

Acton Public Schools  
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District  
Acton, MA 01720

**SCHOOL DISTRICT GOALS - 2008-09**

**GOAL 1: Continue to Enhance Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for All Students**

**Statement of the Situation**

This year, we will continue to use available federal grant funds to supplement and support the districts' Research and Development and Professional Development budgets. We will continue the curriculum and instruction initiatives that have been identified by the schools. In addition, we will continue to assess where we are and how well we are doing in order to maximize our commitment to a comprehensive process of curriculum planning, instructional strategies, and assessment practices in order to foster continuous improvement of student performance.

**Strategies**

**1. Curriculum**

We pride ourselves on the range and depth of our educational programs, our commitment to ongoing curriculum renewal and efforts to ensure that the instructional programs are responsive to the needs and interests of all our children. We will continue to offer strong academic programs with opportunities for exposure to a wide range of experiences. Curriculum is an ongoing process that guides the delivery of instruction and assessment. Therefore, we will review our curricular objectives and compare them to state and national learning standards, as well as respond to the varying and changing needs of our students and staff. APS curriculum objectives and AB course documentation guide the delivery of instruction and assessment and should be used as a basis for curriculum development in the following areas:

- a. Continue documenting building-level, school-based, and system-wide curriculum initiatives via the action plan process; document and reflect on the usefulness of this tool.
- b. Initiate the process for a K-12 Continuous Cycle of Curriculum Improvement; evaluate the success and challenges of the cycle.
- c. Continue ongoing articulation, documentation, and refinement of the K-12 curriculum; keep a log of all new additions or changes.
- d. Continue providing opportunities for conversations/collaboration about curriculum articulation with APS and/or AB faculty in order to facilitate curriculum coordination and enhancements; document the meeting dates and agendas.

**2. Instruction and Assessment**

Provide high quality professional development and support curriculum Research and Development projects that enrich professional growth for all faculty and staff to deepen knowledge and expertise in content areas, instructional strategies, and assessment practices. Continue to analyze assessment data, both individually and in aggregate form, to share results with administrators and teachers to improve instructional practice. This year we will embark upon major technology initiatives with APS staff with a laptop adoption, which will take major planning and commitment.

- a. Offer a variety of professional development opportunities through our online catalog, both school-based and system-wide, to enhance, enrich and expand staff repertoire for effective instructional practices to meet the needs of all students. This year will be a challenge as the majority of staff will be renewing their certifications/educational licensures, they will need assistance with this activity and many staff members have already reached the maximum number of PDPs to recertify. We will assist all staff in the recertification process and continue to be creative in offering additional professional possibilities.
  1. Collaborate with various school districts and outside entities to enhance instruction, assessment, and content. Collect data on the collaboration, value and attendance of professional activities.

2. Use technology tools to improve instruction, assessment, and curricula content while increasing the use of technology as an administrative enhancement. Document the successes and challenges of the APS and AB initiatives.
- b. Develop a plan to foster a global awareness of educational exchange; through the creation of a district-wide task force to review what steps need to be taken.
- c. Continue to expand the use of the District Curriculum Library (DCL); making the resources available to the staff.
- d. Evaluate the districts' library programs; a task force will gather information to analyze the data gathered.
- e. Review student performance results to note successes, trends, gaps, and challenges; a written analysis of the data will provide the information.
- f. Define what **Response to Intervention (RTI)** is and decide what it will mean for the district.

### **Outcomes**

1. Share the progress of Continuous Cycle of Curriculum Improvement process.
2. Post any new curricula documentation K-12 on the district website.
3. Document and share the progress of the HS and its NEASC pre-self study process.
4. Staff will utilize the online professional development catalog.
5. Share projects and instructional strategies that use technology tools.
6. Develop a plan to pursue/initiate a global educational awareness exchange.
7. Report on the state of the library programs.
8. Devise a district plan for a **Response to Intervention (RTI)**.

**Timeline:** September 2008– August 2009

**Responsible Parties:** Susan Horn, Deborah Bookis, Eileen Sullivan, Priscilla Kotyk, Liza Huber, Mary Emmons, Lynn Mulrooney, Carol Huebner, Stephen Hitzrot, Ginny Conway, All Principals, Assistant Principals, Mark Hickey, Diana Woodruff, RDLs/BDLs, Margaret Murray, Anne Kingan

## **GOAL 2: Continue to Promote a Positive School Culture and Climate**

### **Statement of the Situation**

To ensure a positive school environment, matters of school safety, wellness, social inclusion, respect for individual differences and learning must be emphasized. We respect divergent and newly emerging thinking, and are receptive to adjusting, adapting, or re-affirming our core values within and throughout our school culture. Members of the Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts recognize that a school community that values diversity and global awareness offers optimal opportunities for improving student growth and achievement.

### **Strategies**

#### **Wellness**

1. Review current policies and procedures.
2. Review other district policies and procedures.
3. Review current literature and identify relevant themes
4. Appoint subcommittee chairpersons and assign participants: Food in the Curriculum/Celebrations, Life Threatening Food Allergies, Nutrition and Fitness.
5. Coordinate parent/guardian forums (September 19<sup>th</sup> and October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008).

#### **Our Changing Demographics**

1. Establish parent, teacher and student focus groups for discussion and support.
2. Using a survey format, develop questions for teachers, parents and students that provide information regarding the differing educational goals and perspectives found within our school and community (i.e., student experiences, educational outcomes, school culture).
3. Identify and explore culturally relevant themes and experiences that influence the success of all students in Acton and Boxborough.
4. From the data driven survey, design professional development opportunities that reflect current needs and core values.

#### **School Safety**

1. Raise awareness, educate and empower students and staff through continued professional development and training, i.e., stress management, cyberspace, crisis response, etc.
2. Ensure that all school handbooks include required procedures for student discipline and mitigating harm, including "rights and responsibilities."
3. Improve record keeping procedures for effective intervention and responses to incidents of bullying, teasing and harassment.

### **Outcomes**

#### **Wellness**

1. Recommend modifications, if appropriate, to our current wellness policy and/or procedures and protocols for responding to life threatening food allergies, health impairments, nutrition and physical well-being to the Superintendent.
2. Publicize policy changes and/or procedures as identified.

#### **Our Changing Demographics**

1. Based on analysis of data, utilize feedback to identify themes to assist with programmatic planning.
2. Based on analysis of data, identify and publicize the core values that the district believes are essential to a comprehensive education.

3. Develop a plan for appropriate community outreach to support continued conversations and integration of differing educational goals and perspectives.
4. Increase civic connections in the Acton-Boxborough community.
5. Encourage the administrative staff to think globally before decisions are made for Acton and Acton-Boxborough.

### **School Safety**

1. Develop a set of procedures, including appropriate documentation, for all schools to use consistently when incidents of bullying, harassment, and teasing occur.
2. Identify themes based on analysis of data, on an annual basis, to provide information regarding types of bullying, teasing and harassment incidents to assist with programmatic planning.

**Timeline:** September 2008-August 2009

**Responsible Parties:** Liza Huber, Pupil Services Leadership Team (Stephen Hitzrot, Ginny Conway, Jenny Gormley, Diana McNicholas, Carol Huebner, Matthew Kidder, Mary Emmons, Lynn Mulrooney), Susan Horn, Marie Altieri, all Principals, Assistant Principals, RDLs/BDLs, Deborah Bookis, Eileen Sullivan

### **GOAL 3: Continue to Review and Refine Our Multi-Year Financial Plan**

#### **Statement of the Situation**

Our budget model will reflect the need to efficiently manage resources and ensure that FY'10 budget decisions reflect current economic realities.

#### **Strategies**

1. Review the existing financial plan.
  - a. Refine budget creation assumptions consistent with the current economic downturn.
2. Define educational needs and develop preliminary budget on needs and economic realities.
  - a. Review personnel needs and costs as well as curriculum/program needs and costs in light of existing projections and economic realities.
  - b. Work with staff to identify possible new sources of revenue, reallocation of costs from the appropriated budget to grants and revolving accounts and explore other cost saving measures.
  - c. Review the decision to allow new school choice students in the regional system and its impact on the FY'10 budget.
3. Develop a process to communicate our needs to the public to ensure acceptance and support.
  - a. Continue to actively engage the Acton Leadership Group (ALG), and Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) in the process.
  - b. Seek input on the budget process from the public, staff, and the Boards of Selectmen and Finance Committees of Acton and Boxborough.
4. Continue to identify long-range needs and develop a rational resource management program.
  - a. Refine three-year projections through finance spreadsheet and personnel cell charts.
  - b. Articulate long-term needs through the capital plan.

#### **Outcomes**

1. Develop refined multi-year budget and capital plans.
2. Execute a thorough budget process which assesses needs and receives adequate input from all players, consistent with economic realities at the local, state, and national levels.

**Timeline:** September 2008 - April 2009

**Responsible Parties:** Bill Ryan, Tess Summers, Marie Altieri

**GOAL 4:     Develop a plan to address major facility needs in those buildings outside of the building projects.**

**Statement of the Situation**

As we closed out the final stages of the building projects, we began to assess our capital needs in the Merriam Administration Building, Gates, Douglas and Conant schools. We have developed a comprehensive, prioritized capital needs plan which will address the major systems (boiler replacement, HVAC upgrades, and roof replacement). Phase I (boiler replacement & HVAC upgrades) of the Capital Plan will be completed this year. It is our hope to move forward with Phase II (roof replacement at Conant, Douglas, Gates and the Administrative Building) of the Capital Plan in the 2009-10 school year. If completed within a two/three year timeframe, the building infrastructure should only require routine maintenance and upkeep over the next 15 years.

**Strategies**

1. Collaborate in the work of the Capital Planning Committee which is an offshoot of ALG.
  - a. Coordinate school and municipal capital needs in a coherent fashion.
  - b. Work to develop a revenue sharing plan to support school/municipal priorities.
  - c. Participate in discussions of funding sources which could be used to fund projects with the least tax impact.
    1. “One-time sources (e.g., free cash, NESWC, etc.)
    2. Appropriated budget
    3. Debt Exclusion Override (20 years)
    4. “Revenue gap” (created as taxes needed to fund existing borrowing decrease)
  - d. School Committee decision by January 2009 regarding Phase II of the Capital Plan.
  - e. Prepare a proposal for April Acton Town Meeting.
2. Continue to work closely with staff to identify other faculty and site needs.
  - a. Once identified, develop a cohesive plan to complete work within available resources.
  - b. Continue to work closely with community groups and our staff to complete capital initiatives (Leary Field improvements, Athletic Field Lighting Project, CPA Projects at Douglas, Gates and the Parker Damon Building).

**Outcomes**

1. Comprehensive capital plan with associate funding proposal for Town Meeting.
2. Complete all FY’09 capital projects

**Timeline:**                   July/August 2008 – April 2009

**Responsible Parties:**               JD Head, Bill Ryan, Tess Summers

## **Goal 5: Administrative Succession and Hiring**

### **Statement of the Situation**

To hire and support strong administrators to bring the districts forward as principals and central office administrators retire. The Superintendent of Schools will retire in the summer of 2009. Four Principals retired in the summer of 2008. Other administrative openings in 2008 and 2009 include the Director of Community Education, two Assistant Principals and the Regional Department Leader for Science. The districts and the school committees are committed to hiring strong administrators, and supporting them in their transition into the Acton and Acton-Boxborough schools.

### **Strategies**

1. Develop an Administrative Mentoring Program to support administrators hired for FY '09.
  - a. Each new administrator will be assigned a mentor to support them through their first year. Mentors will meet with new administrators at least once every two weeks.
  - b. Administrative team will prepare information to present to new administrators during two summer workshops.
  - c. New administrative team will meet periodically as a group.
2. Work with the School Committees to develop a process for hiring a new Superintendent of Schools.
  - a. Provide School Committees with information about search firms, other district's search processes, comparative salary and benefits data.
  - b. School Committees will hire a search firm and form a search committee.
  - c. Search firm will work with search committee to interview focus groups, solicit input from communities, advertise and attract candidates, screen and interview candidates. The search committee will recommend 3-4 finalists to the School Committees.
  - d. The School Committees will host the finalists during a site visit and School Committee interviews and will make a final appointment by March.
3. Work with the McCarthy-Towne school community to select a new principal.
  - a. Interim Principal Nancy Kolb will work with the staff through the summer and fall to review values, goals, and to review that which is most important to McCarthy-Towne.
  - b. Director of Personnel Marie Altieri will meet with the staff and PTSO in September to review the process.
  - c. A McCarthy-Towne Principal Search Committee will be formed in late September, consisting of faculty, staff, parents and a principal from another school. The committee will be facilitated by the Director of Personnel.
  - d. The committee will solicit feedback from all facets of the community, develop an ad, solicit applicants, screen and interview applicants and recommend four finalists to Superintendent Bill Ryan by the end of January.
  - e. Site visits will take place in February. The Superintendent will make a final appointment in March.

### **Outcomes**

1. The new McCarthy-Towne principal appointment will be made in late February or early March. The new principal will work with Nancy Kolb and the McCarthy-Towne community to transition smoothly by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009.
2. The School Committee will appoint the new Superintendent in March. The new Superintendent will work with Bill Ryan to transition smoothly in the summer of 2009.
3. New administrators will have the tools and support systems in place to have a successful first year in their new roles.

**Timeline:** July 2008 – August 2009

**Responsible Parties:** Marie Altieri, School Committees, Search Committees, Administrative Team, McCarthy-Towne staff and community.