

*Linking communities through learning*

September/October 2008

Message from the Executive Director

Julian E. MacDonnell, Jr.

NRIC is on the Move!

As this issue of the NRIC Newsletter comes to you, the Collaborative as we knew it has changed! We have struggled with low student tuitions and referrals for some of our programs, but we did not stand still. We looked internally and recognized the need to consolidate, enhance, and improve our classrooms, programs, and services. This renewal to excellence has been evidenced with our commitment to our new Reading Initiative led by Ms. Cindy Kendall and the Curriculum Committee. In our consultative services area, Mr. Robert Wall has developed new support programs for our Board of Superintendents as they work to re-energize their faculty with individualized professional development to support classroom management, and universally designed instruction.

We have continued to support alternative learning opportunities through our Virtual Learning Academy. To date, more than 500 students throughout Rhode Island have been enrolled in our virtual learning courses. The success stories are written daily as students find new avenues to reclaim lost credits or participate in high quality curriculum aligned to State and National Standards. These students are no longer dropping out, but remain enrolled with the support of their local school systems.

We have moved to a student management and IEP platform that simplifies the transfer of student information between NRIC and its districts. In doing so, we have coordinated many meetings to share forms and develop a set of NRIC standard forms for RIDE and parental rights management under IDEA.

Fiscal Year 2008 was a challenge in many ways as we dealt with the impacts of Senate 3050 Legislation within our districts and the fulfillment of our strategic plan for professional development. From the struggle and challenge of attempting to purchase property to develop a professional development center and new office space, a renewed energy grew from the cooperation and collaboration to find a common ground in dealing with local financial crisis and our future mission. The accrued monies for the purchase were given back to our local school systems to assist them in meeting their financial mandates and a new office and professional development center was identified and a lease has been approved. We are anxious for our December move to a new professional building designed to meet our office needs and provide state-of-the-art professional development space.

We have worked with Northeastern University to develop and deliver three new degree programs to Rhode Island teachers and administrators. A newly designed Educational Doctorate Program began in October with an initial cohort of 23 Rhode Island administrators. Adding to this was the beginning of a Masters Degree Program for Elementary Teachers with a concentration in Mathematics or Science. The NRIC will work with NEU to gain RI Higher Education and RIDE approval in the coming year.

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"Flexible people never get bent out of shape!"

..... Unknown

Message from the Executive Director (cont'd)

The NRIC was recently awarded a new RIDE grant for Early Childhood with a focus on supporting high standards and accreditation. As you can see, our RIDE relationship continues to expand with new opportunities to support our local and non-member school districts within Rhode Island. The RIMAC Grant to support access to instructional materials for visually impaired students is moving forward with great success due to the leadership of Jayne Rabideau.

The NRIC Curriculum Leadership Team, with the commitment and support from our Superintendents to work collaboratively on professional development, will be focusing on Using Data to Improve Instruction this year. When we combine this with a new regional professional development plan currently being developed by the Superintendents, our training center will be hopping! The NRIC Conference Center will lead to numerous conferences and professional development activities for all of the educational faculties of northern Rhode Island. Our new website – www.nric-ri.org – will support electronic registration for all professional development opportunities through the use of our new PROTRAXX registration.

We are on the move and by adapting to meet the evolving needs of our educational communities, NRIC will continue to be the focal point for support and collaboration. My best wishes to all who have supported this Administration and made this NRIC transformation a reality.

Back.....and to the Future

By Robert E. Wall, Director of Educational Services



As the 2008-09 school year opens, NRIC looks back to core missions of the past and seeks to reinvigorate them, while looking to the future of education in Rhode Island.

In the past, professional development had been a core mission of NRIC – not restricted to Special Education, but education in general. With the Main Office moving to a more accessible centrally located facility for northern Rhode Island and the State as a whole, once again NRIC will be positioned to better support school districts. While previously NRIC had been hampered by inadequate training facilities, the new location will allow presenters to speak to large groups, accessible to individuals with any number of disabilities. In addition, our state-of-the-art Professional Development Program – PROTRAXX – will enable us to accomplish much more via the web, thereby reducing the intensive administrative support that providing these programs currently entails. This new facility, in conjunction with our Protraxx partnership, will allow us to provide professional development opportunities for our districts for more comprehensive support to all students, especially those with diverse academic needs.

While we have ramped up our capacity and ability to provide professional development and support, our programs have been active in working to meet the expanded needs of our students as well. Our Reading Initiative, lead by Cindy Kendall, and supported by our new Reading Support Specialist, Dianne Peretti, will significantly ramp up our ability to provide focused, structured, sequential, research-based reading interventions to our diverse students. Our Student Information System Initiative will enable us to participate in and realize a goal of many of the districts in the northern region that experience a great deal of student mobility—an electronic records system that allows districts to transfer student information at significantly reduced time, paper and labor costs with significantly improved accuracy. In today's educational climate, many of the essential records for our students are no longer only housed in the Special Education Department. Being able to share information electronically will allow students to move with their Personal Literacy Plans, Individual Learning Plans, formative and summative assessment data from district and state assessments, in addition to their special education assessments. In this way, we will be better prepared and informed to meet their educational needs.

The national state of education has changed dramatically over the past ten years as we change our cultural focus from an industrial-driven economy to an information-service based economy. The NRIC stands prepared to assist districts, as well as students that we serve, meet those changes as well.

Technology News

By Thomas H. Rambacher, Technology Director

NRIC Website

Welcome back to the start of what promises to be another exciting school year with what we hope will be filled with many beneficial advancements using technology. The first and one of the most anticipated is the new NRIC website.

Hopefully, everyone has had the opportunity to visit and look through the new NRIC website www.nric-ri.org. The creation of a website that tries to capture and inform people of all the great programs and professional development opportunities here at NRIC is no small undertaking. Thanks to the hard work, planning, and coordination of Craig Enos and Debbie Jannetta, the new NRIC website is up and running.

The website will be constantly evolving over time, and Debbie Jannetta has once again stepped up for the NRIC organization by volunteering to serve as the Webmaster for our site. Debbie is in the process of populating many areas of the site with documents and information. There are discussions taking place to create a secure "employees only" portion of the website where information, policies and procedures, as well as forms will be available to access electronically. As we all try and "go green", this will be another step to try and reduce the amount of paper and energy we consume on producing and distributing these types of materials.

So, if you haven't had the opportunity, please check out the website and submit comments (and thanks) to Debbie at djannetta@nric-ri.org with the subject line of your email as NRIC Website.

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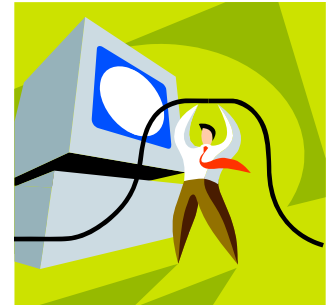
NRIC Profile / Site News

SRA Corrective Reading Program

By Cindy Kendall, Assistant Special Education Director

During the month of October, every educator can feel the increased stress and tension in a building related to the administration of NECAP. Now imagine you are a fifth grade boy who reads below a first grade level, and you're facing your third day of testing. That was exactly the scene I encountered during one of my walk-throughs. His teacher bent down to look him in his face and said, "I know it's hard, just do your best. I promise I will teach you to read." Those words have been echoed throughout the Collaborative over and over again. Our staff has a renewed direction and confidence in their instruction with the implementation of the SRA Corrective Reading Program.

The Corrective Reading Program is an evidenced based program that guarantees two years growth in one year. It's triage for reading. It incorporates all five areas of reading development; phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. It consists of a decoding strand, and a comprehension strand. Students are grouped at various levels based on a placement assessment. There is



NRIC Site Profile / Site News

on-going progress monitoring through periodic mastery tests. Instruction is explicit and systematic. Fidelity to the program is necessary to ensure success. Students who do not place in the Corrective Reading Program are placed in the more language-based Mastery Reading Program.

I want to extend my thanks to the Curriculum Committee who researched various reading programs and finally recommended the SRA programs for our classes. The committee consists of the following Collaborative teachers: Karen Gill, Cheryl Silva, Nancy Duffy, Tina Hoover and Karen Correia. In addition to selecting the reading program, the committee is finalizing the creation of a standards-based ELA curriculum that will guide teachers in their instruction.

Lastly, we welcome our new Reading Specialist, Ms. Dianne Peretti. Ms. Peretti is a retired reading coach from Pawtucket, and she has jumped in both feet to become an essential member of the Collaborative team. She provided instruction and guidance in administering the GRADE. This will help us to determine the grade levels of our students and whether or not they require a Personal Literacy Plan. She will provide on-going support to our staff and students. The implementation of a program model of related service delivery places our interventionists in the classrooms. It gives them the flexibility to support our new literacy initiative through direct service or in a class through functional group lessons.

It is through this multi-pronged approach to our literacy instruction that we will impact student achievement. It is the belief that through improved instruction our students will experience less frustration and more academic success.

St. Lawrence School

Who is the New Kid on the Block?????

"I am" -- Dianne E. Peretti! I am the new Reading Specialist/Consultant, who is married with two adult children and a baby Boxer granddog.

I have taught grades K-12, as well as a teacher in a variety of disciplines: Kindergarten, Language Arts, Reading, Algebra, Driver Education, and in addition, as a Literacy Coach.

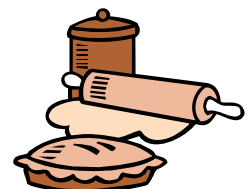
Currently, I am housed at St. Lawrence, but travel to the other sites as well, working with teachers on GRADE Testing (Group Reading Assessment Diagnostic Evaluation), PLP's (Personal Literacy Plans), and Best Teaching Practices.

Everyone has been very welcoming and supportive!!! Thank you. I'm thrilled to be the newest member of the Collaborative family!!

St. Lawrence School (cont'd)

By Karen Gill

The holidays are just around the bend and to ease your pain, we are having a pie fundraiser to save you all from your kitchen woes and earn money for Room 8 at St. Lawrence! As extra incentives, there will be a pizza party for the top selling classroom and a \$25.00 gift certificate for the top selling teacher. Please use professional judgment in sending order forms home with children.



NRIC Site Profile / Site News (cont'd)

For all those paying by check, please make it payable to Karen Gill.

All orders must be returned to Karen Gill at St. Lawrence by Thursday, October 23. Delivery is scheduled for the first week in November. If your site has a large order and a freezer to store the pies, I will have them delivered to you. If not, please contact me to arrange a time for you to pick them up at St. Lawrence.

We appreciate everyone's support!

St. Joan's School

Please Join Us!

"Lanes for Life" Fundraiser



We are extending an invitation to all classes to join us again this year for the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society's "Lanes for Life" Fundraiser. Last year's event was a huge success as we raised over \$1,500.

If your class is interested, please call or email Andrew Dagesse at St. Joan's with your class location and number of students. We will coordinate transportation and dates for the students to bowl. Fundraising sheets will be faxed to your site for the students to take home. They can ask their family and friends or teachers to sponsor them. They can give a lump sum donation or a certain amount for each bowling pin (i.e., a dime for every pin knocked down, which would mean that if the child gets 100 pins = \$10.00).

Not only is this a fun event for the children, it is also beneficial for teachers as well. It can be incorporated into R.I.A.A. goals such as writing, math, reading, communication skills and much more. For the SAP program, it would benefit students' community experience. For the RAP Program, it will teach students about helping others and good sportsmanship.

If you need more information, please contact Andrew Dagesse at St. Joan's School at 658-5796 or send an email to: adagesse@nric-ri.org.

NEWS FROM APARTMENT C



The students at Apartment C would like to send a special thank you to everyone who participated in purchasing fall mums! As a group, we spent over four hours at a local farm gathering materials and learning what it takes to be a farmer! What an amazing experience!

Keep an eye out for more Collaborative creations developed by the students at Apt. C.

Let's Help the R.I. Community Food Bank!

The students at Apartment C will be collecting donations for the local community!

On October 15th, the students from Apartment C toured and volunteered at the R.I. Food Bank. It was an amazing experience. What we found out is that they need donations to help local families through these economic difficulties.

NRIC Site Profile / Site News (cont'd)

Here's a list of the most needed items:

- Protein: Canned Soup, Tuna, Meat, Peanut Butter, Nuts
- Canned Fruits & Vegetables including juices and dried fruit and tomato sauce
- Carbohydrates: Nutritious breakfast cereals, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, boxed macaroni & cheese
- Crackers, granola bars, cheese & cracker packages
- Extra virgin olive oil and canned or dried beans

We will be collecting donations for the months of October & November. Please contact Cindy VanAvery or Anita Hero if you have any questions.

Thanks to all for your generosity!

Cindy VanAvery, Anita Hero & Students

NRIC's Auditory Oral Program Presents..... Hearing Loss in Your Classroom

WHEN: Thursday, November 6, 2008
3:30 pm – 5:30 pm

WHERE: Orchard Farms Elementary School
1555 Scituate Avenue
Cranston, RI 02921

This is a RIDE endorsed professional development activity with 2 contact professional development hours.

Please contact Donna Rizzo, Program Coordinator,
at
270-8726 for more information.

NEWS FROM TEC

By Jane Slade

The Transition Employment Center is fortunate to have welcomed nine new students for the 2008-09 school year. We are also welcoming back four returning students that will be graduating and transitioning to their "next step" in their adult life.

As we begin our third year of the program, we continue to enhance our classroom and community-based curriculum. It has been a powerful experience to see our students meet and exceed the expectations we have put forth thus far. These experiences have led us to this motto for the school year: **"If you give them wings, they just might fly"**.

We held a Parent Night on September 16, 2008 to welcome new parents and begin to calm their fears and anxiety about how they describe the "cliff fall" to adult services.

We are looking forward to a very busy, exciting, and productive year! We have also welcomed Georgia Guiney to our staff at the TEC and Kristen Campbell to the staff of the Regional Vocational Assessment Center.

NRIC Site Profile / Site News (cont'd)

NRIC Staff Flu Shot Clinic

It's that time of year – flu season! Influenza can cause body aches, sore throat, fever, cough, congestion and extreme fatigue. Your best defense is a flu shot!

In conjunction with the Occupational Health Department at Urgent Care, we will hold a Flu Shot Clinic again this year for NRIC staff:

WHEN: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12TH

TIME: 2:30 PM TO 4:00 PM

WHERE: NRIC Main Office

If you're interested, please register with Debbie Jannetta, NRIC, at 658-5790, Ext. 223 or email: djannetta@nric-ri.org before November 5th.

Urgent Care will bill your health insurance so they will require a copy of your Blue Cross/Blue Shield card. Please bring a copy with you or send a copy to Debbie Jannetta in advance.

Recycle Printer & Ink Cartridges!

In conjunction with Northeast Recycle Group, we will be recycling all toner, copier and printer ink cartridges.

Please send all your empty cartridges to the Main Office.

Thank you!

Employee News

- ✚ Congrats to new mom, Colette O'Brien, on her new baby girl! Hope you're feeling better soon.
- ✚ Congrats to Janet Mongeau and Michael Petit on their marriage!
- ✚ Congrats to David Ulmschneider and his wife on their new baby boy!
- ✚ Bob Dagesse & Family are on the run again! Contact Bob for more details on how you can help with their Disneyworld Marathon for the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society.



Upcoming Events

CPI Training	Oct. 1	Main Office	3-7:00 pm
Operating Committee Meeting	Oct. 3	Main Office	1 pm
Board of Superintendents Meeting	Oct. 7	Main Office	12:30 pm
Columbus Day	Oct. 13	Closed	
RIDE Teacher Assistant Network	Oct. 15	Main Office	4-6:30 pm
IEP Training	Oct. 16	Main Office	3-5:00 pm
RIDE Authentic Assessment Training	Oct. 20	Main Office	8 – 3:00 pm
NRIC Curriculum Leadership Team	Oct. 23	Main Office	8 – 9:30 am
TEC Parent Information Night	Oct. 28	Main Office	6-7:00 pm
CPR Training	Nov. 4	St. Lawrence	8-2:00 pm
Election Day	Nov. 4	Closed	
NRIC Curriculum Leadership Team	Nov. 5	Main Office	8 – 9:30 am
“Hearing Loss in Your Classroom”	Nov. 6	Orchard Farm	3:30-5:30 pm
Transition Advisory Council Meeting	Nov. 6	Main Office	9-12:00 pm
Operating Committee Meeting	Nov. 7	Main Office	1 pm
Veterans Day Holiday	Nov. 11	Closed	
Flu Shot Clinic	Nov. 12	Main Office	2:30 – 4 pm
Board of Superintendents Meeting	Nov. 18	Main Office	12:30 pm
Wilson Training	Nov. 19, 20 & 21 st	Main Office	8-3:00 pm
NRIC Curriculum Leadership Team	Nov. 20	Main Office	8- 9:30 am
Happy Thanksgiving!	Nov. 27 & 28	Closed	
Board of Superintendents Meeting	Dec. 9	Main Office	12:30 pm
Regional Transition Coordinator Mtg.	Dec. 10	Main Office	9-12:00 pm
Transition Advisory Council Meeting	Dec. 11	Main Office	9-12:00 pm
Operating Committee Meeting	Dec. 12	Main Office	1 pm
NRIC Curriculum Leadership Team	Dec. 18	Main Office	8 – 9:30 am
Holiday Recess	Dec. 22 – Jan. 2	Sites Closed	



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Should you have events you would like included in future issues of our newsletter, please email to Debbie Jannetta at djannetta@nric-ri.org.