

THETFORD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tuesday, September 24, 2019
Thetford Elementary School

APPROVED MINUTES

Shannon Darrah convened the meeting at 6:33 p.m. The following were present: Julie Acker, Charlie Buttrey, Shannon Darrah, Donna Pluta, Megan Snider, School Board; Chance Lindsley, TES Principal, Bruce Williams, OESU Superintendent
Public Present: Mary Wunderlich, Ginni Balch, Kate Hill (7:02 p.m.) Cynthia Odell (7:06 p.m.)

AGENDA REVIEW: Agenda approved as amended.

MINUTES REVIEW: MOTION: (Buttrey/Snider) moved/seconded to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2019 Board meeting as amended (unanimous approval).

REVIEW OF ORDERS: Orders have been approved, no notable items.

PUBLIC COMMENT / CORRESPONDENCE: The Board received correspondence from a researcher from the organization BallotReady who was looking for information regarding our Act 46 merger status and board member terms. Darrah will respond.
Odell asked what the decision was on attaching correspondence to the minutes? Best practice is to acknowledge the correspondence was received, it does not need to be attached to the minutes.

PRINCIPAL REPORT: Lindsley and Wunderlich, TES SBAC Coordinator, put together a summary of the most recent SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) test results from 2019. This test replaced the NECAPS 3 years ago. All of the 3rd-6th graders participate in the assessment. Wunderlich began with the demographics: TES is a K-6 school, 27% of the students K-6 qualify for free/reduced lunch (FRL) and 25% of the 2019 SBAC students (grades 3-6) are FRL. Buttrey asked, where does Thetford compare statewide? Williams estimated that Thetford stood in the bottom quartile compared to the rest of the state. TES had 194 students, 20% are on IEP's. The student:teacher ratio is 10.7 according to SchoolDigger.com. The test is an end of year summative assessment in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Students use iPads to complete the test. Wunderlich discussed statistical vs. educational significance of the results. Wunderlich summarized the key findings from the 2018 analysis done by Laura Sharpless and Abby Harrington. She then presented data from 2019 compared to 2015-2018 data. The data was gathered from the VT Agency of Education. Additionally, VT Digger has also put together an online tool that was helpful. In 2019, 54% of students in grades 3-6 were proficient in ELA. School-wide proficiency in ELA has not changed in a statistically significant way over the last 4 years. In Math, 42% of 3-6 graders were proficient which is not a statistically significant change over the last 4 years. Lindsley noted that the drop in Math was expected after the implementation of the new math program, Bridges. Buttrey asked, how does TES compare statewide? Our total proficiency is very close to the statewide average.

Wunderlich noted many changes at TES over the past few years, including:

- New Math program, Bridges for grades K-5th started in 2018-2019
- Principal leadership changes, 3 different principals in the last 5 years.
- New ParaEducator configuration, last 3 years have brought more 1-1 assignments
- Increased IEPs (39 this year)
- Last year for Track My Progress Assessments
- Return of Math Coach
- Mentor Matters Program started this year
- Multi-grade Classrooms for all grades 1st-6th

Lindsley discussed steps the school will take this year and beyond. STAR District-wide assessment will replace Track My Progress next year. MTSS (Multi Tiered Systems of Supports) to create a clear path from regular instruction to interventions using a data driven system. This is happening this year SU-wide. Project Based Learning and Responsive Classroom have stalled some, likely due to leadership turnover and scheduling. Lindsley would like to explore how the school can go more in depth in those areas. Infinite Campus data system is being implemented this year across the SU. Lindsley asked, how does the board feel about interim SBAC testing? Interim assessments would increase familiarity with the language and format of the test, which would in turn increase the test scores. Buttrey asked, what is the current pedagogical thinking around the idea of “teaching to the test”? Discussion followed. Lindsley leans towards teaching the whole child and a lot of the things that are important can not be measured, though that does not discount the academics. However, when test scores are what is used to assess a school’s performance, then there should be a level of importance placed on them - especially as it can impact the public’s perception of a school. Philosophically this is conflicting. Given that the SBAC is a better assessment of critical thinking, why not practice so that students can gain familiarity to get through to a deeper understanding of the question? Williams noted that the SBAC test reflects the standards, so by design the standard curriculum should be “teaching to the test”. Compared to previous assessments, the quality of the SBAC is high. Interim testing to get comfortable with the test format and technology is not a bad idea, the question is how much time should you spend on that? Wunderlich noted that there are many digital tools available, and perhaps providing a few windows of time throughout the year for teachers and students to practice would be helpful. Discussion followed. The board thanked Wunderlich for the presentation of the data.

Wednesday, 9/25 is the last meet & greet with Lindsley and Carrie Brennan at Cedar Circle Farm. Lindsley reported that the turnout at the previous ones was great, quite a few parents and community members have attended and it has been good to meet and gather input. Becky De Fransisco and Ray Chin are conducting a class for TES and TA faculty on Developing Educational Leadership Practices, focusing on non-violent communication. Lindsley reported that Kate Hill and Sara Bailey are the TES representatives for the Strategic Planning committee. The solar field brush hogging was completed, and John Brown is working on replacing the balusters on the tree house and researching options for replacing the hot water system. The school completed its first evacuation drill of the year. Lindsley noted how quickly the building can be evacuated. Buttrey asked about the Monstshire partnership and how that was going. Lindsley is

looking forward to meeting with the Monstshire educators this week and will know more after that.

TA REPORT: Darrah reported that the last TA Board of Trustees meeting was short. Brennan is settling in as head of school. Some policies were passed and the board discussed board composition, currently there are 12 board members which is relatively small compared to past years.

FACILITIES NEEDS - BOARD DISCUSSION: The need for more comprehensive planning around facilities needs is two-fold. One is for the upcoming strategic plan, and the other is for long range budget forecasting. Buttrey noted that we have a 20-year bond that is about to be paid off. It would ideal to have schedule, much like the town does for its equipment. Would this be a strategic plan item or separate? Darrah said that John Brown is working on that and can come to our November meeting to discuss. Darrah asked, what does the board think are the greatest facilities needs? Darrah and Acker both feel that insulating the curtain wall in the primary wing is a top priority, as well as replacing the windows. Acker noted that there could potentially be a significant energy savings there, perhaps there are some grants available for energy audits and improvements? Buttrey will ask Bob Walker from the Thetford Energy Committee if he knows of any programs. Williams asked about the water issues and Lindsley reported it was fixed and tested and there is plenty of water now. Discussion followed, including a taste test of the water from the tap. Brown has been researching the current water heater and it will require upgrading to meet the needs of the building. Snider noted the gym floor resurfacing will need to be completed sometime in the next few years.

CANDIDATES FOR MINUTES CLERK: Darrah reported that we had one letter of interest to our advertisement for minutes clerk. Nancy Perkins, who does minutes for other OESU boards, can do the job for \$55.00/hour. Buttrey asked, what did we pay the last clerk? Odell responded that she thought it was \$55.00/meeting. Discussion followed. Balch asked could employees of the district be minutes clerk? Board members agreed that there would not be a conflict of interest since minutes are reviewed and approved by the board, and that minutes are not taken during executive sessions. Balch then asked what the responsibilities would be? After reviewing the expectations, Balch is interested in the position. MOTION: (Buttrey/Snider) moved/seconded to offer the position of minutes clerk to Ginny Balch at a rate of \$35.00/hour. (unanimous approval).

LUNCH PROGRAM DISCUSSION: At the last meeting Buttrey had asked what would it cost the school district to provide free lunch to all the students? Under Vermont law and AOE guidelines, Thetford does not qualify for the community eligibility provision, though there is a provision that provides some reimbursement for each category at the time the school enrolls. Williams quickly ran some numbers. Thetford already subsidizes a portion of the lunch program. Total revenue in food sales to students in FY19 was \$39,226. The total operations was \$88,410, and there was a \$14,293 loss. At first glance it appears that it could cost the district approximately an additional \$50,000 to provide school lunch to all, Williams will do more research to come up with a definitive number. He also noted that Thetford appears to pay its food service workers

as employees of the district, Darrah confirmed yes. Williams stated that most other schools contract these services, and they are paid for by revenue from sales. Williams will be attending a discussion about the community provision sponsored by Hunger Free Vermont in White River Junction, he will send out details for anyone that wishes to attend. Buttrey is talking with Joe Tofel, a trustee of the Floyd Dexter Fund to establish a summer lunch program for students in which the board may be asked to permit the use of the building in the summer to distribute bagged lunches. Discussion followed on logistics and other area programs.

SUPPORT STAFF GRID DISCUSSION: Buttrey reported that the OESU negotiating team met the day before. Bradford and Newbury will need to negotiate a new contract as a result of the merger. The Thetford grid cannot be changed until a new contract is negotiated. The statewide healthcare negotiation is currently in mediation. The board will keep negotiations update on the agenda for future meetings.

STRATEGIC PLANNING NEXT STEPS: Darrah spoke with Delia Clark and they decided that Clark and the Strategic Plan Committee members will attend the October 8 board meeting. It will be first on the agenda so the board and committee can align. The committee will then be excused so that they may hold their first meeting to plan the schedule. Darrah is still looking for a TA board member and TA student representative. Darrah asked where to find a copy of the old strategic plan? Williams found a copy in the board book and will get an electronic copy to Darrah.

OTHER BUSINESS: Williams distributed a board Code of Ethics document which all board members read and signed.

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: (Acker/Buttrey) moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. (unanimous approval).

FUTURE MEETINGS:

10/08/19 Thetford Town School District Meeting 6:30 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Julie Acker, Board Clerk

Attachment: 2019 Assessment Presentation, M. Wunderlich

SBAC Test Results

What do the results tell us?

September 2019

Assessment Data Discussion

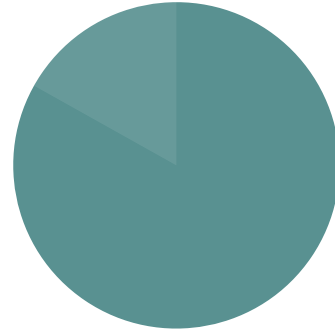
Mary Wunderlich, SBAC Coordinator



SBAC

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

The tests, created by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, are administered to children in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.



Thetford Elementary School: Who Are We?

Serves Grades K - 6

27% FRL* (25% of 2019 SBAC test-takers)**

96.9% White 1.3% Hispanic 1.3% (2 or more races)*

Number of Students: 194

Percent on IEPs: 20%

Student : Teacher Ratio 10.7*

Average Class Size = 17 student

**According to data published by VT AOE

*According to SchoolDigger.com





End-of-year summative assessment

- English Language Arts (ELA)
- Mathematics
- **Computer Adaptive**
- **Administered digitally (TES students use iPads or laptops)**
- **Types of Questions: (12 different types)**
 - Selected-response items
 - Non-traditional response questions
 - Constructed-response questions
 - Performance tasks



About Test Items

Select an Item Type

Evidence-Based Selected Response

Equation

Grid Item: Drag and Drop

Grid Item: Hot Spot

Grid Item: Graphing

Hot Text

Matching Item

✓ Multiple Choice

Multi Select

Short Answer

Table Item

Writing Extended Response

students with a number of answer options.

The student may select only one option.

About This Item



Read the passage and answer the questions.

Treasure in the Field

by Marilyn Bolchunos

Once there was a man who lived with his two young sons on a farm in Vietnam. Since the man had to tend the field, the boys took care of the house. That is, they were supposed to take care of the house.

Often the father returned home to find that nothing had been done—he even had to cook

2884

Read the sentences from the passage.

Day after day they dug. Their neighbor was astounded to see how long and hard the young men worked.

What does the word astounded **most likely** mean?

- (A) disappointed
- (B) discovered
- (C) satisfied
- (D) surprised



Statistical Significance vs Educational Significance

- Small sample sizes
- Margin of error not represented in all data
- 3-years is recommended for any data analysis. Year 2014-2015 was a trial year but was included in 2017 data analysis.

Key Findings:

- Our performance is in line with other comparable schools.
- Students who receive FRL performed significantly lower than those who are not, particularly in ELA.
- There is a significant gap between boys' and girls' performance in ELA.
- Overall school performance has not changed significantly in the last three years of testing.

Next Steps:

- Examine our ELA and Math instruction of socioeconomically disadvantaged students.
- Examine our instruction of boys in ELA.
- Examine our interim assessments in ELA and Math. Do our other methods of assessing students match what the SBAC tells us?

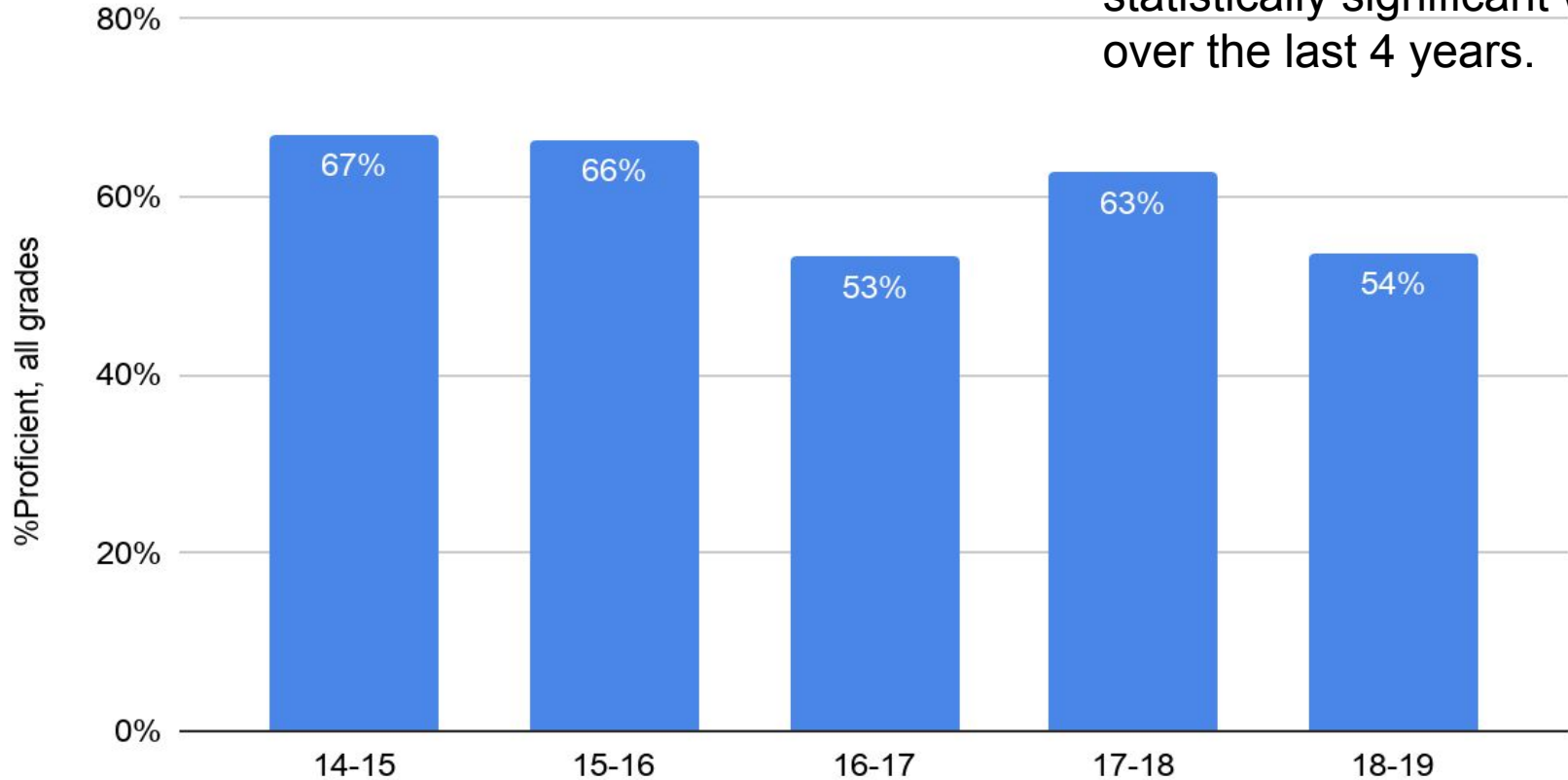
Update Sept 2019*

4 years of SBAC data (2 additional years)

How are we doing?

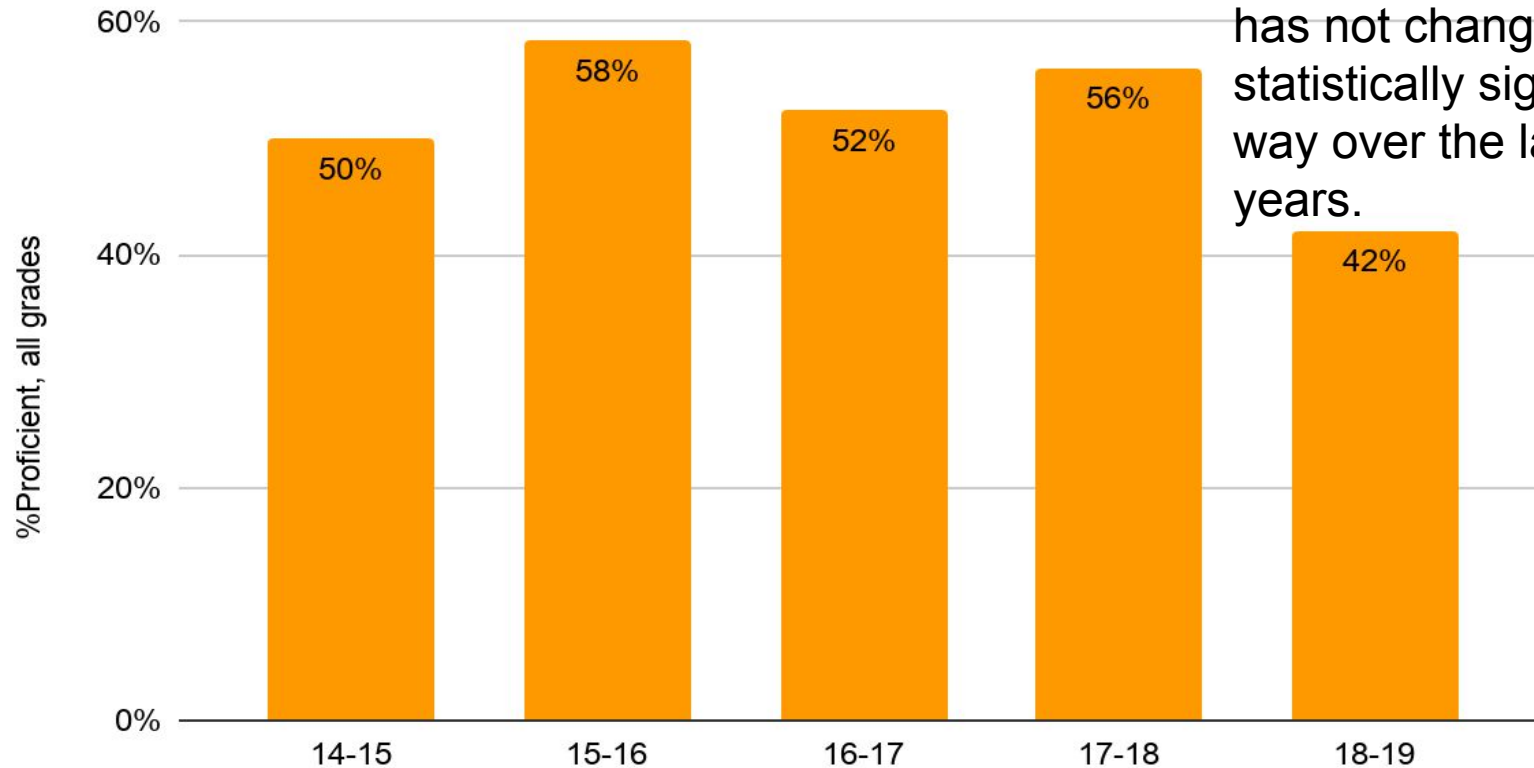
*Update to Data from Vermont Agency of Education Assessment Portal

5 Years of ELA at TES, all grades



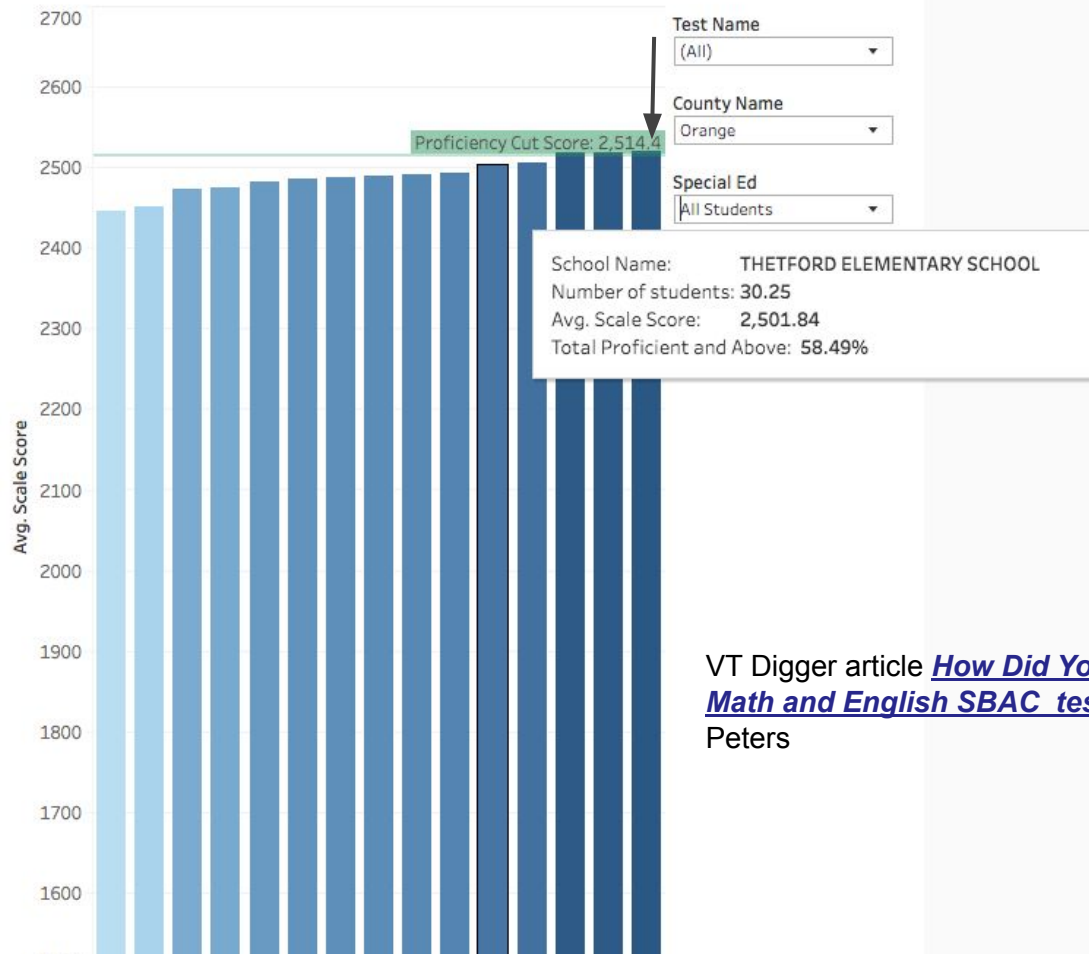
Schoolwide proficiency in ELA has not changed in a statistically significant way over the last 4 years.

5 Years of Math at TES, all grades



Schoolwide proficiency in Math has not changed in a statistically significant way over the last 4 years.

2018 Smarter Balanced Test Scores: Orange County



VT Digger article [How Did Your School Fare on 2018's Math and English SBAC tests?](#) by Lola Duffort and Stacey Peters



What is TES doing differently?

- New Math program, Bridges for grades K-5th started in 2018-2019
- Principal leadership changes, 3 different principals in the last 5 years.
- New ParaEducator configuration, last 3 years have brought more 1-1 assignments
- Increased IEPs (39 this year)
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Next Steps:

Next year STAR District-wide assessment will replace Track My Progress

MTSS Multi Tiered Systems of Supports (Academics and Behavior)

Instruction: PBL and Responsive Classroom (Deeper vs Broader)

Interim SBAC Testing

Infinite Campus

Teacher Leader Cabinet -OESU