion services for only the areas of disability (i.e. if a student has a math disability and requires significant assistance in class, inclusion for math class is appropriate). A special education teacher or instructional assistant may provide inclusion support. IEP Teams determine the frequency of inclusion services based upon individual needs.

The Academic Assistance Program is intended for both special and general education students who require re-teaching, pre-teaching and more exposure to content area curriculum. This class is co-taught with one special education teacher and two content area teachers. As a part of this program, students receive progress reports on a regular basis. All special education students are enrolled in this class every other day for 42 minutes.

### **High School**

Specialized instruction to support inclusion is provided by special education teachers who support students in their inclusion classes. These classes focus on organizational and study strategies to help students with disabilities included in general education classes

succeed. The learning format includes, but is not limited to: 1:1 instruction, small group instruction, monitoring and reinforcement, applied academics, homework strategies, evaluation of strategies and skills, and academic test monitoring.

The Academic Support program at Watertown High School is intended for both regular and special education students and offers daily support to students in grades nine through twelve in all academic areas. The teacher and instructional assistant support students to complete projects, prepare for tests, organize their assignments, and homework. Collaboration with teachers, guidance counselors, administration, parents, therapists, etc., are other important aspects of the support given to students in this program.

Watertown High School supports the transition of general and special education students who will be going out to work when they graduate. The Transition to Work Program recognizes and acknowledges the necessity for all students to be given the opportunity to gain awareness and understanding of the world of work while developing appropriate work behaviors, social and life skills. A job coach will be provided to assist student transition and the move toward the world of employment. The program works closely with community-based employers to enhance the experiences of participating students, supporting them in the development of skills and relationships that lead to successful transitions into the world of work. This program is incorporated into the student's overall schedule and requires 18 to 20 hours of work weekly. Requirements include weekly meetings with the coordinator or job coach; an in-house internship to prepare the student to transition into the work-force; submission of weekly pay stubs; quarterly performance evaluations to assess students' progress; a midterm and year-end graded project; development of a program newsletter as part of the student's evaluation.

### **Specialized Services**

The following related services are offered at the pre-school, elementary, middle and high school levels to students who qualify for the specific services.

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Psychologists (testing and consultation services)
- Counseling, Clinician Support (one- to- one, group therapy by Wayside Youth and Family Services, Colony Care, The Academy of Physical and Social Development)
- Specialized Reading Instruction (Orton-Gillingham, Wilson Reading Program, one-on-one and small group instruction.)
- Behavioral Consultation (Melmark New England)
- Behavioral / Social Services (Walker School Services)
- Vision Specialist Support (Carroll Center, Perkins School)
- Instructional Tutoring (one-to- one or small group on specific instruction)

These services are typically provided in-class. However, there are times when a student requires "discrete" out of class interaction. With all these related services, consultation to staff and parents and evaluation services are provided as needed

## **INTENSIVE IN-DISTRICT INTERVENTIONS**

Student Services has been working on establishing four strands of services which would offer step-down and step-up services for students as well as respite, intensive short-term and long term intervention.

The four areas derive from observable service needs among students and from the trend for such students to seek services out of district. These strands address the following disability areas:

### **Language-Based Programming**

These programs are designed to meet the educational needs of students diagnosed with learning disabilities in the areas of speech and language, reading, and writing. The program provides academic instruction that is diagnostic, intensive, and highly structured. At the Hosmer, Lowell, and the Middle School the specialized instruction is in the areas of reading, writing, and math. The language-based programming at the elementary and middle school level does not extend to science, history, and specials. At the High School the language-based programming expands to include language arts, math, history, and science.

### **Integrated Services Programming**

Watertown recognizes the need to educate and care for the whole student. We are intensely aware that there is more to educating students than just academic development.

The Integrated Services Program (ISP) provides academic and social / emotional support to students. Students may receive a spectrum of services creating optimum inclusive opportunities in general education classrooms. Within this program, it is our goal that students will gain the skills and strategies necessary to be increasingly successful socially and academically throughout their school career.

At the elementary level, Opportunity Rooms have been created at the Hosmer and the Lowell. These rooms provide therapeutic space to provide on-going behavioral and emotional support to students. Students are able to access the space for breaks, time out space, adapted lunch/recess groups, and as a quiet work space. School-wide behavioral rubrics are used when deciding to access the Opportunity Room to deal with disciplinary issues. Students sent for time out will process their problem behavior with adult assistance and learn positive strategies for dealing with emotional situations.

The Middle School Integrated Services Program (ISP) offers respite, drop-in services, 45 day evaluation services, and a substantially separate classroom. The goal of these therapeutic services is to help students manage academic, social and emotional stress.

The program offers a full range of support from drop in visits, to scheduled check-ins, to a substantially separate classroom. The program supports regular communication with parents, outside therapists, social workers, general education teachers, guidance counselors and administrators.

The Integrated Services Program at Watertown High School is comprised of four programs for students with a wide variety of needs. The CAP and LOOK OUT programs provide support which is integrated into the inclusive school day, while COMPASS and NEW SYSTEMS provide substantially separate settings for students with more significant issues.

The Counseling and Academic Support Program (CAP) provides support for students who may be experiencing some need for emotional and academic support during the school day. It offers an environment which encourages development of coping skills through goal setting and therapeutic intervention. Of equal importance, it also provides an opportunity for support around school assignments through a liaison with teachers around a student's progress and behavior in class.

Usually, students are scheduled into CAP for a class period each day. However, under special circumstances, CAP may be available as a respite setting for periodic emotional support.

The LOOK OUT program provides staff to "look out" for students in the mainstream who may be experiencing difficulty with attendance, tardiness, and minor behavioral issues. Students will be assigned to a Team which will gather information about behavioral patterns and follow-up with teachers. The Team which is comprised of classroom teachers, a therapeutic Team leader, and a therapist, will meet weekly to strategize and address issues which interfere with students fully participating in school in appropriate ways.

The COMPASS program provides a substantially separate classroom environment for students who express significant emotional concerns such as anxiety by internalizing these concerns and who find it difficult to participate in the mainstream high school setting. Classes are taught by special education certified teachers assisted by an instructional assistant. The maximum class size may vary from 8 to 10 students. Students will participate in morning check-in exercises with the staff and in therapeutic groups appropriate to their needs throughout the day. Students are encouraged to begin to take a class or classes in the mainstream at a pace which matches their emotional progress.

The NEW SYSTEMS program provides a substantially separate classroom environment for students who express their emotional concerns through externalizing behaviors in school. Classes here are taught by a special education certified teacher assisted by an instructional assistant. The maximum class size may vary from 8 to 10 students. This class provides a structured setting through the use of therapeutic intervention and a behavior management system. Students are encouraged to develop more adaptive behaviors and to return to the mainstream setting through gradual reintegration. Morning

check-in activities and appropriate therapeutic and behavioral work will enhance academic instruction.

Additional support services are available to students in the COMPASS and NEW SYSTEMS programs. These include social skill training groups, counseling, and structured recreational events.

### **Watertown Connections Programming**

The Watertown Connections Program is designed to serve students who benefit from Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) programming. Many students can benefit from ABA programming in inclusion classes, however there are some children who benefit from direct ABA instruction in a substantially separate setting. Watertown staff members working in these programs are trained in the development, implementation, and evaluation of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) programming, and their work is overseen by BCBA certified consultants from Melmark New England.

At the preschool and elementary level students that benefit from direct ABA instruction in a substantially separate setting are enrolled at the Early Steps Preschool and at the Hosmer Elementary School. The Hosmer has two substantially separate Connections classrooms, one for primary aged students K-2 and one for intermediate students in grades 3-5. Elementary students who require less intense programming are enrolled at their neighborhood elementary school. Teachers and instructional assistants implementing ABA programming at each of the elementary schools are supported by one of two consultants from Melmark New England.

Students needing ABA programming at the Middle School are both educated in a substantially separate classroom and included in general education classes as appropriate given the student's needs. ABA programming at WMS is also overseen by Melmark New England.

Next year ABA programming will be made available at the High School as students needing a range of ABA services move from the Middle School to the High School.

### **Learning Support Programming**

There is an expanding diagnostic category appearing in the schools, neurodevelopmental disorders. These include severe seizure disorders and neurological syndromes (which seem to be appearing in much greater numbers). These children are largely nonverbal in the early grades and need a great deal of intensive instruction for the most basic cognitive and academic skills. Class size is small and speech and language therapists are involved daily to support the development of communication skills.

There is a Learning Support classroom at the Cunniff for students in grades K to 2 with the understanding that the Cunniff will eventually serve all the elementary aged students that require a substantially separate classroom. Currently there are classrooms at the Lowell and the Hosmer but these classrooms will be closed as students currently in them move on to Middle School.

The Learning Support Program at Watertown Middle School provides services to students with significant cognitive and developmental delays. Students are supported in learning the content for their grade level with modified curriculum and small group instruction. There is an added emphasis on the practical skills for required for daily living.

The Learning Support Programs at Watertown High School supports students who benefit from small class size and require modified curriculum. This past year many of the eighth graders eligible for the Learning Support Program at WHS were interested in vocational programming and enrolled at Minuteman Regional Vocational High School. There continues to be a small group of students requiring specialized programming at WHS but the number is quite small this year.

This year the High School created a new program for students from 18 to 22 years old who remained eligible for special education. The Learning Experiences Adult Program (LEAP) has a curriculum that focuses on giving students the skills they need to live independently in the community. They learn the skills necessary for: daily living, leisure, community participation, health, self-advocacy, communication, interpersonal relationships, and employment.