



MATH SPECIALIST, SAM JOVELL WORKING WITH TEACHERS AFTER A PD PRESENTED BY GREG TANG, DURING THE SUMMER.

School Improvement Quarterly News

SEPTEMBER 2016

Issue Date



Have a wonderful school year!!

“So Excited to Join this Professional Team”

By: Jennifer Chatain

Joining Questar III BOCES in July was such a gift to me. I have already learned so much from the School Improvement Specialists that surround me and I am looking forward to supporting their efforts in our school districts, as well as meeting all of the district administrators and staff over the next few months. I have been able to visit a number of districts and participate in rich discussions about student achievement and district needs. The student-centered discussions and the willingness to pursue continuous improvement is impressive and exciting!

As the Director of School Improvement, I will pursue new workshop models and support the embedded coaching strategies that have had such a tremendous impact on our component districts. This newsletter is the first example of our efforts to communicate more frequently with all of you about what is being planned throughout the year. It will also serve as a platform to celebrate the work of our specialists and teachers through collaboration that impacts student learning and achievement.

As I prepare this message for all of you, I remember what it was like for me as a Principal: checking classrooms; fielding

phone calls; hiring new staff; checking bus lists; welcoming teachers; handing out class lists and schedules; and working Labor Day weekend finishing final tasks. The list never seems to end! Sleep the night before the kids arrived was almost impossible! However, when the doors opened and the sound of kids yammering about their summer filled the air, I took a breath and SMILED! All the work was worth it!!

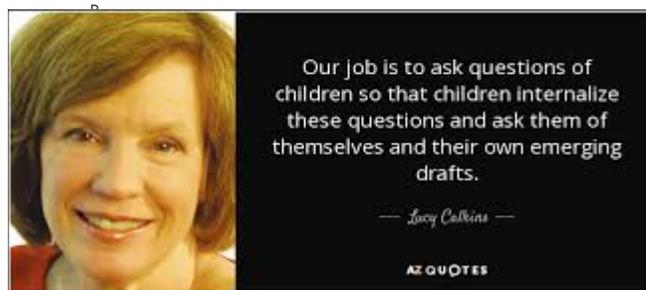
While school has just begun, and the summer work is complete, I know there are many more daily tasks that lay ahead. I want to assure you that the School Improvement Office is here to assist you in anyway. Please never hesitate to contact us - we are always willing to do your research and lighten your load. We have all walked in your shoes and understand the varied assignments that you are tasked with completing on a daily basis, even when the fire alarm sounds, a parent needs to talk immediately, or the milk is frozen in the cafeteria!

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ELA Specialists “Summer FUN”

by Arlene DeSiena



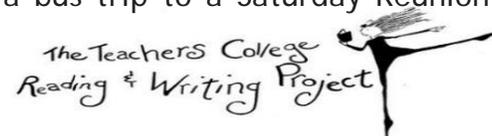
Summer at Questar III BOCES was very busy! We were fortunate to host several nationally renowned presenters who extended our knowledge on the topic of literacy.

The first luminary to arrive in Castleton was Kelly Gallagher. Fresh from finishing another year of teaching high school English, Kelly shared many ways to engage hard-to-motivate students with complex texts. Participants also received a copy of Kelly's book, *In the Best Interest of Students*. On the second day of the workshop, participants studied the book using the “whip-around” model for the first chapter and a jigsaw approach for the rest of the book. We were treated to a presentation by our resident Google expert, Jason Adams on Lit Trips, interactive field trips teachers can use to virtually “transport” students to the actual setting of books they study in class. Teachers collaborated on developing unit plans to use, incorporating the lessons learned from Kelly and Jason.

With so many of our component districts adopting Lucy Calkins' Units of Study in Reading and Writing, our next summer workshop was presented by coaches from Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Teachers were divided into two groups, K-2 and 3-5, so they could devote the entire day to learning how to teach each unit.

Our final workshop was presented by Leah Mermelstein. For those who needed a refresher in or are new to ways to manage a writing workshop model, this was a very informative workshop! The first day, Leah used her extensive classroom and coaching experience to share how to effectively launch the writing workshop. On the second day, teachers studied Leah's book, *Self-Directed Writers* and used the time to plan their own writing calendar, based on the writing program currently used in their district.

Stay tuned for upcoming events offered this fall (including a bus trip to a Saturday Reunion at Teachers College on October 22, 2016 on MyLearningPlan).



Getting Prepared for the Next Generation of Science Standards



The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) are K-12 science content standards. States developed the NGSS to improve science education for all students. New York State is in the process of adopting a version of these standards. A goal for developing the NGSS was to create a set of research-based, up-to-date K-12 science standards. These standards give local educators the flexibility to design classroom learning experiences that stimulate students' interests in science preparing them for college, careers, and citizenship.

A high-quality science education means that students will develop an in-depth understanding of content and develop key skills—communication, collaboration, inquiry, problem solving, and flexibility—that will serve them throughout their educational and professional lives.

How Can Questar III Help?

Questar III BOCES has two Science Specialists who are working to design workshops and support services aligned to the NGSS. The Specialists have been attending training workshops, becoming well versed in the expectations, content and skills required by the new standards. Listed on page 3 are a variety of services the specialist may provide to your teachers.

NGSS workshops for K-12 teachers could include:

- General overview of the standards
- Building or grade level workshops for implementation
- NGSS aligned Instructional strategies and activities
- Content/concept support for elementary teachers
- Engineering design practices by grade level
- Instructional coaching for NGSS implementation

Our Science Specialists are available for in district work as well as workshops at the Questar III office. For more information contact:

Jane King at jane.king@questar.org

George Seymour at george.seymour@questar.org

THANK YOU ALEX!

by Susan Marks

Alex Chandler is a 4th grade teacher at Walter B Howard Elementary School in New Lebanon.

Alex has been teaching for over 20 years and in the past several years, has worked with Questar III BOCES content specialist to give her students the best possible classroom experience. Since 2013, Alex has partnered with Questar III's Senior Mathematics Specialist Susan Marks. During their meetings, Susan and Alex have created meaningful assessments, developed strong RTI instructional strategies, explored new classroom techniques and clarified New York State's Common Core learning standards and assessment expectations. Susan has offered coaching, lesson feedback, curriculum guidance and resource insights.

Alex has seen a great deal of success with her math students in the classroom and on the New York State Assessments. Alex believes that her experiences with Questar III School Improvement Specialists has made a positive impact on her teaching.

"Over the years I have worked with three Mathematics Content Specialists--Sam, Gail, and Susan," she said. "All three women have shared their knowledge and expertise gained through teaching and coaching. I'm happy to share my classroom with them whether I'm watching and learning from them through modeling a lesson or from their observing me and giving me tips to strengthen my lesson. Professional conversations are insightful and full of up to date, useful information. I have learned best practices from their experiences in the classroom and with other school districts. Having a relationship with them over the years has given me a "go to" person for help. If they didn't have the answer, they searched until they found it. It has been a pleasure to have been able to work with them through the years."

Questar III would like to celebrate Alex's continued efforts and success in her ongoing development as a teacher and life-long learner. Thank you for all you do, Alex!

NEWS from our Commissioner

Over the summer, more than 1,700 educators and 300-plus parents applied for the ELA and Math Standards Review Committee spots. A total of 138 parents and teachers were selected. There are 66 ELA Committee members and 72 Math Committee members.

You can find more information about the standards review, including an updated timeline and a map showing the geographical representation on the Standards Review Committees at www.nysed.gov/aimhighny.

A survey will go live September 21st and be open for comment until November 4th. The Commissioner requests that you review the work of your colleagues, and comment honestly, so that our state can publish the best revised standards. Questar III BOCES will set up 3 meetings to support teacher completion of this survey. Refer to the last page of this newsletter for further information.

New Service offered at Questar III BOCES

by Tasha Anderson, Social Studies Specialist

In April 2014, the Board of Regents adopted the new K-12 Social Studies Framework. Questar III is offering a new social studies School Improvement service to support teachers and school leaders in our component districts as they adjust teaching practices to align with the new Framework.

The Framework was collaboratively developed by educators across New York State based on design principles established by the National Council of the Social Studies, through its College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework.

Implementing the NYS Social Studies Framework requires three key instructional shifts:

1. The first shift is a focus on conceptual understanding. Questioning plays a critical role for educators as they support students with the development of conceptual understanding. The Framework emphasizes the use of compelling questions to build student interest, as well as supporting questions to assist students in their investigations and guide them in their exploration of the social studies.
2. The second shift will move educators from the role of disseminator to the role of facilitator to support student-centered sustained inquiry, productive collaboration and informed action.
3. The third shift will require educators to integrate content knowledge and skill acquisition purposefully so students can develop the skills to think like a geographer, historian, economist and citizen in a democratic state.

What do the instructional shifts and new Framework mean for educators?

To implement the new Framework, teachers may need support finding and adapting primary and secondary sources for students to explore as they investigate compelling and supporting questions that drive instruction. Others may benefit from collaborating with colleagues and peers to develop compelling and supporting questions. Some teachers may benefit from instructional coaching to support the shift from a teacher-directed classroom to a student-centered learning environment.

The new Questar III service (Co-Ser 522) is similar to our embedded model for ELA and math. We can provide regional and in-district workshops and staff development to ensure horizontal and vertical alignment of the social studies practices between grades. We can offer customized services as well, based on individual school and district needs.

With training and support, social studies educators in grades 6 through 12 will be able to enhance student learning in the social studies, while strategically reinforcing the Common Core Literacy skills necessary for students to be successful across content areas. For educators in grades K-5, implementing the social studies Framework is a unique opportunity to reinforce Common Core ELA skills through explicit instruction in the social studies. Please let us know how we can best support you and your educators with this transition.

Our new Social Studies School Improvement Specialist may be reached at Tasha.Anderson@questar.org or 518-479-6879.



School Library

System Offerings

Students grades K-12, and teachers have free access to eBooks and audiobooks through the School Library System's OverDrive collection. OverDrive is an online extension of our schools' physical libraries.

Through the OverDrive app, books can be accessed anytime, anywhere. Please see your school librarian to get started!

More information about eBooks available at no charge to all Questar III component districts can be found at:

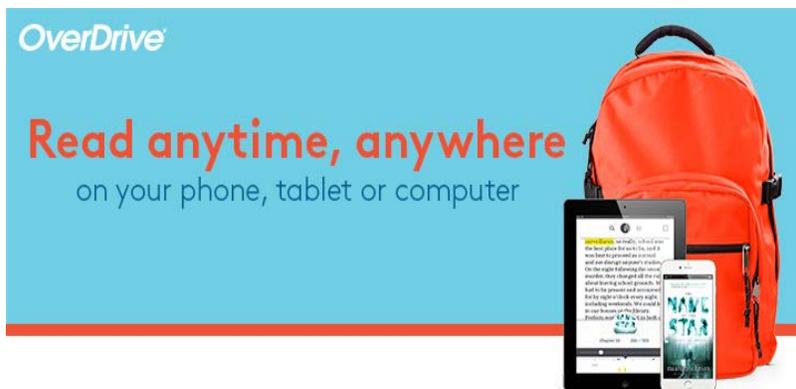
<http://libguides.questar.org/SLS/ebooks>

Arts & Enrichment Programs

Did you know? Districts that participate in the Arts in Education and Exploratory Enrichment Co-Sers receive state aid back on funds spent on author visits, school performances, and field trips aligned to the curriculum. If your school is planning to host events this school year, even if PTSA funds are being used, contact Kim Harris at kharris@questar.org to learn more about these Co-Sers.

Odyssey of the Mind

This year's Odyssey of the Mind tournament will take place at the Cossackie-Athens Central School District on Saturday, **March 25, 2017**. We are anticipating nearly 90 teams this year. Please mark your calendar so that you can cheer on teams from your district or join us as a volunteer or judge. For more information, contact Jen Cannell at jen.cannell@questar.org.



TECH VALLEY HIGH HAPPENINGS

New this school year, Tech Valley High School is employing a School Outreach Coordinator who serves to facilitate collaboration among all of their sending districts. Sarah Fliess taught ELA and Social Studies to middle schoolers for 10 years before moving into high school instruction and teacher coaching for the last 5 years. In her new role, Sarah will be facilitating a variety of Outreach activities including Data Studies, Instructional Rounds, PBL work, and PLCs in addition to Tech Valley's "InReach" which includes tours, program studies, and teacher residences. Check out techvalleyhigh.org to find out about upcoming Professional Support opportunities in your area. If you would like more information, you can reach Sarah Fliess at sfliess@techvalleyhigh.org.



MARK YOUR CALEDARS!!!**WORKSHOP EXCITEMENT for 2016-2017**

Go to MyLearningPlan.com
for further details.

ELA
Science
Math
Data
S.S.

Close Reading and Text Analysis Institute, October 14th

Have Data...Now What? October 26th (K-12)

Teaching Analysis and Argument Writing Institute, November 1

Content Specific Workshops:

Chemistry, November 29th

Physics, December 6th

Earth Science, December 8th

Using Questions to Enhance Student Engagement, December 13th

Biology, January 11th

Greg Tang, Fractions, Ratios & Proportional Thinking, February 10th and May 19th (follow up) (4th-9th)

ATTENTION ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS!

Do you have a workshop you would like us to deliver?

Do you have building goals that require professional development?

Do you have novice teachers who need PD hours?

Send all requests to: Maria.Fernandez@questar.org

**Library
Services
And
MORE!!**

Cool Tools for Schools - Cool Tools for Schools is a flexible, self-paced, online learning program designed to help you keep up (and catch up) with a wide range of web-based services and networking tools, and explore how they can be used in a K-12 setting. Participants will work through 5 or 10 learning modules focused on different categories of web-based educational services and tools. There are currently 40 modules that will appeal to a wide range of interests.

Begins October 3rd,

<https://www.mylearningplan.com/WebReg/ActivityProfile.asp?D=15197&H=1&l=2154604>

Text Sets – Regional School Library Systems' Meeting, **WSWHE BOCES, December 9th**

Tell it on Tuesdays – Monthly webinar series for school librarians on a variety of topics. The first TOT is from Alicia Abdul, School Librarian at Albany High School, presenting on new and noteworthy young adult novels, **October 4th, 3:30pm - 4:30pm,**

<https://www.mylearningplan.com/WebReg/ActivityProfile.asp?D=15197&H=1&l=2179657>

School Librarian Liaison Meetings – Representatives from each district attend four liaison meetings each year. Professional development is a primary focus of these meetings.

Helpful and Informative Links for Teachers!

Math

- Illuminations - <https://illuminations.nctm.org/>
- Learn Zillion - <https://learnzillion.com/>
- EngageNY Studio Talk (k-5 mathematical modeling videos) - <https://www.engageny.org/content/math-studio-talk-common-core-instruction-video-series>
- Illustrative Math - <https://www.illustrativemathematics.org/>
- Greg Tang - <http://gregtangmath.com/>
- K-5 Math Teaching Resources: <http://www.k-5mathteachingresources.com/>
Unpacking the Standards (North Carolina - note that NYS may have a couple of different standards that what appear in this document, however, this is a great resource for seeing what the standard "looks like")
<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/acre/standards/common-core-tools/#unmath>

SS

- New K-12 Social Studies Framework and Toolkit and Prototype Global Regents Questions
<https://www.engageny.org/new-york-state-k-12-social-studies>

ATTENTION TEACHERS!!

We need your help!!!

Please come to Questar III BOCES on one of the following dates to complete the AIMHIGHNY Survey about our revised ELA and Math standards.

September 26th, October 6th and October 25th

3:30 to 4:30 in Conference Room 3 on the 1st floor

(refreshments to be provided and a special door prize)