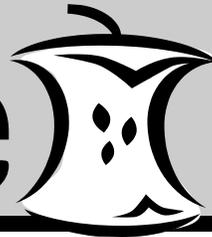


The Core



Orchard Elementary School ▪ 2 Baldwin Avenue, South Burlington, VT 05403 802-652-7300

May 24, 2019
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Important Dates

Memorial Day

Monday, May 27
No School

K-12 Arts Show

Wednesday, May 29
6:00—7:00 pm SBHS

Early Release Day

Friday, June 7
12:30 Dismissal

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Last Friday's Spring Fling was a big success! We enjoyed exceptional weather with lots of fun activities. The PTO took a risk by not charging admission or serving dinner, but I thought it worked out really well. Special thanks to Dayna Lorenz, Robyn Kummer and other volunteers for organizing this special family evening.

Also, thank you to our Green Team and parent & student volunteers for prepping our gardens last Saturday. They did some great work which included a Hydrangea in the courtyard, the beginning of a Memorial Garden in honor of Sue Barry.

Other things going on: we enjoyed the Tuttle Middle School Jazz Band today and have the Vermont Youth Dancers coming for a performance on Wednesday, May 29th—no slowing down here!

Have a relaxing and reflecting Memorial Day Weekend; take some time to read with your child.

Mark Trifilio

Letter to Parents Regarding Current Discussions on Specialized Instruction

Parents have been asking for more information about the recent conversations on Specialized Instruction. Here is a brief history (my version) of what we have been engaged in:

Vermont's Agency of Education hired a national consultancy group called the District Manager's Group to provide recommendations on best practices for meeting the needs of all students, *it is called the DMG Report*. Our district leadership teams are using the DMG Report recommendations to take meaningful action steps in South Burlington Schools. Here are some of those recommendations and goals:

1. **Highly Trained Teachers:** To have the most highly trained teachers work with struggling learners. The report strongly urges districts to hire more special educators and less support staff. The purpose is to place the teaching of the most complex learners into the hands of people with the highest education and training. Orchard School started building this team a year ago and will have a designated special educator per grade this fall. We are losing three support staff members in the process though all support staff will be offered positions in the district this fall.
2. **Intervention Blocks:** Have students remain in class for key instructional times and have daily intervention blocks so all students get what they need. We have been working toward this goal though time and resources are tricky. We hoping to actualize this goal for the fall.
3. **Specialized Instruction:** Teachers should be provided deeper training in curricular areas to ensure all students are engaged at a higher level. This is where we began working toward Specialized Instruction. We cannot have all teachers be trained deeper in all subjects, so our goal is to assign one or two teachers per grade get further training in math, literacy and science. We do not call this Departmentalization (especially since we do not have Math or English Departments). We call it Specialization so we can target teachers with more in-depth training.

continued to page 2

For more information, you can check out the actual DMG Report on line. Click on [Expanding and Strengthening Best-Practice Support for Students Who Struggle](#). It is a lot to read but Executive Summary is only six pages.

Thank you very much for reading this through. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions, concerns or comments. I am happy to meet with anyone to share more!

Sincerely,
Mark Trifilio

FAQs on Specialized Instruction

What is Specialized Instruction? Specialized Instruction is designed for teachers to have deeper training in key curricular areas – reading & writing, math, science and social studies. Students would then have two (or three) teachers during their school day. Students in grades 1 & 2 would have two teacher teams (one teaching reading and writing, the other teaching math and sciences). In grades 3 – 5, there are three teacher teams (reading, math, sciences and all three are teaching writing). This way, all students, from struggling learning to high achievers, would be getting more thorough instruction.

Why do Specialized Instruction? Students from Orchard School tend to do well very well on national assessments such as the SBACs; however, we are not making needed progress for all of our learners, most notably our students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. We believe Specialized Instruction could be a strategy to meet the need for all students – ranging from low to high-achievers.

What is talk about the Williamstown School? The Williamstown School has been using a Specialized Instruction model (as well as a number of our neighboring school districts). Williamstown is “moving the needle” on achieving academic success for their students of poverty. We have learned a lot from their work.

Why were parents not given this information? The communication plan was delayed to ensure all three elementary schools were moving forward together. Administrators rolled this out to all faculties and staff as a first step. The next steps were to inform parents and provide teachers time to work through details. Parents received a letter from *Concerned Orchard Teachers* through social media that provided misguided information. This caused a large backlash in the community and the superintendent took order by putting “a pause” on moving forward.

Will my child get lost in a Specialized Instruction Model? Just like our traditional model, there would be one teacher assigned as your child’s classroom teacher. They would be together for Morning Meetings and other classroom activities. Our expectations are the same as now with high expectations to keep close relationships with students.

Will there be less free time for students in a Specialized Instruction Model? Just as in previous years, teachers would be responsible for daily schedules and could build explore time (aka free time) into the schedule.

What are the next steps? To be determined.

Lunch Menu from May 27—31

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Memorial Day Holiday No School	Crispy Chicken Tenders Sweet Potato Fries <i>or</i> Egg Salad Sandwich <i>also:</i> Fresh Fruit & Salad Bar	Shepherd’s Pie Dinner Roll <i>or</i> Egg Salad Sandwich <i>also:</i> Fresh Fruit & Salad Bar	Cheese or Veggie Pizza Fresh Kale Salad <i>or</i> Egg Salad Sandwich <i>also:</i> Fresh Fruit & Salad Bar	Creamy Chicken Pasta Bake Fresh Kale Salad <i>or</i> Egg Salad Sandwich <i>also:</i> Fresh Fruit & Salad Bar