As we move from our landmark 2010-2014 contract to our current 2014-2017 agreement, we can look back with great pride on our collective work as New Haven Teachers. The accolades for us deservedly continue as we enter the sixth year of our School Change Initiative emphasizing the power and talent of New Haven Teachers. When finally given a “seat at the table” to collaboratively set policy decisions for all aspects of teaching and learning and work rule conditions for both teachers and administrators, our collective strength and ingenuity produced evaluation systems that have been the model for the entire country and work rules that enhanced our profession thereby eliminating many of the draconian measures inflicted by years of previous top-down mandates. While we have made great progress and have much to be proud of, our work continues. All of us that have taught even a single day in New Haven know the conditions, while infinitely better, are far from perfect.

Over the years we have put in place written policies that address items such as lesson plans, TEVAL goal setting, the use of personal days and sick days, 30 minute teacher time plans for all schools individually crafted and voted upon by teachers, the incorporation of student feedback in a teacher’s evaluation, the implementation of newly created Advisory periods, etc. Of particular note, while we teachers and administrators, at both the building and central office levels, have certainly had disagreements along the way, take note of the fact that these policies are jointly developed and implemented. I know of no other school district whereby policy is set in writing by a teacher’s union president and the superintendent and members of his executive team.

Each year we add new teachers and administrators. This article will serve as a point of reference for educators new to New Haven and a refresher for our veterans. I have listed the items chronologically as we have collaboratively developed these policies throughout our 6 years of school reform here in New Haven.

**LESSON PLANS**

Our lesson plan policy is clear. The content and format of the teachers plan remain solely within the purview of each teacher.
This is true in all schools. There are a couple of schools with slightly different lesson plan policies but they have been agreed to in work rules established specifically for those individual schools. The NHPS lesson plan policy is included in full detail below. TEVAL goal setting is also included in this memo. An updated memo on goal setting was sent in September 2015 and is included toward the end of this article.

The districts’ policy on lesson plans is listed below. While the policy itself has not changed, we did update it a bit with a reference to TEVAL. Our policy on Goal Setting for TEVAL is included as well.

From: Imma Canelli, November 22, 2011
Subject: Lesson Plans

Lesson Plans
There have been questions concerning the district’s policy as to teachers’ responsibility in regards to lesson plans. Weekly lesson plans are due to administrators upon request by Monday morning (or the first school day of each week). The purpose of lesson planning is to ensure the delivery of high quality instruction to our students. Our TEVAL document identifies six (6) elements that are to be addressed in planning when preparing lesson plans. These are delineated in section 3b “Instructional Practice-Planning and Preparation”.

In this context, our district does not specify a checklist of items to include, nor do we impose a particular format. Evidence of proper planning and preparation will be observable when supervisors visit classrooms. To that end, teachers will construct lesson plans including pertinent information that will enable them to effectively deliver instruction consistent with our TEVAL document. For example P2 “Establishes clearly defined student learning goals and objectives for all students.” It should be evident when your lesson is observed that teachers have clear goals and objectives for the lesson being delivered, whether the teacher has chosen to explicitly write it into their lesson plan or not.

Administrators may share suggested templates for lesson plans, but teachers should utilize a format in which they are most familiar and comfortable, leading to the ultimate goal of delivering high quality instruction. (Note: in some Turnaround schools, lesson plan templates were discussed with staff and agreed to as part of the election to work)

Goal Setting
Goal setting is a vital component of the TEVAL process. It is intended to be and in large part has been a cooperative, collaborative process whereby teachers and their Instructional Managers (IM) examine data and mutually establish student learning goals. Neither the teacher nor IM can or should attempt to unilaterally impose the learning goals. However there are situations whereby despite the best efforts of both the teacher and IM mutual goals cannot be established. In these situations contact Michele Sherban-Kline and David Cicarella, and a meeting will be arranged to assist in facilitating the mutual goal setting.

From: David Cicarella, December 10, 2013
Subject: Advisory Period

Thank you for implementing an advisory structure in your schools to address the on-going college and career readiness preparation of your students school-wide. In scheduling the advisory classes/teaching assignments, it has come to our attention that there may be some conflicts with the NHFT contract in terms of total # students, # classes per day, and # teacher preps.

Please review the schedules of the teachers in your respective buildings. Advisory assignments, where instruction and related work is being performed by the teacher are contractually viewed as a class preparation. Please discuss this matter with your teachers and solve as a school community. If needed, please make adjustments to teacher schedules based on the NHFT contract language (see below).

1. 125 student maximum
2. 5 classes max per day
3. Teachers are receiving the appropriate number of prep periods per week
4. A teacher with up to 2 preparations (for example: Alg 1 and Advisory) receives one prep period per day ~45 minutes minimum
5. A teacher w/3 preparations per day (for example Eng 1, Eng 2, and Advisory) receives 7 prep periods per week ~45 minutes minimum and preference from relief of collateral duties
6. A teacher w/4 preparations per day (for example Eng 1, Eng 2, Eng 3, and Advisory) receives 7 prep periods per week ~45 minutes minimum and relief of all collateral duties
HILLARY CLINTON
✓ Opposes the prioritization of services for work performed by union members
✓ Has a 100% AFT voting record in the U.S. Senate
✓ Is a vocal supporter of the “right to organize” and for workers to become union members
✓ Collaboration “It’s just dead wrong to make teachers the scapegoats for all of society’s problems. Where I come from, teachers are the solution. And I strongly believe that unions are part of the solution too.”
✓ Testing “We should be ruthless at looking at tests and eliminating them if they don’t help us actually move out kids forward.”
✓ Charter schools Must be held to same accountability and transparency as standards as traditional public schools “If the charter school is failing it should be shut down.”
✓ Advocate for Women & Girls

WHAT ARE “THEY” SAYING

JOHN KASICH “If I were king of America I would abolish all teachers lounges where they sit together and worry about “woe is us.”

DONALD TRUMP “They are sending people that have lots of problems. They are bringing drugs. They are bringing crime. They’re rapists.”

BEN CARSON “Obamacare is the worst thing to happen to this country since slavery.”
“Because a lot of people who go into prison, go into prison straight and when they come out they come out gay.”

JEB BUSH “People should work longer hours.”
“Stuff happens.”

CHRIS CHRISTIE “National teachers unions deserve a punch in the face.”
“The AFT is not for the education of our children.”

FIO RINA CATALINA “Force a government shutdown over planned parenthood.”

POLLING INFORMATION
Despite the barrage on Hillary from others, her net approval rating among Democratic voters is still +53% points!! She is the only Democratic candidate that can win and hold the White House

RESULTS OF SUFFOLK POLL – OCTOBER 1
Hillary Clinton 41%
Bernie Sanders 23% • Joe Biden 20%
If teachers are fine with the way things are, great! If not, please work to solve it as a school community. If our assistance is needed, please do not hesitate to contact either one of us.

SICK DAY/PERSONAL DAY POLICY
There have been persistent discussions concerning the use of sick days and personal days and how they intersect with TEVAL. Additionally, a protocol for resignations and retirements was sorely needed. The following memo addressed these concerns.

From: Donna Aiello and David Cicarella, April 9, 2014
Subject: Sick Day/Personal Day Policy

There have been increasing numbers of questions from both teachers and administrators regarding sick days, personal days, and the process for teachers concerning retirement notification.

Sick Days
• Teachers have asked about the monitoring of sick days by supervisors, the responsibility of substitute lesson plans, and how attendance/tardiness relates to TEVAL.
• All employers either in the private or public sector monitor the attendance of their work forces. While there is no official “trigger” that might raise a concern here in the NHPS, specific patterns of absences do. Examples that prompt scrutiny are: consistent and repeated absences on Mondays and Fridays, repeated absences before and after school vacations and/or holidays, excessive total number of days absent etc.
• Regular and predictable attendance is an essential function of employment. Sick time is available per the NHFT contract for “teachers who are unable to attend his/her regular scheduled classes because of a bona fide illness which requires her/him to stay home.” Questions about excessive absences and tardiness and their relation to TEVAL have been addressed previously and are surfacing again.
  • Attendance issues are not part of TEVAL and there should be no reference to attendance concerns in a teacher’s TEVAL documents. Concerns about teacher attendance are to be directed to Human Resources.
  • Tardiness is a component of the TEVAL process. It is part of Professional Values in the Reliability section.
• Teachers are required to keep 5 days of lesson plans available. The plans should be relevant to the NHPS curriculum, appropriate to the scope and sequence of the class, and updated and replenished as needed.

Personal Days
• The protocol for use of a sick day is to use the AESOP system, providing 48 hours notice “whenever practical”. (per NHFT contract) This language was written as such because there may be last minute, unexpected personal circumstances where a 48-hour notice is not possible. We do ask that teachers give as much notice as possible. For example, if a court date has been established 2 weeks prior, teachers can go into AESOP and create the personal day absence at that time. This advance notification helps our colleagues in the building when planning for that day.
• While personal days are not subject to administrative approval, in the spirit of collegiality and helpfulness to colleagues, when a significant number of teachers are taking a personal day on the same day, those teachers with the flexibility to move the personal day to a different day can offer to do so. There is confusion as the AESOP system has a drop down tab for administrative “approval”. We are presently checking into the software system to see if that “approval tab” can be disabled as it has been the source of the misunderstanding and is not relevant to our protocol for personal days.
• Questions as to the appropriate use of personal days have come to us repeatedly. Personal days as per the NHFT contract “are to be used to provide the teacher with necessary time off in order to fulfill bona fide personnel needs, such as the performance of legal, household, and other business which could not otherwise be legitimately performed during the teaching day…” If there is a concern about the use of personal days for business that does not meet this standard, it should be referred to the HR office.

The expectation for all professional staff is to be judicious when using sick days, personal days, and leaves of absences and that all such absences be taken consistent with the terms and conditions outlined in the contract. Everyone gets sick, has unexpected circumstances that may require the use of personal days, or may need to take a leave of absence. This is absolutely understandable and an overwhelming percentage of us operate with a high degree of integrity in this area. Other schedulable circumstances or affairs which can be managed outside of school hours should be scheduled whenever possible outside of school hours or on non-school days.

Retirement and Resignation
• Teachers are asked to give as much notice as possible to the district if they are planning to retire or resign for the coming school years, so that vacancies can be...
posted and the best possible candidates can be hired for those positions. Advance notification also allows other teachers looking to transfer an opportunity to apply for these vacancies. A position cannot be posted until an official retirement is received, so delaying notification compromises the transfers and hiring process.

- Medical benefits continue for teachers through August 31st. For example, if a teacher submits a retirement notice to Personnel in February, effective after working to the end of the school year, they will have prepaid their medical cost sharing through the entire summer. Their medical benefits remain intact throughout the summer.

- Teachers that take the 26 pay plan (with bi weekly checks throughout the summer) will, of course, receive their regularly scheduled checks as it is not ‘summer pay’ but rather a budget plan whereby money earned during the 10 month school year is spaced out over the course of the calendar year.

If any questions or concerns remain please contact either one of us.

**30 MINUTE TEACHER TIME PLANS**

Where the 2010-2014 contract emphasized evaluations plans for both teachers and administrators alike, our next contract of 2014-2017 focused on professional development opportunities for teachers. One incredibly innovative policy from that contract was the ceding of strict managerial rights from central office and replacing it with a highly collaborative and cooperative system for implementing collaborative time for all teachers. For years and years our contract dictated that teachers were to report to school 15 minutes prior to the student arrival time and would remain until “shortly after dismissal”. That language has been replaced by a policy whereby every school determines how to best utilize the 30 minutes teachers work in the school buildings before the students arrive and/or after they are dismissed. This was a huge win for teachers as the simplistic policy of merely showing up 15 minutes before the start of the school day has been replaced with incredibly innovative time plans developed at the school level.

One question I am constantly asked by both teachers and administrators is with the removal of the clause that states a teacher must be in the building 15 minutes prior to the arrival of the students then “what time do teachers have to report to work?” The answer is simple. While it is certainly no later than the student arrival, the professional expectation is all teachers will be prepared to perform their duties when the students arrive. Many teachers arrive very early as this is either their preference or what their respective schedules permit. Others remain after school each day to prepare for the next day as their schedules may only allow them to arrive closer to the student arrival time. Regardless of individual personal schedules, our professional responsibility is clear. We are ready to perform our duties when the students arrive each day. The procedure for developing these school-based policies is articulated below.

From: David Cicarella and Michael Crocco, May 20, 2014
Subject: 30 Minute Time Plan

Thank you for all of the time and energy that you have spent with teachers in your schools to identify ways to allocate the time they agreed to in the NHFT contract that will begin in 2014-15. We have a team gathering information on your plans all of whom have reported robust conversations, along with opportunities and challenges. (The team is composed of NHFT leaders (Dave Cicarella, Tom Burns, Pat Delucia, Dave Low and Justin Boucher), in addition to district-level leaders (Mike Crocco, Michele Sherban, and Jen Kramer-Wine).

As you know, the new NHFT contract (2014-2017) emphasizes teacher professionalism and enables each individual school to create an additional half hour of planned teacher time beyond the 6 hour and 15 minute student school day, thereby bringing the teacher work day to 6 hours and 45 minutes. The NHFT contract calls for teams of teachers and administrators at each respective school to collaboratively develop a plan which will best serve their needs. Each school will determine the mechanism whereby both teachers and administrators have an opportunity to provide input and offer suggestions as to the design of this 30 minute block of time. Possible uses that your school team could consider is planning time for various teacher meetings (such as grade level, data teams, departmental, school wide or any combination of these types of meetings based on need), arrival/dismissal support, and embedded professional learning. The collaboration and ultimate agreement at the school level will align with the NHFT contract utilizing the protocols for Work Rule Votes.

Several schools have completed this process and their plans have been finalized and submitted. Thanks for your hard work and collaborative efforts. Other schools are still in the midst of the process and many have conveyed questions as to either the procedure or voting protocols, or both.

1. Teachers and administrators arrive at one collaboratively developed plan. The details of the plan are put in writing and sent to all teachers and administrators for review over the next 5 days. This 5 day period allows for clarifying questions, concerns, etc to be properly addressed.

2. After the 5 day review period the NHFT representative and building principal will arrange for a ballot vote at a meeting of all teachers. The ballots will be counted in full view of all present immediately upon collection of the ballots.

3. The plan must be approved by both the administration and the teachers (by a 75% vote). Neither party (administrators nor teachers) can unilaterally impose a plan.

4. In the unlikely event a school cannot arrive at a plan agreed upon by the administration and the teachers, then...continued on page 8
the school will adopt the default plan from central office (still being developed as of this date).

5. Many schools have asked about an extension beyond the May 19th deadline. The Superintendent has agreed to allow for additional time and has extended the deadline for completion of these plans to Friday, May 30.

Please contact us if you have any questions or need any assistance.

If you have not sent your school’s plan for 2014-15, please send the plans to Dave Cicarella (david.cicarella@new-haven.k12.ct.us) and Jen Kramer-Wine (jennifer.kramer-wine@new-haven.k12.ct.us) – we will work to compile the plans in order to brief Garth.

STUDENT FEEDBACK IN TEVAL
The CT Dept of Education has based their evaluation system on our TEVAL. In fact, I was part of the 15 member PEAC (Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee) that developed recommendations that led to the statewide evaluation system (SEED). One point of contention was how to incorporate student feedback. Our policy is listed below.

From: Michele Sherban and David Cicarella, June 6, 2014
Subject: Student Feedback and Teval

There have been a few common questions regarding our joint memo (attached) sent on Wednesday June 4. As we stated in the memo, you probably already have plenty of feedback for your personal reflection in conversations with peers, as well as from conferences with students and parents throughout the school year and will not find it necessary to gather any more. The End of the Year Conference Form includes an area with the following question for documentation:

“Describe how you gathered and used feedback from students, parents, and/or peers to improve your practice.”

A Few Salient Points

- While the length of the response (for the question above) is entirely up to the individual teacher it certainly can be answered adequately in one well-constructed paragraph.

- If you feel you need additional feedback you can elicit it in any way you deem necessary. Simple surveys, student conferencing, etc. But again, chances are you already have plenty to draw from for your reflections.

- It is NOT necessary to have feedback from every student, parent, etc. A representative sampling will allow for adequate reflection.

- This is not intended to be an arduous task whereby teachers create a binder or folders etc. Conversely, the purpose is for teachers to reflect upon feedback gathered throughout the year and use it to inform their future instruction.

- This discussion at the End of the Year Conference, between the teacher and the IM, will be a professional conversation as to how the feedback was gathered and how it will be used to inform future instruction. There is no requirement or expectation for any written documentation beyond answering the question above.

Please contact either of us if there are any further questions.

GOAL-SETTING AND GROWTH MEASURES FOR TEVAL (UPDATE)
The TEVAL goal-setting policy was clarified in this memo as the new SBAC test was creating some confusion as to goal-setting, SLO’s, and IAGD’s.

From: Michele Sherban and David Cicarella, September 29, 2015
Subject: Student Feedback and Teval

As teachers and instructional managers are engaging in the goal-setting process it has become clear that we would all benefit from additional guidance from the curriculum supervisors regarding appropriate student learning growth measures. Deputy Superintendent Imma Canelli is working with the team of curriculum supervisors to revise the Content-Specific Goal-Setting Guidelines that they provided last year. We anticipate that this will be ready to send out to administrators and teachers later this week. Please be on the lookout for this communication.

Most importantly goal-setting per TEVAL requires that the SLOs (Student Learning Objectives) and IAGDs (Indicators of Academic Growth and Development) be mutually agreed upon by the teacher and Instructional Manager. The guidelines are being developed to assist in this process. They are not intended to be nor should they be interpreted as mandates. We continue to stress the use of multiple measures of assessment when determining student growth. There is no requirement that any particular assessment (standardized, district developed or teacher created) must be one of the assessment measures. Again, the SLOs and the methods of assessment should be mutually agreed upon and based upon each individual teacher’s student data.

In order to give teachers and their instructional managers sufficient time to work with the guidelines we are extending the goal-setting deadline to Friday, October 30, 2015.

Thank you for your patience. Once you receive the Goal-Setting Guidance document if you have any questions please contact one of us.