

**RSU #16 School Board
Administrative Report
Shawn Vincent
Principal, Bruce M. Whittier Middle School
September 5, 2017**

Staffing

- Whittier welcomes Ms. Sarah Henderson; she is teaching 7th grade math and science.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

- Whittier opened with 132 seventh graders and 114 eighth graders on campus. This is an increase of twenty students from this time last year. Seven Whittier Middle School students are attending Poland Community School as part of the Functional Life Skills program.
- The first two teacher workshop days were dedicated to *Building Assets, Reducing Risks* (BARR) training. Whittier Middle School received a grant aimed at rural schools through the Department of Education Investing in Innovations funding and a division of the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation. BARR's goal is to increase achievement for students in the grades 7-9 transition years by combining real-time analysis of student data, intentional relationship building, student asset building, and intensive teacher collaboration to help prevent course failure and improve academic success. We applied for the grant because the program matches much of what we do at Whittier, but provides additional structures to solidify our efforts. The model provides training, resources, technical assistance and a framework to create the necessary student supports. The opening days of training were extremely positive, productive, and well-received.
- The investment of time in BARR training has created a backlog of other trainings that will be completed during early release time in September. This Wednesday, we will use the faculty time to do required trainings, review our implementation plan for BARR, and work on building consistent expectations about grading and using our online grade book. Upcoming Wednesday time will be used for academic team meetings, training on PBIS and disciplinary response, establishing committee work and goals, Teacher Evaluation and Professional Growth training, and school goals around assessment. It will be a full month, but we believe the work this month will set us up for a successful year.
- Over the summer, twenty 7th graders were invited to Whittier for a two-hour special introduction to managing middle school, Step-up Plus. Special thanks to Jess Madsen, Bonnie Robbins, Clayton Jones, Logan Landry, Hannah Sirois and Sarah Henderson for creating and facilitating this program.
- In August, teachers Dan Knott and Heidi Lachapelle presented at the University of New England on the use of 3D printers to enrich learning in the classroom. They have additional presentations scheduled at the Maine Educators of Gifted and Talented (MEGAT) Conference and the Association of Computer Technology Education of Maine Conference.
- Dean Jessica Madsen is helping eighth graders improve their leadership skills and giving them opportunities to lead through her Student Leadership Academy. Twelve students started in the program last fall, attended a meeting in August and participated in some team-building and learning activities. The group of students came back to help the 7th graders at Step-up Plus and came back to school with 7th graders on August 30th to serve as school ambassadors. The group will continue to meet during the school year and provide some mentoring for younger students. Jess is also working with the team to develop some community service efforts.

Events

- Whittier hosted an Ice Cream Social on August 17th and an Open House on August 28th. Both were very well attended. Many teachers and staff volunteered at the social.
- September 12th: Grade 7 Parents Laptop Night
- September 22nd: School picture day

Facilities: The school looked great to open the year. Thanks to Tony Bennett and the maintenance team.