

*Acton-Boxborough Regional School District*  
16 Charter Road  
Acton, MA 01720  
978-264-4700 [www.abschools.org](http://www.abschools.org)



# McCarthy-Towne School School Improvement Plan for 2016-17 School Year

## McCarthy-Towne School Improvement Plan

### School Council Membership

Name	Role	Year of Term
David Krane	Principal (Chair)	Permanent
Laura Krieger	Parent	2015-2017
Tracey Estabrook	Parent (Co-Chair)	2014-2016
Deanna O'Donnell	Parent	2014-2016
Kerry Lewis	Parent	2015-2017
Cheryl Beaudoin	Faculty	2014-2016
Kate Gibalerio	Faculty	2014-2016
Noreen Cohen	Faculty	2014-2016
Nancy Kolb	Community Representative (Appointed)	

**Goal:** Continue to develop and support the workshop model in all classrooms:

- i. Participate in professional learning activities in order to improve teaching and learning to support the Common Core curriculum
- ii. Continue to inform families about the function and meaning of the Workshop Model

### Background and Rationale:

McCarthy-Towne School will be entering the third year of a professional learning relationship with Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) at Columbia University. For the fifth year in a row, we will be sending a group of teachers to the Teachers College Summer Reading Institutes and one teacher will be attending the Summer Writing Institute. These weeklong Institutes add to teacher knowledge and skill base around the Reading and Writing Workshop model and synthesize the work that is done over the school year with the summer work when the Project Staff Developers visit our school and work with our teachers.

We are also continuing the work of using the workshop model for mathematics instruction. This effort is teacher-driven, using a mix of a variety of existing math workshop ideas and concepts and making the effort to fit them within the essence of the structural framework of the Reader's and Writer's Workshop models as outlined by Teachers College. Familiarity and experience with this structure will allow educators and students alike to more easily transition into the instruction.

## McCarthy-Towne School Improvement Plan

### **Strategies:**

#### ELA

- a) Continue to participate as a Project School
- b) Continue to send Faculty Members to Teachers College at Columbia University for on-going training at the Reading and Writing Project
- c) Continue to integrate content instruction during the Workshop time
- d) Adjust classroom and school-wide schedules to support instructional change

#### MATH

- a) Pilot within two grade-level teams the exploration and implementation of the workshop model to advance mathematical concepts and skills
- b) Explore the use of assistants to support classroom math instruction
- c) Adjust classroom and school-wide schedules to support instructional change
- d) Allow time for faculty observation of math workshop in action in schools outside of this district

### **Outcomes:**

Teachers will continue to explore and use new methodology to adjust instruction, examine and integrate Common Core standards, effectively integrate new lessons into the curriculum, and refine lessons to address identified needs.

### **Goal:** Responsive Classroom for the entire school community

We will take a pro-active, educational approach to creating a positive social environment that fosters respect and compassion for all. We will set school community-wide expectations and norms that include both adults and children.

## McCarthy-Towne School Improvement Plan

### **Background and Rationale:**

This goal is an ongoing one for our school community. Each year we work with a consultant from the Responsive Classroom organization who spends a day with the faculty working on a specific approach to enhancing a positive social atmosphere with specific strategies for both educators and students. We will also be using the Responsive Classroom platform to tie in with district-wide goals around building social/emotional health for all students and faculty in the ABRSD.

### **Strategies:**

- a) Schedule parent information forums that specifically address the mechanics and philosophy of the Responsive Classroom
- b) Plan to offer workshops on the Responsive Classroom for the entire faculty
- c) Continue to offer summer professional learning opportunities for teachers as presented by Responsive Classroom
- d) Use the language and strategies of Social Thinking in conjunction with the structures of the Responsive Classroom

### **Outcomes:**

To increase student and adult self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These factors all contribute to stronger community building for educators, students and families.

## **Assessment of Previous Year's School Improvement Plan**

**Goal:** We will investigate the effectiveness of homework. This will be a yearlong process of study and exploration of homework, in all its forms. This process will include:

- a) Parent forums
- b) Additional surveys
- c) Investigation of research
- d) Faculty discussions
- e) Gathering information for families and staff to consider and discuss
- f) Communicate our findings to the respective communities

## McCarthy-Towne School Improvement Plan

### **Outcomes/evidence and means by which they were assessed:**

*Outcomes: To gather parent and faculty feedback, insight gained from research, to inform all of the McCarthy-Towne school community stakeholders of what homework is and what it is not.*

In the process of exploring what homework can actually look like at each of the grade levels and, additionally, in the faculty meetings that we used to evaluate the effectiveness of homework, we began an organic process of reducing the amount of homework that was given to students. As we planned information sessions for parents based upon the parent survey from the year before, it became very clear that the amount of homework being given this year was considerably less than the school year before. The process of examination and reflection was the impetus for significant reductions across the grade levels. The faculty then decided that the current status quo was appropriate and that we would continue this into the next academic year, carefully monitoring the amounts. This was communicated to the School Council and was met with agreement.

### **Goal:** Extend the workshop model to all classrooms:

- Participate in professional learning activities in order to improve teaching and learning to support the Common Core curriculum
- Schedule Parent Forums to help educate parents about the workshop model

#### **ELA**

- a) Continue to participate as a Project School
- b) Continue to send Faculty Members to Teachers College at Columbia University for on-going training at the Reading and Writing Project
- c) Continue to integrate content instruction during the Workshop time
- d) Adjust classroom and school-wide schedules to support instructional change

#### **MATH**

- a) Continue to explore and implement the workshop model to advance mathematical concepts and skills across the grades
- b) Explore the use of assistants to better support classroom instruction
- c) Adjust classroom and school-wide schedules to support instructional changes
- d) Allow time for faculty observation of math workshop in action, both in and out of school, and for development of student activities

## McCarthy-Towne School Improvement Plan

### **Outcomes/evidence and means by which they were assessed:**

*OUTCOMES: Teachers will continue to explore and use new methodology to adjust instruction, examine and integrate Common Core standards, effectively integrate new lessons into the curriculum, and refine lessons to address identified needs.*

#### **Goal Assessment:**

With the continued counsel of the Teachers College Staff developers, we continue to work on purposeful implementation of the Reader's and Writer's Workshop. We have piloted expanded time for Reader's Workshop in Grades Two and Four in an effort to further explore pushing in more reading instruction for these two grades with the help of our Reading Specialist, with moderate success. Successful push-in instruction requires more personnel than we can offer at this point. However, the expanded instructional times were successful as we continued to adjust. We will be making an effort to do this school-wide in the coming academic year.

The continued development of the Math Workshop is becoming increasingly successful as more teachers are looking at the effectiveness of the model. This work will be continuing.

### **Goal:** Responsive Classroom for the entire school community

Take a pro-active, educational approach to creating a positive social environment that fosters respect and compassion for all. Set school community-wide expectations and norms that includes both adults and children.

- a) Schedule parent information forums that specifically address the mechanics and philosophy of the Responsive Classroom
- b) Using the first building-based Professional Learning Day in fall, 2015, to offer a series of workshops and break-out groups on the Responsive Classroom for the entire faculty, including classroom assistants and Special Education assistants
- c) Continue to offer summer professional learning opportunities for teachers as presented by Responsive Classroom

## McCarthy-Towne School Improvement Plan

### **Outcomes/evidence and means by which they were assessed:**

*OUTCOMES: To increase student and adult self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These factors all contribute to stronger community building for educators, students and families.*

#### **Goal Assessment:**

There is strong agreement among faculty and staff that this was a goal that was unequivocally met. There is also strong agreement that it continues to be a goal that constantly needs to be nurtured, renewed, and revisited. Working with a consultant to launch the new school year was a tremendous inspiration and that inspiration worked to sustain the important work of the school wide Morning Meeting occurring in every classroom, every day, at the same time. Special Educators, Music, Art, and Physical Education teachers were assigned specific classrooms or rotations so that they, too, could participate in the daily Morning Meeting. Students could see that all of the adults in our school were active participants in an event that was community wide.

We will again begin the year by working with a consultant from Responsive Classroom, specifically working on the academic piece of *Teacher Language* and the social and very practical piece of dealing with *Thorny Behaviors*, both critical parts of the Responsive Classroom approach and philosophy. A team of Special Educators and our Assistant Principal has attended conferences and workshops on Social Thinking. This is another part of the effort and working more closely on social/emotional issues and challenges that are part of the elementary school experience.