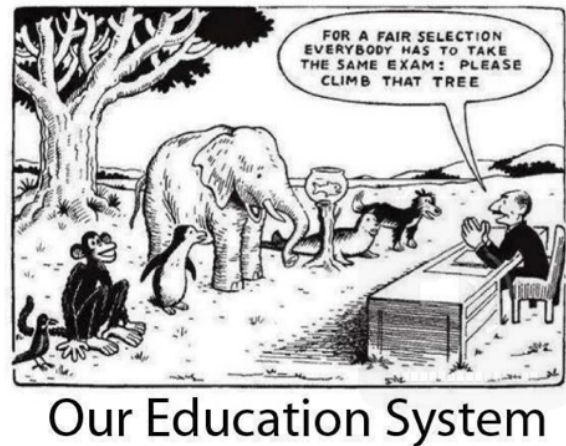
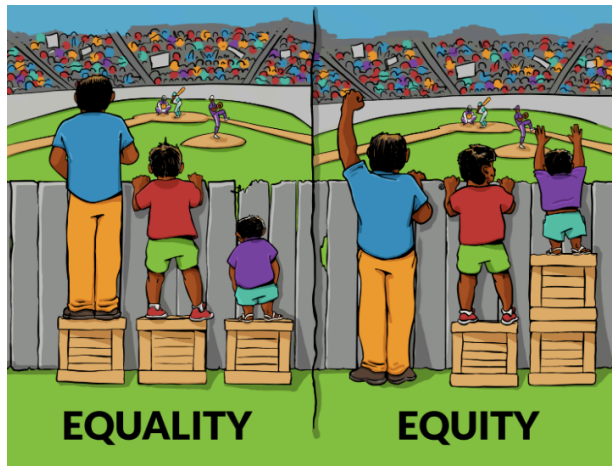


## Teaching & Learning 2

November 17, 2016



*At my Boston University graduation last May, one of the speakers, Turahn Dorsey (Chief of Education for the City of Boston), reminded all of us not to view ourselves as “saviors” of children/families affected by poverty. Rather, he encouraged us to empower them by providing opportunities and designing policies, which favor equity over equality.*

*This message translates to my work as an Assistant Superintendent in a profound way. In schools and towns we have limited resources and must decide how to best use them for the greater good. Please take a moment to study the two illustrations above. The illustration on the left depicts three square boxes (resources) and different ways they can be designated, revealing vastly different outcomes. Students living in poverty or underprivileged youth clearly need educators with an equity-based perspective. The illustration on the right expands that conception reminding educators to think outside the box to better meet individual student needs. In the Watertown Public Schools, we work hard to maintain this focus so that all of our students grow and achieve, as we decide how best to allocate our resources.*

- 1. Professional Development Team (PDT) Updates** - Our goal is to continue to build the capacity of our diverse staff to be excellent teachers and administrators by providing high quality professional development. The PDT continues planning for Early Release and Full Day Professional Development and recently reviewed recommendations from the principals, District Leadership Team, and the staff survey. The next meeting is December 8<sup>th</sup> where we will finalize PD agendas for the following Early Release dates (12:45 - 3:45 p.m.): Monday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday, Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, and Wednesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>. Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> is a full day of PD.
- 2. A Most Generous School Grants Program** - The Watertown Education Foundation and the Watertown Community Foundation are teaming up to offer a new School Grants Program for the 2016-2017 academic year, with \$35,000 available to seed innovative programming for Watertown’s public schools. Applications are now available on the Watertown Community Foundation website ([WatertownFoundation.org](http://WatertownFoundation.org)). Completed applications are due on December 16, 2016 and grants will be awarded by January 20, 2017. They prefer folks apply online.

3. **Report Cards Dates** - WHS & WMS distributed to students on November 22<sup>nd</sup> and all elementary schools on December 8<sup>th</sup>

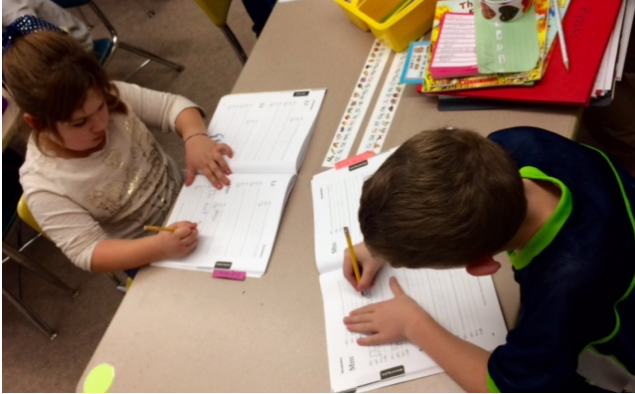


**(Left) An outdoor classroom** - 7<sup>th</sup> graders at WMS enjoyed *A Charles River Expedition* designed to introduce students to the water unit in science (pollution and ground water) including data collection/analysis, compare present geography to an 1828/1829 map, create a Haiku poem, and learn about natural photography. Their engagement was remarkable. Teachers Lisa McDonagh, Sheila Gilmartin, Kerri Lorigan, Karen MacAulay were joined by WMS school nurse Kati Swift, and WHS curriculum coordinators, Dan Wulf, Lynsey Kraemer, and Maureen Regan.

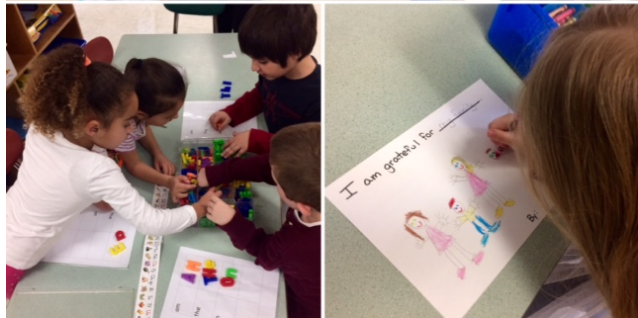
**(Right) Professional Development on Student Assessment Data - Reading in the Upper Elementary Classroom**, K-12 Literacy Coordinator, Dari Donovan, led professional development with our grades 3 - 5 teachers designed to link student learning outcomes and decision-making. After assessing and collecting data, teachers are analyzing the results of the fall reading assessments (Fountas & Pinnell benchmarks, San Diego Word Test, Quick Phonics Screener, MAZE) to help inform their instruction. WMS reading teachers, Kelly Spillane and Ellie Zuckerberg, led professional development on similar reading assessments at WMS.

4. **Grant Award** - WPS received notice that Hosmer Elementary School's Extended Day Program was awarded a \$5,000 Grant through the MA Cultural Council. The Cultural Partner Organization for this project is the Mosesian Center for the Arts (fka Arsenal Center for the Arts). The Residency Program will run at Hosmer School with a Cultural Partner and a Historian twice a week for eight weeks for 1.5 hour sessions, from January 9 through March 10. Students will work in groups of eight to create original short plays about their communities. Before the residency, lead teachers and youth education staff will meet with school staff to identify vocabulary and curriculum material pertaining to the history that should be included in the program. Beth Sahakian, Director of the Extended Day Program, is very excited to work with the MA Cultural Council and the MCA-Arsenal Center for the Arts to provide this rich opportunity for the students.
5. **PARCC/MCAS Results** - We will present these results at the December 5<sup>th</sup> School Committee Meeting.





Christine Talamas' first-grade class at Lowell School - Following up on summer literacy professional development/training of a cohort of first-grade teachers, a Literacy Coach from Wilson Foundations modeled lessons and debriefed with our teachers to enhance their skills and confidence with the implementation of our Foundations program. For more information on this K-3 reading program, use this link: <http://www.wilsonlanguage.com/programs/fundations/>



Cunniff School Candidis - (Left) Mrs. Hager's first grade students are describing the attributes of circles (top photo), bottom: Ms. DeFabritiis' students are identifying shapes in the Math In Focus lesson. (Right) Students are participating in literacy centers and writing activities in Mrs. Tanguay's Kindergarten and in Ms. York's Kindergarten. The bottom right prompt is, "I am grateful for \_\_\_\_\_" and the student wrote, "my family" then sketched them. 😊

*For your planning purposes...*

- Nov 29 - WMS Evening Parent Conferences
- Nov 30 - K-8 Early Release, Parent Conferences
- Nov 30 - WHS Evening Parent Conferences
- Dec 1 - K-5 & WHS Evening Parent Conferences



6. **ISP Biology program at WHS** - For the second year WHS students are a part of a great program to head-start three Northern red bellied cooters (turtles) for the Massachusetts State Fishery & Wildlife division. This is an incredible program that has basically brought this species of turtle back from disappearing in Massachusetts. By teaming up with different schools and organizations throughout the state, the head-start program has been able to bring the red bellied cooter population from ~300 total in MA in 1984 to over 3,500 found in the wild today. The goal of the program is to raise these turtles to a size where they will be better able to survive in the wild. Our students care for these turtles for about nine months in Room 166c, and by the time they are released in the spring they should be about the size of a 3-year-old turtle. WHS teacher, Rob Randall, shared that they only eat romaine lettuce and the cafeteria staff has been nice enough to save scraps from lunch and fill up their bucket each day so they can grow and get ready to be released in the spring.

*That's all for now, folks!*

Keep each other well,

*Theresa*

**Theresa McGuinness, Ed.D.**  
*Assistant Superintendent*