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To: HUUSD Board of Directors
From: Brigid Nease, Superintendent
Date: August 28, 2017
RE: FY 18 State of the State: A Start Up Report

Welcome back to the new school year. As I begin writing this on our first student day back, I am pleased to report a very smooth opening with just a few small glitches easily rectified. Summer break brings rest, renewal and reflection, all good ingredients necessary for an energized and successful school year. We have been very busy this month getting ready to open all seven campuses and the central office. The administrative team has also spent two full days in retreat. I look forward to sharing much more information with you over the course of the next several weeks, but I did want to get you some start up information.

1. Here is my welcome to staff and a list of new hires in the HUUSD.

An e-card was included first.

Dear HUUSD Staff-

I would like to sincerely welcome you back to the 2017-18 school year. There is no doubt that it will bring a host of emotions; anxiety, exhilaration, joy, laughter, productivity and amazement as all years do. Students are precious. Our time with them is important and meaningful. We can learn as much from them as they do from us if we allow ourselves. I wish for us all to have a great year filled with positivity and contribution. Laugh together and lift each other up along the way. The work is hard and the hours long, but the difference each of you makes in the life of a student is immeasurable and something you may never know. Also remember that it takes all the employees in our organization, teachers and others, to keep it all running smoothly and to achieve our goals. Thank those around you when given the chance. I have also included the list of employees newly hired in the HUUSD. Give them a hardy welcome!

Have a great year in every way. Please don't hesitate to call or drop an email if I can help you in any way. I look forward to seeing all of you at our October inservice.

Best regards,
Brigid Nease

NEW HIRES 2017-18 as of 8/28/2017

Crossett Brook: Ian David Spaulding, Special Educator, 1.0; Kelsey Burnell, Spanish Teacher, 1.0; Todd Keller, Maintenance Director, 1.0; Cody Croteau, Instructional Assistant, 1.0.

Fayston: Amanda Badgley, Nurse, .5; Skip Wallace, Custodian, .5; Sarah Bray, Food Service Assistant, 1.0; Ryan Charlston, After School Assistant, .3.

Harwood: Jason Reichert, HS Math, 1.0; Andrew Bishop, HS Math, 1.0 (was here last yr. as 1 yr only); Megan Reed, Library Media Spec., 1.0 (was LTS last year); Katelyn Schraml, MS Math, 1.0; Amanda Badgley, Nurse, .5; Wendy Gagliardi, Science, 1.0 long term sub; Jessica LaBonte, Digital Media, 1.0 for 1 year only; Andrew Lucier, Phys. Ed., 1.0 this year; Chris Langevin, Athletic/Activities Director; Jean Hubbell, Math, 1.0, 1st semester only; Andrew Melville, Food Service Worker, 1.0.

Moretown: Christine Wulff, Special Educator, .5; Loretta DiMario, Administrative Assistant, 1.0; Michael Perry, Custodian, .5; Cheryl Lundblad, Instructional Assistant, 1.0; Robin Harris, PK Instructional Assistant, .5; Nicole Day, Instructional Assistant, 1.0; Michelle Sismondo, Instructional Assitant, 1.0.

Thatcher Brook: Christian Guggemos, Gr. 3 Teacher (was LTS last year); Erin Affronti, Special Educator, 1.0; Matthew Bloom, Assistant Principal, 1.0; Kaitlin Quaranta, Student Support Specialist, 1.0; Allison Champlin, Instructional Assistant, 1.0; Hank Touchette, Custodian, 1.0; Jonathan Hammer, Custodian, 1.0; Tammy Rost, Instructional Assistant, 1.0.

Waitsfield: Michael Perry, Custodian, .5; Sarah Fornaby, Instructional Assistant, 1.0; Kaitlyn Wimble, Instructional Assitant, .85.

Warren: Ross Greene, PE/Health Teacher, .55; Julie Galati, Special Educator, 1.0; Joshua Morse, World Language, .4; Skip Wallace, Custodian, .5; Ashley Hall, Instructional Assistant, 1.0; Eileen Gombosi, Art Teacher, 1 yr. only, .4.

HUUSD C.O.: Lindsey Sanders, Admin. Asst. to Curr. Dir., .6

Here is my press release announcing our 3 new assistant principals:

The Harwood Union Unified School District will be welcoming three new administrators to our team along with a number of new faculty members. Matt Bloom has been hired as an Assistant Principal to join Principal Denise Goodnow at the Thatcher Brook Primary School, and Brian Moody and Sam Krotinger have been hired as Interim Assistant Principals to join Principal Lisa Atwood at Harwood Union Middle and High School for the FY 17-18 School year.

Sam and Brian will be taking a one year leave of absence from their current teaching positions at Harwood to replace Principal Amy Rex, who resigned in June. The final details around their

responsibilities and schedules are still being fine-tuned. Brian Moody will continue to teach two health classes in addition to his administrative responsibilities. A full search for a permanent replacement for Amy Rex will begin in January when a search committee and thorough selection process can be put into place. Principal Atwood has announced that she is expecting to retire in FY 19 or FY 20 at the latest.

I asked each of our new administrators to submit a short bio. Here is what they shared.

Matt Bloom:

I am a Vermont transplant having been born and raised in San Francisco, CA. I have lived in Vermont for the last 18 years. My wife Martha is from the Burlington area, and we live in Colchester with our three daughters, Amanda (17), Emily (14), and Izzy (10). I am a soccer dad and all girls play soccer year round. As a family, we enjoy skiing and snowboarding, spending time with our extended family and friends, and being at our camp on Lake Champlain. One thing I am most proud of that the Bloom family does together is the volunteer and advocacy work we do for Type 1 Diabetes through the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Our commitment and dedication to JDRF stems from three generations of Type 1 Diabetics in the family. Both myself, our oldest daughter Amanda and my father have diabetes.

I began my work with young people 18 years ago when Martha and I moved back to Vermont. I began working in the community mental health field (working for Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle Counties) community mental health agencies as a team leader and behavior consultant. Following that, I worked in St. Albans City School for four years as an Alternative Education and Behavior Specialist and then in the Alburgh Community Educational Center as a Behavior Specialist. It was in Alburgh that I emerged as a school leader working with teachers, families, and children in a greater capacity. For the last five years, I have served the community of Milton as the middle school's Student Services Coordinator. I received my BA from San Francisco State University with a major in psychology and a minor in special education, my MA from Johnson State College in applied behavior analysis, and my CAGS in Leadership from the Upper Valley Institute in their principal internship program.

I am beyond excited to have the opportunity work with the TBPS community and cannot wait for the school year to begin.

Sam Krotinger:

I grew up in the Berkshires, and went to prep school in Massachusetts while my parents worked in a rural hospital in Haiti. When my family returned to the US, we moved to Vermont, where I attended the University of Vermont as a studio art major/comparative religion minor. After graduation in 1996, I lived in New York City and Portland Oregon, working in fashion photography and digital imaging. I moved back to Vermont in 1998 and received my Masters in Curriculum & Instruction from UVM in 2000, completing student teaching at Essex High School. I began teaching digital media in HU's visual art department in the fall of 2000. I received my Masters of Fine Arts in Visual Art from the Art Institute of Boston in 2009. I began my graduate course work in school leadership in 2013 at Castleton State College, and completed my

licensure coursework in the spring of 2016 at St Michael's College. I have been a member of the Washington West Supervisory Union Leadership Team for the past two years, and a member of the Harwood Union leadership team for the past three years, where I worked directly with outgoing principal Amy Rex on many of the major initiatives that our school continues to develop. My duties as principal for the upcoming year include: Proficiency Based Grading and Reporting, Professional Development Consultation, League of Innovative Schools Liaison, Harwood Leadership Team Facilitation, Community Engagement Initiative, and Learning Community Oversight and Professional Development.

Brian Moody:

This will be my 18th year at Harwood and 24th year in education. I have a B.S. in Health and Physical Education from Johnson State College, an M.A. in Curriculum Development from Johnson State, and a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study in Education Leadership from Saint Michael's College.

My administrative duties will include working with the 9th grade team, freshman focus program, coordinated school health initiatives, and various student groups. I will also be a part of the student management team and will continue to teach middle school health. I will assist Principal Atwood with the oversight of facilities and transportation. I live in Elmore with my wife Jen, and stepsons Jackson and Adam.

Summer Work and School Openings:

The Warren School was not ready for opening the first day, Monday 8/28. They will open on Wednesday, 8/30. The project continues as expected, and the contractor did meet the agreed upon deadlines as of 8/25. Both occupancy and fire inspections are successfully completed. However, there simply was not enough time to both clean and set up classrooms to a minimum standard. Even with the delay, there will be more unpacking and set up to do.

The Fayston School completed their renovation of the maker's space area on time without any unexpected difficulties.

All 7 schools and the C.O. received, installed, and trained personnel on new printers and copiers as per our new lease agreement. This was a huge undertaking. In addition, all 4 valley schools and the C.O. have new 911 compliant phone systems from Waitsfield Telecom. We are still learning how to use them, but they are great!

Negotiations:

On August 24th, the board and the teachers' association exchanged first proposals electronically. The board negotiation team met that same evening. These proposals are confidential at this time based on our meetings being held in executive session pending a finding from the court. Our first joint meeting with the teachers to review and discuss both proposals is on Thursday, 8/31/17. I received an update from our school attorney last week. Our case, along with several others from other districts, is still pending awaiting a court decision, which is expected in 60 days. The VTNEA filed a motion to dismiss the case over the summer but it was denied.

Budget & Finance:

Michelle will be giving a short presentation at the board meeting on 8/30 and a full report in September regarding budget process and development. We spent the majority of our 8/25 retreat as a full admin team developing a model for “One Budget Budgeting in the HUUSD” that we thought could work well for us to get started as a team and improve upon last year’s process. We scheduled two more 2-hour meetings on 9/11 and 9/18 to work solely on budget all together, including staffing recommendations. Michelle will also report on the end of year audits, but none of our schools ran a deficit last year. Our combined end-of-year fund balance is \$643,121.00. We will be talking and learning more about Act 85, the legislation surrounding educators’ health insurance and the “recapture” amount accessed to us, \$190,861 to find out of this FY 18 budget.

Fall 2017 Curriculum Update:

Sheila sent out an update I thought you may be interested in:

I have set up a [BLOG](#) where you can access a number of curriculum updates, assessment information, LTEE updates, resources, and information about Professional Development. Please "FOLLOW BY EMAIL" (top corner of blog homepage) to get this information pushed to you whenever there are updates.

Assessment Updates

[NWEA MAP Assessment](#)

[Local Assessment at-a-glance Matrix](#)

Curriculum Updates

[Science Curriculum Development \(in process\)](#)

[Social Studies Development \(in process\)](#)

[PE Curriculum- \(completed\)](#)

New HUUSD Learning Expectations - these will be tuned at a pre-service day and/or a shared staff meeting and then uploaded to JumpRope for your use

[Proficiency Based Learning Expectations/ Rubrics: Middle School \(5-8\)](#)

[Proficiency Based Learning Expectations/ Rubrics: High School \(9-12\)](#)

LTEE

[Action Plan Priorities 2017-18](#)

[HUUSD Action Plan](#)

PD in Science for HUUSD:

Our staff will continue to strive to become leaders in the state of Vermont in the teaching of national standards in science. To further support high quality teaching, learning, and our recent budget investment, we will be sending a team to Project Lead the Way Summit 2017. It is the

premier gathering for the PLTW network – a group dedicated to preparing students with the in-demand knowledge and transportable skills they need to succeed in college and career. The conference will take place October 22-25 in Orlando, FL and will feature best practices for delivering and supporting inspiring hands-on learning experiences; to engage in unparalleled learning opportunities through workshops and other exciting sessions; and to connect with 2,000 guests who are committed to empowering students to thrive in an evolving world. Guests will have access to PLTW’s renowned professional development through more than [250 interactive workshops](#), hands-on learning opportunities designed to model the PLTW classroom experience, and a variety of networking opportunities. HUUSD will be sending a small team of leaders as a pilot project. If the training proves to be of high quality, we will likely send another cohort in the future. Our team attending: Sheila Soule, Denise Goodnow, Alex Houston (CBMS), Ryan Bushey (HUHS), Katie Sullivan (Warren)

Elementary K-5 Mathematics Program Pilot:

We will be piloting three elementary mathematics programs, Bridges, Investigations and Eureka Math, for grades K-5 this year. Our goal is to both update our curriculum materials and select a common program to be used in all HUUSD schools. The program we currently use in all schools except Warren, Investigations, has been revised. Before purchasing these new versions, which are quite costly, we feel it is essential to conduct a thorough pilot review of all three programs considered to be the best. This is a very thorough process last undertaken in this SU in about 2008-09. Here is the [link](#) of our working document.

Administrators at HUUSD Board Meetings:

At the retreat, the administrators voted to maintain a sign up that has one other administrator at the board table for the entire meeting, along with Michelle and me. The others will attend based on the agenda items on topics they are directly responsible for, staying only for that portion of the meeting. We also developed a template for a combined board report from all the administrators that we hope to present as part of my written report the last board meeting of each month. The format will be categorized by the 3 C’s – Curriculum, Climate and Communication in grade groups PK-4, 5-8 and 9-12. The group further decided to have all newsletters posted on each school’s website with a link to each from the WWSU website (we are still working on changing the domain over to HUUSD).

Intra District Choice:

I have included a spreadsheet [link](#) of the students participating in the Intra Choice policy. We have the usual 10 or so continuing in our middle school exchange - 4 students from CBMS going to HUMS and 6 from HUMS going to Crossett. In addition, about 20 other students will be attending schools other than their town of residence. The process has been very smooth.

The Beginning Work of Redesign Study:

Our administrative team spent a good amount of time at our summer retreat thinking about and brainstorming what is needed to get started on the possible redesign and/or reconfiguration of our HUUSD schools. I have included a **brainstorm** below. A question was posed, and the team had 7 minutes to just share thoughts. Each person just “popcorned” out

what his/her thinking was in that moment. There was no follow-up or deeper conversation on what was initially said. We will revisit our work and try to determine where to go next and how. I thought it might be helpful for the board to see our initial brainstorm.

1. What do you think the HUUSD Board expects around redesign and reconfiguration?

More opportunities for students. Middle schools being equitable. Innovation. Cost effectiveness. Change. Opportunities for advanced students. Convenience. Options. Increased enrollment. Expanded programming and more expansive use of school facilities. Cohesive proposal from admin team. Concrete way for community to be involved. Visuals for discussion. Updated facilities, 21st century facilities. School might close. Stronger scores in math, science. Personalization. Magnifying our schools (academies). Being more efficient. Expecting something different. Really believe there needs to have community say. Young children to stay in communities (town schools). Some expect same class size they are used to, and others expect right size student to staff ratio. After school/summer programming (year round opportunities). Expect middle schools to be completely merged.

2. How should we determine the possibilities of a reconfiguration or redesign?

Brainstorm. Dedicate time at meetings. Review prior work on topic. Bring specific facts on buildings (Ray). Plan for rolling population. Realistic cost effectiveness. Goals of accomplishment. Goal oriented - function vs. form. Needs and best practices - research on configuration. Pick Brigid's brain for her ideas. Look at other districts for models that exist in VT and outside. Utilize teachers' expertise. Visioning process with teachers (middle school). Enrollment trends, projections, and what real estate market looks like. Possibilities determined by reality of what we have, not necessarily by what the research says is best practice. Visuals would be helpful. Ask student opinion. May have to survey certain groups to get info. Mock models and answer question, "Why wouldn't it work and what would it cost?" Financial resources. Realize we're not starting from scratch. Mindful of effort to refine what we are doing and build on our work. Ignore certain things to get certain things, then come back to it. Suspend one thing to get to another – give up to get. Use futures protocol so we can imagine what it would look like to be reconfigured. Admin team needs to come up with a proposal for redesign, then have feedback from community, then determine where we go from there. If they don't like this, what is your thought? Propose process as supported by team, give the board a suggested proposal to move forward on gathering input. Framework to make it clear.

3. What are the questions we need to ask in order to determine if we should merge schools, close a school or reconfigure grades?

No. of pupils, no. of classrooms and size of classrooms (capacity). Can and should we bring all 5/6 and 7/8 together in to one cohort 5-12? Transportation logistics. Financial impact and savings. What are we trying to accomplish? Impact on families. What new opportunities does it offer for students? What is the timeline for this? What are potential repurposes for any building not being used as a school? What are gains that the prototype model brings to kids? Impact on community. What is lost? How do we engage community of repurposing a school for greater educational opportunities? What will we be able to provide with savings that is realized that is not available now? Can we reach more students if we consider using a building

for specific skills (hands-on skills, etc.)? What is the board's role in this? What are long term consequences? Administrative redesign or reconfiguration of admin team? What does the communication plan look like? What does it mean for the CO personnel and location? Clearly articulate gains and losses of each prototype and evaluate those. Do we need an outside facilitator?

4. How should the Pros and Cons of each new configuration be determined?

On a chart. Does it meet goals that were set forth, identify the goals? Visuals. Some sort of rubric or scoring gradient to define criteria. Pros and cons of each new configuration are determined by answering question is it better for kids, save money, or both. Some metrics. By the admin team. Maybe a focus forum where we can listen to people's reactions to it.

5. Can the middle schools be merged (7-8 from CB to HU): What do we need to know? What would be needed? Are there insurmountable barriers, and if so what are they?

Size of school problems. Harwood would need remodeling. Transitioning kids back and forth from CB to HU during the day. Move adults, not the kids. Is it feasible to move students? Enrollment numbers and staffing needs. # of rooms. Endorsements for teachers. Goal is for all kids to be together in 7-8 cohort? Transportation impact. Capacity at CB is 400.

6. Should we continue to operate 4 schools in the valley? Why or why not? What criteria should be used to decide?

How small is too small? What would grade configurations be? Will we move the 5/6 to one building or to Crossett? What is cost of keeping or not keeping them? How important is it for students to be far from their homes? Transportation impact. Siblings being in different schools. What is needed to achieve parity in each school class size? What is school's capacity to be modified? What other school might be modified if needed? Can any of the schools do this? What land will support in terms of expansion, septic, etc. Other educational areas that would not be used? What is value of repurposing? If a school closes, the town can purchase it for \$1. Educational purpose - if one of the schools in the Valley closed, what are the options for use? Alternative school? How would a magnet program affect this decision? How does the construction at Warren and updating that building affect this decision? How do we justify closing that school? What impact does closing a school affect the culture of the community? What is impact on town itself if school closes? Class size? What physical plant changes and reconfigurations are possible? What should we do about the Waterbury/Duxbury increasing enrollment? What about the underserved PreK?

7. Who should lead this work and how?

Have admin team, Brigid, and a facilitator. Gather info from other parties before we sit down and discuss this. Sub-committee with the board? Setting up task for educational leaders to bring forth proposal, which would include options and process for moving forward. Anticipate these things. Anything else you want? Proposal to include: Quadrant, goals, visuals, rubric. What are elements of the proposal that we need to develop? Process among ourselves of 1, 2, 3 configurations with recommendation for one but here are others. Develop a process by which they will be considered by board. Develop way to invite community in through focus

forums to react and give input to board. Measure with quadrants, etc. Estimated costs, estimated facilities. Research and statements of fact. Not be able to do X because there's not enough capacity to do that. Identify the givens (non-negotiables). Define the problem we are trying to solve and establish goals, then determine process we should use, these are 3 models we are doing our work around, timeline. Showing board the work, especially the rationale, that's the part we need to make all stakeholders understand.

8. Here is a [link](#) to the spreadsheet where we are beginning to populate the data on the physical plants.

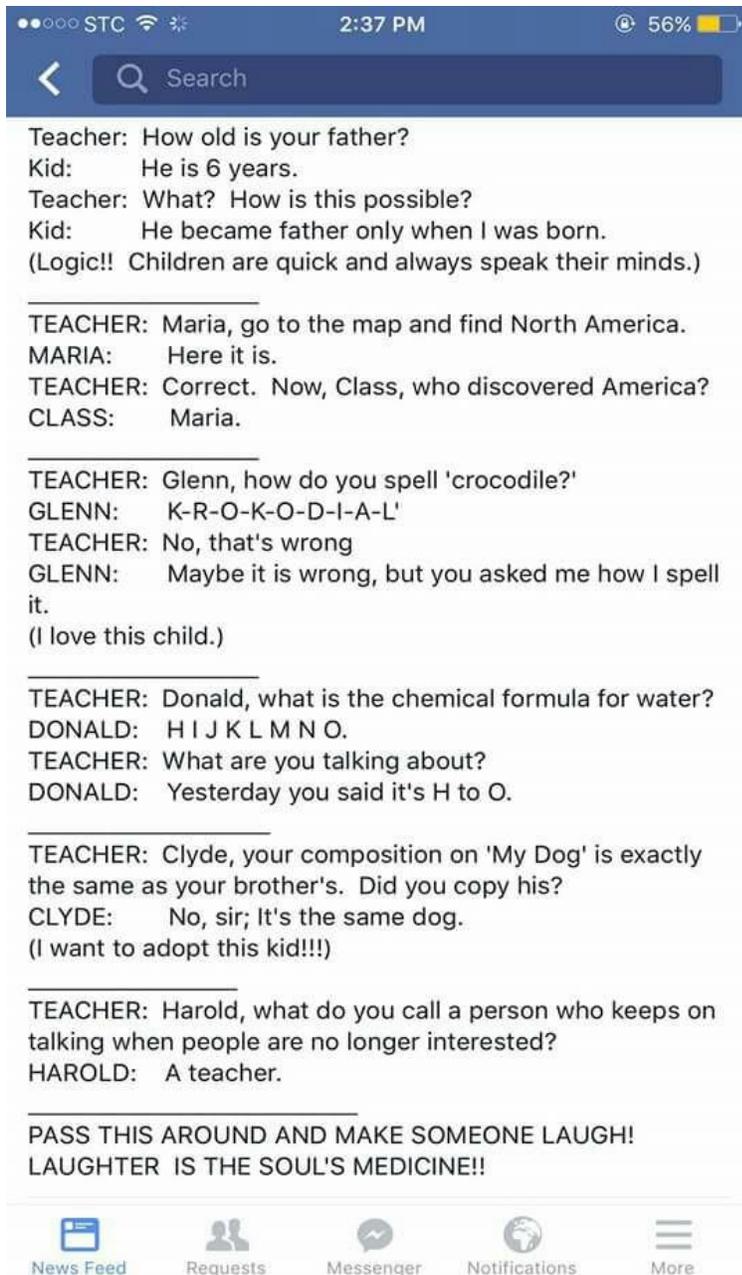
9. State Level Start Up Work Begins:

This week I will be in Montpelier all day on Thursday and Friday working as a VSA trustee with Superintendents from all the regions around the state. One piece of our work will be spending an hour each in a one to one format with Governor Phil Scott, Krista Huling, Chair, Vermont State Board of Education, Senator Philip Baruth, Chair, Senate Ed Committee, Representative David Sharpe, Chair, House Ed Committee, Jay Nichols, Exec. Director, Vermont Principals Association, Nicole Mace, Exec. Director, Vermont School Boards Association and Secretary Rebecca Holcombe. The focus questions posed to them in advance are: what exactly is your current perspective on public education in Vermont; and what are your priorities for the Vermont education system? I will report back to you about what I learn later in the month.

I am including two reports as good start up resources for you. The first [link](#) is a report by VSBA/VSA to the legislature on cost containment. The second [link](#) contains a State of the State start up report by Secretary Rebecca Holcombe. Both contain relevant data for budget development and our redesign work. VSA trustees will be discussing these documents this week also.

As we begin this new school year, I am focused on the extremely hard work ahead. In addition to taking care of ourselves, it is so important that we try to take care of each other. For me that means assuming good intentions, lifting each other up, letting go of the negative, knowing that mistakes and missteps are part of the hard work, recognizing the strength of our team, and using levity wherever we can. Laughter is very healthy medicine.

One of the best parts of being in education is listening to the funniest things that students say as they developmentally unfold the world. The other day a friend of mine shared a story about her granddaughter that made me laugh so hard. She said that this little 5 year old girl had developed a fascination with adaptive equipment during regular visits with her family to a retirement home to visit a loved one. The girl would go about examining and talking about walkers, canes, tools to put on socks, and so on. She was always looking for something she hadn't seen before. One day as she was engaged in her exploring, she excitedly called rather loudly for her mother to come. Mom arrived to see her standing over a glass container with a set of dentures in it as she exclaimed, "Mom. Come see this. The tooth fairy will really not believe this one!" Out of the mouths of babes!



I hope we all continue to laugh as often as we can. Lucky us. Kids are our business. Be well. I am looking forward to a great year. Please do not hesitate to give me a call anytime to just chat. I am also available to meet. Relationships are best built one at a time.

Educationally yours,
Brigid