

## **WELCOME TO SCHOOL YEAR 2010-2011**

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September 1, 2010

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[View - Quicktake of Learning slideshow with Liv'n in the 21<sup>st</sup> C song]

### **PREZI SPLASH PAGE**

I am very happy to have us all gathered together to start a new school year. I hope you are refreshed, relaxed, and ready to return to your students and teaching. In spite of the frustration and disappointment of not **yet** having a new teacher's contract, this summer's professional development, work of various task forces, changes to programming at many levels, and new teacher induction have us poised to begin a positive school year.

I want to thank everyone in central office, principals, curriculum coordinators, the buildings and grounds crew, and the tech services team for working tirelessly to prepare for the opening of school. There has been a lot of work done in each building and when you go to your schools after this meeting, you'll still find contractors and custodians finishing up to be ready for this Tuesday.

If last year was a transition year, with just a new superintendent, then this year has more changes. I would like begin to tell you about some of these changes by introducing our new administrators: Ray Shurtleff, Interim Human Resource Director; Steve Watson, High School Headmaster; Annmarie Beaudreau, Associate High School Headmaster; Arlene Schainker, Secondary Special Education Coordinator; Cindy Crimmin, Cunniff Principal. I also want to introduce old friends in new administrative positions: Mena Ciarlone, Elementary Curriculum Coordinator; and Barbara Gortych, Assessment and Guidance Coordinator.

Finally, I also want to recognize the School Committee members: Chair-Tony Paolillo, John Portz, Eileen Hsu-Balzer, David Leone, Laurie McManus, Kip Beach, and Mark Sideris. Thank you all for your steadfast support and encouragement.

### **TODAY'S PLAN**

I want to let you know that this morning's presentation is made possible by the creative work of so many of you who captured and shared photos for the slideshow you've been watching. Dan Dressler and Vera Ventura produced my very artistic and professional multimedia presentation. They took a powerpoint stack I wrote, and transformed it into this beautiful presentation- as an example of what is possible with a few of the new tools we have in education. The catchie tune with the slideshow is our Liv'n in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

song by our own famous Teacher's band, The Rock'n Raiders. Finally, thank you to Kip on audio and Mike Adams with technical assistance.

This morning I'm going to share with you ideas and plans about the Future of Learning in Watertown Schools, including what is changing in the world, and what is changing in Watertown. Before I do that, I invite School Committee Chair Tony Paolillo and then Watertown Educators Association President Deb King, to give their welcoming remarks. When we are finished with this meeting, you have Faculty meetings and classroom planning time back at your buildings.

#### WELCOME MESSAGES

John Portz, School Committee, Vice Chair

Deb King, Watertown Educators Association, President (along with the WEA Board)

#### FUTURE OF LEARNING - GLOBE

Like last year, this school year promises to be both challenging and exciting. Our budget is tighter, but we will persevere to devise a new contract, and continue to focus on what is best for the children. Our "digital kids" continue to challenge us to rethink and change our practice to meet who they are and how they learn. I hope that we are all inspired to concentrate on the future of learning and ensure that we are leading the way, and not just catching up. As always, I look forward to working with you to promote these ideals.

#### MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY

This summer I had an experience that helped me return to work inspired and refreshed. That highlight was a trip I took to Uruguay to visit one of my daughters who was working on an ethnographic study of the One Laptop Per Child program in Montevideo. Uruguay is a developing country, but also a country which is wireless. The government has given every child and every teacher in that country an XO laptop. They have deployed about 300,000 XOs.

The XO laptop and the One Laptop Per Child program originated at MIT about eight years ago. OLPC developed computers and software that could realistically become available for the poorest populations around the world. The software available for these laptops and designed specifically for learning is called Sugar. Seeing and learning about this program in Montevideo impressed me as an example of the recent global extent of changes in education. It was so heartwarming to witness the engagement and excitement about learning for both teachers and children of all ages, who haven't even had textbooks or electricity; but now have access to the world through these little XO laptops, known as the "green machine".

## AN EDUCATION PROGRAM

OLPC is not a laptop program, it's an education program. OLPC's mission is "to provide a means for learning, self-expression, and exploration to the nearly two billion children of the developing world with little or no access to education."

The very beginnings of OLPC were with Seymour Papert in the 70's, when he introduced Logo, the first programming language written especially for children. When I began teaching in the 80's I used Logo with my middle school students. This experience made me enthusiastic about improving teaching and learning with new technologies. In 1985 the MIT Media Lab opened with a mission to "invent and creatively exploit new media for human well-being without regard for present-day constraints." That mission spawned the OLPC program, and in 2002 it first provided this little green machine to 20 Cambodian children. The children and their families invented multiple uses for the machines and easily taught themselves to navigate the Internet. Their first English word? "Google."

Throughout my career in education, I've aimed to give students and teachers access to the tools and resources that enable them to be engaged and inspired at school, think creatively, accomplish new things they might not have even dreamed about, and teach each other. If students learn to solve their own challenges, one day they might even help us solve ours. Seeing students and teachers invigorated by little green laptops in Montevideo reinvigorated me about what is most important in our work as educators.

## INTERCAMBIOS - CLASS

Here are a few snapshots of what is happening in Montevideo. "Intercambios" is one of the programs that defines how Uruguay is using the XO's in education. Intercambios means "exchange". There are several kinds of exchanges happening. Wirelessly connected computers facilitate exchanges between children, teachers, and the larger world. This photo is of 4th graders teaching preschoolers to use the XO laptops to play math and reading games, paint and draw pictures, record video and audio, and take pictures to go with stories they are composing and sharing.

## INTERCAMBIOS – SCRATCH

These two sixth graders are making a football (soccer) game with Scratch, a multimedia programming language. This summer South America was gripped with World Cup fever. Five of the 32 teams competing for the Cup were from South America. Uruguay was the only South American team to reach the semi-finals of the World Cup, so this was a very hot topic with the children.

## OLPC SICHUAN, CHINA

I'm sharing this little highlight of my summer with you not only because it was inspiring for me, but because it represents so much of what is changing in education and the world.

One Laptop Per Child is worldwide. It is touching 32 developing countries and 1.4 million children. This is one of my favorite photos on the OLPC Flickr photostream. This photo is of students holding up their XO laptops at school in Sichuan, China.

#### FUTURE OF LEARNING - ROAD

This summer several of your colleagues and I participated in two international educational professional meetings held in Massachusetts - Building Learning Communities in Boston, and The Future of Learning Institute at Harvard. If you know me, you can see why I was excited by these kinds of professional learning opportunities. I am always contemplating the future of education and am driven to focus my attention on how learning is changing and transforming itself. These institutes were designed to help educators understand how globalization, the digital revolution, and advancements in mind/brain research are affecting education today and in the very near future.

#### FUTURE OF LEARNING – BRAIN

These institutes asked its participants [us] to grapple with and discuss three questions: What matters most for people to learn at the dawn of the 21st century? Who is the learner of the future? And, where, when and how, will he or she learn best? At the “Future of Learning” institute Professor Howard Gardner acknowledged that participants would grapple with “... the existential question of what is the future of learning.” Gardner noted that participants might not answer the question, but would walk away from the institute with even better questions and fewer misconceptions. These are not just philosophical questions to be contemplated at summer institutes. I feel strongly that we must translate what we are learning about globalization, the digital revolution, and mind/brain research into our vision, into our goals, and into our practice.

#### P21 - RAINBOW

We are transforming our practice based on these three important developments in the world. They have definitely begun to change our perspective. There is now a major national focus on 21st Century skills and learning. The newly released National Education Technology plan called “Learning Powered by Technology” highlights the direction, goals, and essential ingredients for improving education in and outside of our classrooms. Our thinking and practices in Watertown are aligned with this national plan and the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.

The Partnership identifies seven 21<sup>st</sup> century student outcomes. They are the seven Cs: Critical thinking and problem solving; Creativity and innovation; Collaboration, teamwork, and leadership; Cross-cultural understanding; Communications, information, and media literacy; Computing and Information Communication Technology Literacy; Career and learning self-reliance.

## P21 - BOOK

If we take the basic “3Rs” skills of reading, ‘riting and ‘rithmetic and multiply them by the 7Cs we get 21, a handy formula for successful learning in the 21st century.

## GLOBE - MAP

Now that we’ve looked globally and nationally at the future of learning, let’s look locally, at Watertown. In the midst of all this change in the world, I’m going to highlight what is changing, and what is the same, for this school year.

## FACULTY

Who are we? We are a teaching faculty with almost the same number of members as last year (289); but with 29 new teachers, and about 10 teachers in reassigned teaching positions. We also have about 10 new IAs. We are a faculty with almost the same number of veterans as teachers who have been here for less than 5 years. Like many districts statewide and nationally, our faculty population represents the changing demographics of the teaching population.

What is unique about you, the Watertown faculty, is that more than half of you are on Task Forces and Leadership Councils, helping to lead curriculum programming and professional development. I’d like to recognize all of you who have participated on a Task Force or Leadership Council in any of the past four years or going into this year. Please rise if you are, or have been, one of the instructional teacher leaders or administrators for any of the following: the Teaching & Learning Council, Professional Development Council, Teacher Evaluation Design Team, TIP Instructor Team, K-5 Math Task Force, K- 3 Reading Task Force, Elementary WCAP and Data Team, District Data Team, Autism Council, Early Childhood Task Force, 4-5-6 Science Task Force, World Language Task Force, and the teachers involved in the Ambassadors for Change here at the High School. Thank you for your exceptional contribution to the district for this important work.

## DIGITAL KIDS

Who are our students? We are educating “digital kids”. Last year I showed you a youtube video of a one-year old using an iPhone. Here is a new youtube video of a 2 \_ year old discovering an iPad for the very first time. Notice how she treats it like a toy. [View - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pT4EbM7dCMs>]

How long does it take her to figure out this new personal digital device? If you said 24 seconds you were right. This is a Digital Kid in action.

## DIGITAL KIDS - MILLENNIALS

In fact these Digital Kids are now a part of a new generation which is being called the Millennials, because they are the children of the first generation to come of age in the new millennium. A recent Pew Research Center report called – *“Millennials: Confident. Connected. Open to Change.”* profiles the roughly 50 million Millennials who currently span the ages of 18 to 32. It's likely that when future analysts take full measure of this new generation, they will conclude that millions of additional younger teens, and perhaps even pre-teens, should be grouped together with their older brothers and sisters.

The distinction of this generation is their use of technology. 75% of them have a social networking site. 83% of them sleep with their cell phone (either under their pillow or on their nightstand. Millennials are also called the “Just” Generation. They don't do email, they text. They **just** go to the Internet to find out anything and everything.

## HOW MILLENNIAL ARE YOU?

We have 81 Millennial teachers in Watertown. If you want to know how Millennial you are, the PEW website has a 14 question survey that takes less than a minute to complete. If you are not one of these 81 teachers, taking this survey will help you appreciate what it means to be millennial (or not).

## GUIDING STARS

Three years ago a Community Education Forum, including teachers, students, parents, the Administration, and the School Committee convened in Watertown, on learning in the digital world. We generated what we call our “guiding stars”. These guiding stars have highlighted our focus on preparing students for the demands and opportunities of the 21st Century. Our guiding stars are similar to the seven Cs of the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and they became the foundation for our District Vision and Strategic Goals.

## WPS VISION AND GOALS

Last January, the School Committee adopted our new District vision and strategic goals, which were a result of the 2007 Community Education Forum and subsequent subcommittee meetings with teachers, administrators, and School Committee members. Let's look at these carefully.

## VISION STATEMENT

The vision statement is:

*“The Watertown Public Schools promote high achievement through inquiry, problem solving, collaboration, creativity and hard work. We provide students with a robust education so they will acquire, apply, and practice the knowledge and skills needed for self-actualization and life-long learning. All programs support diverse learning styles, civic interaction, global awareness, and personal success.”*

## STRATEGIC GOALS

The strategic goals are to: Support High Academic Achievement; Foster Self Actualization, and Promote Global and Local Citizenship. What do these goals mean?

### SUPPORT HIGH ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Support High Academic Achievement means that:

*“The Watertown Public Schools will ensure that each student becomes an accomplished learner in the arts, humanities, mathematics, physical sciences and social sciences. The school system will provide all students with a learning environment that sets high expectations and stimulates thinking, problem-solving, inquiry, creativity, and hard work.”*

### FOSTER SELF ACTUALIZATION

Foster Self Actualization means that:

*“The Watertown Public Schools will ensure that each student develops a capacity for life-long learning through comprehensive skill development, exposure to a broad universe of knowledge and disciplines, and support for a diversity of learning styles, future plans, and personal interests.”*

### PROMOTE GLOBAL AND LOCAL CITIZENSHIP

Promote Global and Local Citizenship means that:

*“The Watertown Public Schools will ensure that each student becomes informed about and participates in local and world affairs. Students will strive to understand people of different backgrounds and cultures and the interconnectedness of the contemporary world.”*

### TEACHING AND LEARNING THEMES

The District’s vision and strategic goals are progressive. Though they were adopted last year, the concepts they articulate have been driving our educational planning for several years. Likewise, we have three teaching and learning themes that have been my mantra since I came to Watertown in 2005.

In Watertown we emphasize Educator to Educator Collaboration – both, locally and worldwide - as a model for professional learning. It is the theme behind our professional development programming and Task Force and Leadership Council structure. Data-driven instruction is our focus in using the evidence, of traditional standardized test scores, assessments of project-based learning, and teacher intuition as information to plan practice. Curriculum and Technology integration is the careful combination of content and pedagogy, using digital tools and universal design for learning.

## PRACTICES (SAME BUT UPGRADED)

Here is a quicktake of an exciting variety of practices which we are continuing and are improving with each school year.

- Teams of teachers and administrators work together in “Professional Learning communities” as Task Forces and Leadership Councils.
- Our professional development program is evolving based on your feedback and needs. With the Professional Development Council, teacher professional learning is planned by and for teachers.
- The technology-in-practice schedule has been revamped according to your recommendations. Each course and department will focus on concepts and tools for universal design for learning.
- We are continuously updating our website. Classroom sites are especially getting better and better. We also have developed terrific online student newspapers - the Cunniff Kid’s News, and the Middle School’s Watertown Splash. I began a Superintendent’s webspace last spring that includes my presentations and communications, and showcases innovative teaching practices and a student work gallery.
- Online education is a growing reality. We continue to improve how our students experience online learning both through our own classroom websites and in Virtual High School. It’s very important that both students and teachers have positive and productive online learning experiences.
- The computer labs in each building have been updated, and there are a few more laptops carts in each school. We also have a few iPOD carts on order.
- The libraries are working towards becoming Learning Commons, with digital media studios and project design spaces.
- We are expanding our use of Measures of Academic Progress into the Middle and High Schools.
- The Middle School science teachers are continuing to investigate and design virtual science assessments.

## PRACTICES (CHANGING)

What other practices are we looking forward to this year?

- The most significant change at the High School is a new leadership structure with a new Headmaster and Associate Headmaster.
- The High School also has significantly new special education programming with renovated classrooms.
- At the Lowell School, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers have teamed up to devise new 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade programming.

- We continue to focus on improving our reading programming. This year we will begin to use iPods for a new iRead approach to support reading, especially for ELL and specialized reading.
- The High School will have several new exciting courses and activities: Medical Careers, Journalism & Media, Mock Trial, and Ambassadors for Change.
- We will be instituting a new, District-wide anti-bullying curriculum.
- The Teacher Evaluation Design Team is prepared to debut a pilot program on Professional Assessment & Growth.
- We have started to profile some of the excellent teaching practices across the district. As part of this effort six of your colleagues presented their innovative classroom practices this summer at the international Building Learning Communities Conference.

#### TEACHING PROFILES

You can visit the Teaching Profiles webpage and learn how your colleagues are “Expanding the Boundaries of Watertown Schools” with innovative practices. The purpose of this website is to celebrate your teaching and showcase Watertown teachers using several methods to publish student work on the Internet. From nings to wikis, blogs to glogs, Watertown students are using creative tools to learn, illustrate, and publish their projects to engage each other and the community. I expect this webpage to grow because many of you have a practice that others can learn from.

#### FUTURE OF 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LEARNING IN WPS - YOUTUBE

Finally, we all know that education is a work in progress. We have begun to make great strides in Watertown and have developed momentum towards meeting our goals. This is where we are: The Future of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning in Watertown Public Schools...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvUGivyJdg8>

#### FUTURE OF 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LEARNING IN WPS - CONCLUSION

Educating children in this changing world is really hard work. Concentrating on the future of learning and ensuring that we are preparing our students for the demands and opportunities of the 21st century is what is most inspiring to me about education and the work we do together. I am looking forward to having the most terrific school year ever. I hope you are too.