

**MONTHLY REPORTING OF
ELL STUDENT POPULATION**Acton Public Schools
October 1, 2013

Category	Total as of 9/13//2013	Additions	Subtractions	Total as of 10/1/2013
Conant	42	0	-5	37
Douglas	23	+7	0	30
Gates	11	+10	0	21
McCarthy-Towne	40	0	0	40
Merriam	19	+3	0	22
APS TOTAL	135	+20	-5	150

**EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENT POPULATION
MONTHLY REPORTING & PROJECTIONS**

Acton Public Schools

October 1, 2013

	June 1, 2013	Additions/ Subtractions June 2013	Final Total As of June 30, 2013	September 1, 2013	Additions/ Subtractions September 1, 2013	Final Total As of September 1, 2013	October 1, 2013	Additions/ Subtractions October 1, 2013	Final Total As of October 1, 2013	End of Year Projection**
<i>SPED</i> 3-Year Olds (In-District)	26	+3	29	17	0	17	17	0	17	26
<i>SPED</i> 4-Year Old (In-District)	17	0	17	17	0	17	17	0	17	19
<i>SPED</i> 5-Year Old (In-District)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
SPED 3-Year Old <i>Tuition in From Boxborough</i>	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SPED 4-Year Old <i>Tuition in From Boxborough</i>	1	0	1	2	0	2	2	0	2	1
SPED Student In Class TOTAL	45	+3	48	36	0	36	36	0	36	
Itinerant	17	+3	20	9	0	9	9	-1	8	20
OOD Preschool	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
SPED TOTAL	60	+3	63	45	0	45	45	-1	44	
* <i>TYPICAL</i> 3-year old (In-District)	20	0	20	21	0	21	21	0	21	24
* <i>TYPICAL</i> 4-Year Olds (In-District)	26	0	26	26	0	26	26	0	26	28
TOTAL	106	+3	109	92	0	92	92	-1	91	

*The school district must ensure that programs are available for eligible students 3 and 4 years of age. The programs must developmentally appropriate and located in a setting that includes student with and without disabilities (State Requirement 603 CMR 28.06 (7) and Federal Requirement 34 CFR 300.101 (b); 300.124(b); 300.323(b))

**Projections may be impacted by move-ins and/or Department of Public Health referrals

10/11/13

Conant School Council

School Improvement Plan for the 2013 – 2014 School Year

**Luther B. Conant School
Acton, Massachusetts**

**Principal: Damian Sugrue, M.Ed.
Assistant Principal: Priscilla Kotyk Ph.D.**

June 1, 2013

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I. Background and Rationale

A. About the School Council:

The Conant School Council Meets regularly to discuss progress on the School Improvement Plan and share ideas about the school in general.

Council meetings are structured so that issues or ideas are presented and discussed, with a group approach to problem solving. If a situation requires additional information, a task force may be formed. Task forces, consisting of at least one school council member and Conant parents and staff, are used to research and make recommendations to the Council on specific school improvement goals that are established each year. The task forces, which are not standing committees, report to the Council. This line of communication helps to provide direction and determines when a task force has completed its assigned task. Subcommittees of Council members meet as needed to accomplish tasks, such as the preparation of the School Improvement Plan. The work of subcommittees, like that of task forces, is submitted to the Council as a whole for approval or review.

Meetings focus on monitoring the progress made toward accomplishing the Council's goals and discussing school policy issues which parents, students, or staff which are not being addressed elsewhere by other groups in the school. In this latter capacity, the Council acts as a sounding board and advisor to the principal.

The Conant School Council, as a state-mandated and elected body representing parents and staff, views itself, in relation to the School Committee, as the appropriate vehicle for communicating the concerns and opinions of the Conant community. It would like the School Committee to continue to seek input from the Councils in each of the elementary schools.

A. 2013 – 2014 Conant School Council Membership:

Our membership for 2013-2014:

<u>Conant School Council</u>	<u>Length of Term</u>
Principal: Damian Sugrue	
Assistant Principal: Priscilla Kotyk	
Parents: Seema Shenoy	2012 - 2014
Andrea Keenan	2012 – 2014
Staff: Melissa Hayes	2010 - 2013

	Jana Bardsley	2010 - 2013
PTO Leadership:	Ranjini Reddy	2011 - 2013
Community:	Trish Sullivan	2010 - 2013

II. New Goals for the 2013-2014 School Year

New Goal 1: Student Growth: Continue development of Narrative, Opinion and Information writing rubrics and prompts to align school wide writing program with Common Core Standards and have a mechanism for tracking student growth over time in writing.

- Continue to utilize Professional-learning time to develop rubrics and prompts.
- Implement narrative rubrics and prompts.
- Use Professional-learning time to practice holistic scoring of writing samples.
- Share completed work with district.
- **Responsible Parties:** Principal, Assistant Principal, Teachers.
- **Estimated Cost:** \$0
- **Outcome:** Completed Rubrics.

New Goal 2: Communication: Develop informational materials to assist families in understanding emergency drills and procedures, curriculum and grading, and social/behavioral expectations of students. Use social media when possible to better communicate with parents/families.

- Use understanding of different cultures to create information materials that explain these issues, which can be confusing for our international families.
- Use Facebook/Twitter to communicate school news to our families
- **Responsible Parties:** School Council with teacher input.
- **Cost:** Negligible printing costs (\$500) electronic means of communication will be used as much as possible.
- **Outcome:** Informational pamphlets and or web pages.

New Goal 3: Parental Feedback for Self-Assessment of School Climate and Performance: Create a new survey to garner parent feedback about the Conant School experience.

- Create a survey to gather parent opinions about curriculum, activities, procedures, and climate at the Conant School.
- Use data collected to measure our own effectiveness and make adjustments where necessary.
- **Responsible Parties:** School Council Members.
- **Cost:** \$0
- **Outcome:** New Survey with results.

III. Review of Goals for the 2012-2013 School Year

Goal 1: Communication: Increase communication between school and home.

- Send home (at minimum) a bi-weekly newsletter via email containing calendar/event information, news from principal, news from classrooms.
- Continue to contribute to PTO's Newsflash.
- **Responsible Parties:** Principal, teachers, staff.
- **Cost:** \$0
- **Indicators of Success:** Successful completion of bi weekly newsletter with staff input.

The Blackboard Connect system was utilized effectively to inform families of school, PTO and community events.

New Goal 2: Community: Increase student/adult interactions.

- Develop "Lunch with Principal" program to have every student have lunch throughout the year at least once with principal.
- Develop an advisory or adult buddy program where every adult in the building makes a connection with several students (not in their class) in the beginning of the year and continues to informally check in periodically throughout the year with their group.
- Hold short "community" meetings with students and principal/teachers at each grade level to address grade specific issues. (minimum of three times per year, more if necessary).
- **Responsible Parties:** Principal, teachers, staff.
- **Cost:** Negligible, supplies for principal lunches.
- **Indicator of Success:** Full implementation of Lunch with Principal program, meetings held with children, creation of "Buddy Program".

Due to a very high number of new initiatives this year, this goal has been tabled for the future. The staff will work together to develop new ideas for this goal.

Goal 3: School Climate: Review current lunch procedures.

- Develop ways to increase student seat time at lunch as well as improve overall lunch experience for all students (item strongly identified in parent survey)
- **Responsible people:** Principal, Assistant Principal, Cafeteria Manager, Lunch Staff.
- **Cost:** ?
- **Indicator of Success:** Higher lunchtime ratings in parent survey, improvement in student morale at lunchtime.

Students were able to enjoy more seat time to eat lunch as the newer cash system has been improved. New furniture has been requested to further enhance the cafeteria.

Goal 4: Student Growth: Track Student Growth through our own student assessments.

- Continue to utilize the results from Benchmark Assessments, DRA2, and Assessing Mathematics Concepts systems to check for student growth.
- Discuss Growth data in grade level and vertical teams to inform instruction.
- Report growth findings annually.
- **Responsible Parties:** Principal, Assistant Principal, Teachers.
- **Estimated Cost:** \$0

The assessments have been utilized to collect student growth data. Data will be kept in student assessment folders, that can be accessed by teachers and specialists, to track trends in growth.

Goal 5: Continued MCAS Improvement

- Students who scored Needs Improvement or Warning who are not on IEP's will see the Reading Specialist twice per week to work on remedial MCAS skills.
- Students who scored Needs Improvement or Warning in Mathematics will receive intervention support from the newly hired Mathematics Assistant to work on remedial Mathematics MCAS skills.
- Students who score in this range who do have IEP's will receive the same types of interventions in their placements.
- MCAS Data will be studied by each grade level to determine what skills/topics require further exploration to ensure success for all students.
- This is the same method used to improve our scores last year.
- **Responsible Parties:** Conant Staff, Assistant Principal, Principal, Director of Curriculum.

This goal has been fully implemented and will continue to develop as we move towards the common core and new assessments and accountability systems with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Douglas School Improvement Plan 2013-14



School Council Members: Christopher Whitbeck, Judy Rowland, Lisa Racie, Tamara Ricciardone, Amy Krishnamurthy, Karen Jarsky, Lisa Jensen-Fellows, Tom Reynolds, Debbie Kay, Maura Sharp, Jennifer Rand

The Douglas School Council generally meets every six weeks. This past year, we met on the following dates:

November 29th
January 31th
April 10th
June 5th

Part One: Progress with Goals for 2012-2013

The following list includes this past year's Rationale, Responsible Parties, Strategies, Measurable Outcomes, Target Completion Dates, Assessment of Progress, Assessment Instruments, Anticipated Costs, and Source of Revenues for our two stated goals.

Goal Statement #1: Improve Assessment Analysis to Improve Student Learning

Rationale: The Douglas school assessment system will be organized around the primary purpose of improving student learning. It should provide useful information about whether students have reached important learning goals (benchmarks) and provide information so that teachers can help students move forward. The assessments are currently consistent with learning goals, curriculum, instruction, and current knowledge of how students learn.

Teachers use assessments integrated with curriculum in Language Arts as well as informal observations and interviews, projects, performances and exhibitions, audio and videotapes, experiments, portfolios, and journals.

This year, as we collect data, teachers will begin to analyze the data to track student growth. This is different than in the past when most data was summative or used to inform instruction. This data will continue to serve these purposes, but a system of tracking growth will be new. Teachers will be able to explain how the data shows growth and how they differentiate instruction based on their assessments.

This data will be shared with the school community via a PTO meeting in the spring. It will include reading assessments such as Fontas & Pinnell, school based writing prompts, and other teacher created writing assessments.

Responsible Parties

Principal, all grade level teachers and special educators will work as members of teams working to identify age appropriate, skills and concepts.

Strategies

1. Collection of current and possible assessments
2. Identification of benchmarks
3. Analysis to match skills and assessments

Define Outcomes

1. A Douglas reference of assessments correlated to specific benchmarks.

Target Completion Date

June 2013

Assessment of Progress

By the end of the year, K-6 staff at Douglas created grade level systems to track student growth in mathematics and also improved our system to track reading. Each grade level team created a student growth document that cross referenced Common Core learning goals with unit assessments in math. Teachers can now see student performance on specific learning goals on both pre and post tests in mathematics. Student growth can be tracked from unit to unit. This system can also be used formatively to help teachers identify skills that require more focus or less focus for individual students or the entire class.

Costs: Within professional develop budget for school year

Goal Statement #2: Professional Collaboration and Development

Rationale: Knowledgeable and fair educators are essential for high quality assessment. Assessment systems depend on educators who understand the full range of assessment purposes, use appropriately a variety of suitable methods, work collaboratively, and engage in ongoing professional development to improve their capability as assessors.

Douglas School teachers will identify and participate in professional development and work in multi-grade level teams during the scheduled school day to improve their assessment craft. They will engage in small groups of teachers reviewing student work, or making adjustments to untested practices to improve school-wide knowledge of skills and assessments.

Responsible Parties

Principal, all grade level teachers and special educators will work as members of teams that work to organize and identify and participate in high quality professional development.

Strategies

1. Collaborative, cross grade teams K – 6 review benchmarks, assessments and study student work. They will work with a trained facilitator and use National School Reform protocols to improve their collaborative skills.
2. Each team will keep notes of their collaborative notes as well as personal reflections.

3. Personal reflections will be summarized at the end of the year to show how collaborative time led to student growth

Define Outcomes

1. A collection of reflections summarizing the connection between collaborative teamwork and student growth.

Target Completion Date

June of 2013.

Assessment of Progress

The work on this goal was made possible by the School Committee support of full time specialists in each of the elementary schools. At Douglas we were able to create a collaborative block that rotated every third Wednesday. We experimented with different schedules, and agreed upon one in which grade level teams met and used protocols to review and improve teaching. The teachers reviewed student work, or made adjustments to practices. This became a very valuable time and improved school-wide knowledge of teaching skills and assessments.

Part Two: Goals for 2013-2014

The Douglas staff and School Council have agreed on one overarching goal for the upcoming school year. Teachers, staff and the Douglas School community will focus on **Identifying our core beliefs and identifying how we can best provide an educational experience that "...respects individual talents, supports divergent thinking, tolerates deviation, and encourages creativity."**¹

Our goals are tied to the already established system-wide goals found in the Long Range Strategic Plan:

- Preparing students by providing them with the knowledge, and intellectual and reflective skills they will need to thrive in an increasingly complex world. □
- Review and articulate what all students should know and be able to do at each grade level.

Goal Statement #1: Identifying our core beliefs and identifying how we can best provide an educational experience that "...respects individual talents, supports divergent thinking, tolerates deviation, and encourages creativity."

Rationale: The Acton Public Schools system of school choice encourages schools to be unique in their approach to teaching the state's learning goals.

It is important that each school be able to articulate their beliefs and approach.

Because all schools have excellent teachers and equally prepare students for the Jr. High, parents need to choose us for what we believe – not our product.

Dr. Zhao challenges us to create a school that fosters student innovation as a means to support an innovation driven society. Creating this type of school requires that the staff review the approach that they are taking toward curriculum instruction and analyzing whether it is both effective at leading toward conceptual mastery AND promoting innovation, critical thinking and creativity. This is the task before the Douglas School community.

Responsible Parties

Principal, all grade level teachers and special educators will work as members of teams working to identify beliefs and methodologies.

Strategies

1. Collection of current beliefs in a series of staff meetings and community forums – this will be completed via the Delphi method which involves generating a list of beliefs and then asking "experts" (in our case, teachers, parents and students to indicate their level of agreement that the

¹ Zhao, Yong (2009)Catching Up or Leading The Way: American Education In The Age Of Globalization. ASCD, Alexandria VA. Pvi.

statements are important. We then look to see where there is consensus about importance. A true Delphi does several rounds of surveys, and in each subsequent round the experts get additional information about why their colleagues do or do not think the statements for which consensus has not been reached are important. The idea is that once they know others' rationales, the experts who were on the fence might be swayed one way or the other (important or not important), getting us closer to consensus for all items.

2. Identification of benchmarks – what we want Douglas Students to be able to do, know and produce beyond the curricular benchmarks.
3. Analysis of curriculum and approaches to match beliefs and approaches
4. Teaching team work to provide opportunities for passionate engagement in skill building and fostering innovation

Define Outcomes

1. A statement of Douglas Core Beliefs
2. Grade level key curriculum experiences.

Target Completion Date

June, 2014

Costs \$0

Gates School Improvement Plan

2013 – 2014

**Lynne Newman
Principal
Gates School
Acton, MA 01720**

School Improvement Plan 2013 – 2014

District Strategic Goal: #2 Prepare students by providing them with the knowledge, and intellectual and reflective skills they will need to thrive in an increasingly complex world.

Advance Standards-based Learning/Assessment

Gates School Objective: #1 *Essential content, learning expectations and benchmark assessments that are aligned to State Curriculum Standards will be clearly identified in each grade level, and will be clearly communicated to teachers, students, and parents.*

Strategies	Timeline	Lead Parties	Measurable Outcomes	Narrative Updates
K-6 teachers will pilot GoMath	September - June	Teachers, SPED teachers, Math Curriculum Specialist, Math Assistant	Decision will be made to adopt new math curriculum aligned with Common Core or pilot another program.	
K-6 teachers will align writing curriculum/assessment with Common Core writing standards	September - June	Teachers, SPED teachers, Reading Specialist	Writing curriculum/assessment will be aligned both horizontally and vertically with the Common Core standards for three types of writing (narrative, informative, and opinion).	

District Strategic Goal: #1 Meet the diverse needs of all students by promoting social development and emotional and physical well being through increased student-adult and student-student interactions

Advance Social Development/Emotional-Physical Well Being

Gates School Objective: #1 *Encourage students to live a healthier lifestyle*

Strategies	Timeline	Lead Parties	Measurable Outcomes	Narrative Updates
All school tobas two mornings a week during morning announcements	September - June	PE Teacher, sixth grade student announcers	Successful implementation of tabatas exercise during announcements on Monday and Friday.	
The establishment of a Gates walking club	September - November	Principal, Assistant Principal, Kirsten Nelson, Teachers, Recess Aides, K-6 Students	Students (and teachers) walk fifty miles in fifty days	

School Improvement Plan

2012 – 2013

Final Outcomes

District Strategic Goal: #2 Prepare students by providing them with the knowledge, and intellectual and reflective skills they will need to thrive in an increasingly complex world.				
Advance Standards-based Learning				
Gates School Objective: #1 <i>Essential content and learning expectations that are aligned to State Mathematics Standards will be clearly identified in each grade level, and will be clearly communicated to teachers, students, and parents.</i>				
Strategies	Timeline	Lead Parties	Measurable Outcomes	Narrative Updates
Teachers will review Math learning goals, revise curriculum materials, and implement new standards	September - June	Teachers, SPED teachers, Math Curriculum Specialist, Math Assistant	Criteria by which each learning goal is assessed will be identified.	Teachers reviewed Common Core standards at staff meetings and curriculum meetings.
K-1 will implement year 2 of the Investigations Program	September - June	Teachers, SPED teachers, Math Curriculum Specialist, Math Assistant	Team will meet three times per year to review student assessment data and curriculum materials.	K/1 teachers successfully completed their 2nd year of Investigations. They will be joining the Gates K-6 Go Math pilot in 2013-2014.
Grade 2 will implement year 1 of the Investigations Program	September - June	Teachers, SPED teachers, Math Curriculum Specialist, Math Assistant	Team will meet three times per year to review student assessment data and curriculum materials.	Grade 2 completed their first year of Investigations, and will be joining the Gates K-6 Go Math pilot in 2013-2014 to provide math consistency in grades K-6.
Grade 3 Teachers will pilot the Envision Math Program	September - June	Teachers, SPED teachers, Math Curriculum Specialist, Math Assistant	Team will meet three times per year to review student assessment data and curriculum materials.	Grade 3 completed their year of the Envision Math program. Teachers found this program to be okay, but have agreed to join the K-6 Go Math pilot in 2013-2014.
Grade 4-6 will supplement current math program with additional resources aligned with the standards	September - June	Teachers, SPED teachers, Math Curriculum Specialist, Math Assistant	Team will meet three times per year to review student assessment data and curriculum materials.	It has been challenging to supplement the Scott Foresman math program and align this program with the Common Core standards. Teachers in grades 4-6 are eager to pilot the Go Math program, which is completely aligned to the Common Core.
Gates School Objective: #2 <i>Common assessments, collaborative data analysis and specific student feedback will become a part of the instructional practice of all teachers.</i>				
Strategies	Timeline	Lead Parties	Measurable Outcomes	Narrative Updates
K-1 teachers will use the Assessing Math Concepts (Kathy Richardson Assessment) to assess math concepts and skills three times per year	By end of: September, February, June	Teachers, SPED teachers, Math Curriculum Specialist, Math Assistant	AMC Data will be collected, shared and analyzed at grade level.	K/1 teachers have used the online version of AMC to monitor student progress and guide their math instruction.
2-6 teachers will establish common grade level assessments that align with the math learning goals	September - June	Teachers, SPED teachers, Math Curriculum Specialist, Math Assistant	Teacher Assessment Data MCAS Data (4-6) Common grade level benchmark assessments, which includes formative and summative, will be analyzed.	Teachers used a variety of assessments such as Kathy Richardson AMC assessments in gr. 2, and pre/post assessments and math probes in gr. 3 - 6.

District Strategic Goal: #3 Hire and retain high-quality educators and provide supervision, evaluation, and systemic focused plan for professional growth that improves student experiences.

Advance Professional Growth and Collaboration

Gates School Objective: #1 *Adopt and implement the new teacher evaluation system*

Strategies	Timeline	Lead Parties	Measurable Outcomes	Narrative Updates
Support teachers in setting one student learning goal and one professional practice goal	By October 15, 2012	Principal, Assistant Principal	Each teacher will set two S.M.A.R.T. goals - one for student learning and one professional practice	All teachers set one student learning and professional practice goal. Goals were action-oriented, time-bound and tracked, and were measurable.
Implement Year 1 of the new Teacher Evaluation System	September - June	Principal, Assistant Principal	Evaluation protocol will be followed, evaluations will be completed and shared with teachers	Approximately 50% of the staff participated in the new teacher evaluation pilot. Teachers set goals, were evaluated throughout the year, and received a formative assessment report and a summative evaluation report.
Adopt the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model focusing on: learning, working collaboratively, and holding ourselves accountable for results	September - June	Principal, Assistant Principal, Teachers, SPED teachers, Specialists	The PLC model will be shared with teachers at monthly staff and curriculum meetings	The Professional Learning Community goal was shared at our first staff meeting in Aug. 2012. Teachers set professional practice & student learning goals that focused on learning rather than on teaching. They worked collaboratively during common planning time and at grade level curriculum meetings to meet their shared goals.

McCarthy-Towne School

SCHOOL COUNCIL

Report for 2012-2013
&
School Improvement Plan for 2013- 2014

I. Background and Rationale

A. School Council Responsibilities

The McT School Council provides three useful functions:

- a) It increases communication within the school community;
- b) It provides a forum for a small group of faculty, parents, and community representatives to discuss issues, thorny problems, and difficult situations;
- c) It provides oversight to certain school wide projects.

The job of the School Council is to decide how student, faculty and parent concerns may be handled and to recommend the appropriate group or individual to do so. It serves as a forum to identify and discuss issues and problems and refer them to the appropriate group or decision maker(s) for final determination. The faculty, PTSO Steering Committee, subcommittees and Student Council provide the mechanisms for accomplishing whatever needs to be done.

In some Massachusetts communities the School Councils receive funds directly from the School Committee to help finance projects that will improve the learning of students in their schools. The McCarthy-Towne School Council requests that the APS School Committee set aside \$5,000 for each School Council to fund special projects to help each school attain its improvement plan.

B. Current School Council Membership - [All are two year terms except for principal.]

Parent Representatives:

Maureen Jones	2009-2013
Ann Budner, Co-Chair	2009-2013
Tracy Smith	2010-2012
Frank McCammon	2010-2012

Community Representatives:

John Rowse M.D.	2004-2012
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Faculty Representatives:

David Krane, Principal	Permanent
Noreen Cohen	1998-2013
Allison Leary	2012-2013
Jen Pratt	2012-2013

C. School Council Meetings

The McT School Council schedules five regular meetings during each academic year. These meetings usually occur in October, November or December, January or February, March or April, and May or June. Other meetings may be added if necessary.

One part of each meeting is devoted to hearing concerns from the faculty, the parents, and the Student Council. Another part is to hear how work is progressing on the School Improvement Plan. Each meeting usually focuses on one or two of the School Council's goals. A third part of each meeting is set aside for discussion of any other issues.

II. School Improvement Plan Goals for 2012-2013

Below is a summary of the School Improvement Plan for 2012-2013 as presented by the McCarthy-Towne School Council.

Goal #1:

Arts Integration is an essential part and an on-going goal of McT. We will strengthen and continue to develop this process of learning. We will communicate these efforts to the ever-changing McT community. We will accomplish this by:

- Using the display case in the lobby to share and explain student-produced work
- Using assemblies to share classroom work
- Communicating through The Bulletin and other media
- Using the increased specialist time to advance this goal

Goal#2:

Focus on advancing the mathematical thinking and skills of the students at McT. The faculty will:

- Continue to build upon the past year's successes with the school-based Math Assistant and the work of the APS Mathematics Curriculum Co-coordinator
- Participate in professional learning activities in order to improve instruction and support the Common Core curriculum
- Align the Mathematical Learning Goals developed by Grade Level Teams over the past year to assessments used by the faculty

Goal #3

Take a pro-active, educational approach to creating a positive social environment that fosters respect and compassion for all. We will continue to:

- Have eighty percent of faculty achieve certification in Responsive Classroom I and II
- Have all new faculty trained in Responsive Classroom
- Have monthly Faculty study groups examining the literature and processes of the Responsive Classroom philosophy and curriculum

Goal #4:

McCarthy-Towne teachers will continue to examine literacy across the grades and across the curriculum to develop more cohesive instructional strategies to support teaching and learning. We will:

- Refine the alignment of the ELA Learning Goals developed by Grade Level Teams over the past year to assessments used by the faculty
- Apply Benchmark and interim literacy assessments across the grade levels
- Participate in professional learning activities in order to improve instruction and support the Common Core curriculum
- Expand the resources of the Leveled Library in the Common Core content areas, specifically non-fiction text

Continue to send Grade Level Teams to Teachers College at Columbia University for on-going training at the Reading Project

III. Assessment of the current year's School Council work:

Goal #1:

During the past year, we have had a number of presentations and displays by the various classrooms showcasing the integration of the visual arts into a variety of content areas, notably social studies and the English Language Arts. The addition of Sloyd instructional time has permitted classroom teachers to work more closely with our Art Integration assistant and the Sloyd teacher. This increased time has allowed a greater number of projects to take place and it has strengthened the process. We changed the schedule to accommodate this time and have learned how to better integrate these additional instructional blocks for the coming year.

Goal#2:

We have worked closely with the APS Mathematics Curriculum Coordinator as we targeted a specific grade level in examining MCAS scores and classroom practice. This work moved beyond the item analysis typically done at the beginning of the year and focused on an entire grade level team to looking at specific concepts within the curriculum and analyzing how these concepts were taught. Looking at student data produced over the course of the year initiated some adjustments to practice in all the three of the classrooms at this grade level. Classroom teachers also explored the development of the Math Workshop, bringing the model of the Reader's Workshop to the teaching of mathematics. Initial data analysis at some levels indicate that this is a successful approach and we will be looking more deeply into this approach over the course of the coming academic year.

Goal #3

We continue to work towards our certification goal with eight faculty members attending a weeklong workshop this summer for Responsive Classroom certification at Levels One and Two. This past year, the school has introduced components of the Responsive Classroom philosophy to our Community Assemblies, as we use these gatherings to emphasize, re-teach, and promulgate the values of the Responsive Classroom curriculum.

Goal #4:

We have made great strides as a school in literacy instruction and assessment over the past academic year. Grade level teams are looking at and using assessment data for instructional planning and are putting into practice, at the primary level, innovative Word Study practice in the service of reading instruction. We again will be sending teachers to New York City to Teachers College for more professional learning. Additionally, the District will be hosting a Homegrown Institute from Columbia's Teachers College, which is an opportunity for teachers to participate in the Reading Project workshops here in Acton. We have been conducting well-attended weekly literacy meetings, where a variety of instructional strategies are discussed and moderated by classroom teachers and our Reading Specialist. This program, developed by our Reading Specialist, has been a key element of the continuous professional learning by the McCarthy-Towne faculty. Kathy Collins, a nationally recognized authority on the teaching of literacy, has also been involved with all of our teachers as part of a yearlong consultancy of literacy instructional practice in the classrooms. That relationship will continue and grow in the coming year, as well.

IV. School Improvement Plan Goals for 2013-2014

Goal #1

Take a pro-active, educational approach to creating a positive social environment that fosters respect and compassion for all. The faculty will:

- Use a portion of monthly faculty meetings to examine the literature and processes of the Responsive Classroom philosophy and curriculum
- Train classroom assistants in Responsive Classroom techniques

OUTCOMES: To increase student self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Goal #2:

Art-integration is an essential part of MCT. We will continue to strengthen and develop this process of learning and communicate these efforts to the ever-changing McT community. Communicating with the faculty, student, and parent community what emerges from these processes is a critical component of this goal. We will accomplish this through:

- Faculty meetings and other venues, including staff workshops
- Communicating through The Bulletin, The Howler, and other media

OUTCOME: Increased communication with the community over the use of this learning process as central to a greater understanding of all the content areas, academic and social.

Goal #3

Focus on advancing the mathematical concepts and skills throughout the grades and across the curriculum. We will:

- Begin the work of implementing the Math Workshop model in Kindergarten through Grade 3
- Continue to build upon the past year's successes with the school-based Math Assistant and the work of the APS Mathematics Curriculum Co-coordinator
- Refine the alignment of the Mathematics Learning Goals developed by Grade Level Teams
- Participate in professional learning activities in order to improve instruction and support the Common Core curriculum

OUTCOMES: Teachers use new methodology to adjust instruction, examine and integrate Common Core instruction in math, effectively integrate new lessons into the math curriculum, and refine lessons to address identified needs.

Goal #4:

Continue to examine literacy concepts and skills across the grades and across the curriculum. The Workshop model teaches deeper strategic thinking. We will:

- Extend the Reader's Workshop model and approach to all classrooms
- Continue to expand the Leveled Library
- Continue to send Grade Level Teams to Teachers College at Columbia University for on-going training at the Reading Project
- Participate in professional learning activities, both within the APS district and outside the APS district, in order to improve instruction and support the Common Core curriculum
- Continue to develop building-based professional learning opportunities in literacy for all faculty

OUTCOMES: Expand the use of the Reader's Workshop to increase specific comprehension and critical thinking instruction across the grade levels, and to encourage and increase professional collaboration and learning around literacy and the Common Core Curriculum.

Goal #5

Continue to develop the assessment of skills in a variety of ways to guide instruction and to report student learning and academic growth. We will:

- Refine the alignment of the ELA and Mathematics Learning Goals developed by the District Grade Level teachers to assessments used by the McT faculty
- Apply Benchmark and interim literacy assessments across the grade levels
- Continue to develop grade-level common assessments for specific content areas
- Refine existing portfolio assessment methodology and determine new classroom-based authentic assessments of student learning (knowledge and skills)
- Evaluate the piloted End of Year Reporting Instrument, refine, and launch revised document

OUTCOMES: Finalize Reporting Document as aligned to assessments and the Common Core curriculum and continue a collaborative examination of professional practice through a variety of protocols.

V. Election of School Council members for 2013-2014

Election of new faculty and parent representatives of the McCarthy-Towne School Council for the coming school year usually takes place in June, before the end of the current school year.

The members of the 2012-2013 McCarthy-Towne School Council submit this School Council Report and School Improvement Plan to the Acton Public Schools School Committee.

**Acton Public Schools
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District**

Merriam School

School Improvement Plan Report 2012-2013
School Improvement Plan 2013-2014

**Acton Public Schools
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District**

Merriam School

Part One: Background and Rationale

Members of the Merriam School Council

Ed Kaufman	Principal	
Christy Nealon	Teacher	2nd of 3-year-term
Michele Pruett	Teacher	2nd of 3-year-term
Karen Sonner	Teacher	1st of 3-year-term
Charles Matthews	Parent	2nd of 3-year-term
Cara Morgan	Parent	1st of 3-year-term
Chuck Pollak	Parent	2nd of 3-year-term
Kristin Warren	Parent	1st of 3-year-term

Merriam School Council Meeting Dates 2012-2013

October 9, 2012	March 12, 2013
November 13, 2012	April 9, 2013
January 8, 2013	May 28, 2013
February 5, 2013	

After reviewing the role of the School Council, the Merriam School Council began the 2012-2013 school year organizing the plans/strategies for the School Improvement Plan and developing global plans for the school year. The teachers, parent representatives and principal on the School Council reported progress on the work toward meeting the goals at each meeting. Along with ongoing work on School Improvement Goals, the School Council worked to maintain a strong connection with the PTO (including co-sponsoring several community events) and discussed long-range goals for Merriam School.

This spring, the School Council reviewed, reflected on and discussed the 2012-2013 goals.

Part Two: Evaluation of Current School Improvement Plan 2012-2013

Goal One: Use the new district-wide learning goals in Language Arts and Math to complete and revise our end-of-year document and to complete a thorough list of common and consistent assessments.

Strategies:

1. Staff and parents will be given opportunities at meetings to give feedback about last year's changes to the document, which will help in the revision process.
2. A staff study group will meet on a monthly basis to complete the work on the end-of year document, incorporating the learning goals and feedback from last year's pilot of the document. Progress on the document will be shared at School Council meetings.
3. An article about the new document will be written for the school newsletter.
4. The completed document will be piloted at all grade levels for the 2012-2013 school year.
5. Staff will work in grade level meetings and staff meetings to complete lists of common and consistent assessments used to support the learning goals.
6. These lists will be shared with the parent community at a PTO meeting or in a newsletter article.

Responsible parties: Principal, Merriam Faculty, School Council

Outcome: The learning goals will become a foundation of both the completed end-of-year document and of the assessments that takes place at Merriam School.

Target Date: May, 2013

Assessment: A staff committee met monthly to work on completing this end-of-year document. Information from district-wide grade level meetings about mathematics and language arts learning goals was used as part of these monthly discussions. The document will be completed in June, and will be ready to use. To prepare to use it properly, the staff will review the document at the first meeting of the 2013-2014 school year. Following that, the document will be presented at an early PTO meeting. The Reading Committee (comprised of Merriam staff) worked together to develop consistent guidelines for administering the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), which will be presented at the June staff meeting. In addition, a district committee worked on consistent assessments to be used by the two schools using the Everyday Math program. Additional work on consistent assessment will be continued next year.

Goal Two: Continuing our work on literacy, staff will create a model for using a Readers Notebook in classes at all grade levels. The notebook will be a major vehicle for demonstrating students' growth in literacy over the course of a given year.

Strategies:

- 1) Staff will use twice a month Thursday afternoon meeting time as the basis for this work.
- 2) Work will be brought back to grade level meetings, staff meetings, and school council for review.
- 3) The Readers Notebook will be a vehicle for demonstrating student growth in reading and writing over the course of a year, in a variety of skill areas. This information will be shared at conferences throughout the year.
- 4) A list of suggested activities will be created for inclusion in the notebook for each grade level.
- 5) Information about the notebooks will be shared in details at the fall 2013 Open House, including how the notebook will be a vehicle for demonstrating literacy growth over time.

Responsible parties: Principal, Merriam Faculty, School Council

Outcome: Guidelines and activities for a Readers Notebook to be used at all grade levels will be completed by the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

Target Date: May 2013

Assessment: This goal was extremely successful. Sixteen members of the staff met twice a month, once on our own and a second time with reading consultant Kathy Collins. Over the course of the year – through research, discussion, and by looking closely at student work, the group designed an initial model for a Readers Notebook. Members of the staff, along with Ms. Collins, presented the work of this group at the March School Committee meeting. In addition, the group is completing a guide (to be used next year by all Merriam faculty) to be presented at the June staff meeting. The guide offers an overview and philosophy of the notebook concept, along with sample lessons and student work that will help inspire Merriam staff as their students “write about reading” next year. Information about the notebook will be shared with Merriam parents in the fall. Kathy Collins has agreed to continue to consult with the staff again in the 2013-14 school year.

Goal Three: Continue to improve communication across all parts of the Merriam community.

Strategies:

- 1) "Communication" will be our school-wide theme for the 2012-2013 school year.
- 2) All members of the community will be given an opportunity to reflect on and give input about areas of communication that they would like to see improved.
- 3) Staff will participate in professional learning activities at meetings in school to facilitate and improve communication within the building.
- 4) Students will participate in all-school meetings and Theme Day activities in order to understand more about communication.
- 5) Teachers will reach out to parents with specific guidelines about mutual communication.
- 6) There will be a workshop on communication at one of the PTO meetings next year.
- 7) The principal will write a newsletter article on some aspect of communication.
- 8) Toward the end of the year, parents will be asked to share how the year-long efforts around communication have had an impact on their experience of the school community.

Responsible parties: Principal, Merriam Faculty, School Council

Outcome: Communication at Merriam School will be improved in a variety of identified ways, and this will be borne out by feedback received at the end of the year.

Target Date: May 2013

Assessment: The communication goal was reached with the students and staff, but less so with the larger parent community. Children experienced two Theme Days, both of which included a variety of activities related to communication. In addition, Core Values work, Open Circle, and activities in family groups and at all-school meetings provided other opportunities for students to learn about communication (such as through storytelling, music and poetry). A number of the staff participated in a year-long professional learning experience entitled "Leading Together", and used their knowledge gained to lead activities around communication at faculty meetings. Teachers communicated with parents about the best vehicles for communication within the classroom. The principal wrote a newsletter article about how he makes decisions (and gave an example), as a means of communicating about this process. The School Council sponsored Literacy Night, which drew in many Merriam families, and provided numerous opportunities for communication. However, we would still like to give all members of the community a chance to reflect on this topic, and to provide more feedback. Future efforts around this topic should involve the parents in the community to a greater extent.

Part Three: School Improvement Plan 2013-2014

Goal One: Continue our work in literacy as teachers use the Readers Notebook and practice the school DRA assessment guidelines, and then reflect on that work. Develop and utilize writing rubrics to fit with Common Core expectations.

Strategies:

1. Staff will review the Readers Notebook guide and DRA assessment guidelines given out at the end of the 2012-2013 school year.
2. A staff study group will meet on a monthly basis to discuss how the Readers Notebook work is progressing and will make revisions.
3. Kathy Collins will consult in classrooms to help with the use of the Readers Notebook and with additional reading instruction.
4. The Reading Committee will keep track of questions that arise about administration and organization of the DRA assessments.
5. An additional outside reading consultant will work with grade levels to design writing rubrics that will align with the Common Core.
6. Information about this work will be shared with parents via written and oral communication.

Responsible parties: Principal, Merriam Faculty, School Council

Outcome: Literacy instruction at Merriam School will be more thorough and consistent.

Target Date: May, 2014

Goal Two: Begin a process for reviewing, revising, and communicating about the structures and practices in place for delivery and assessment of curriculum at Merriam School.

Strategies:

1. A staff committee will begin the process of outlining steps necessary for this process.
2. Staff meetings will be one venue for discussions and decisions around this topic.
3. The School Council will be kept informed and will consult with the staff about how to involve the larger community.
4. If changes are made in any of these areas, they will be updated in written documents, and in communications to Merriam families.
5. Plans for an in-depth retreat for staff to look closely and in more depth at these issues will be considered.
6. Progress will be communicated at the end of year and follow-up plans for 2014-15 will be constructed.

Responsible parties: Principal, Merriam Faculty, School Council

Outcome: The community will have made progress toward understanding many of our curriculum structures and strategies, and will have identified areas that might need to be modified or more clearly communicated.

Target Date: May, 2014

Goal Three: Provide opportunities to promote health and wellness activities and discussions at Merriam School.

Strategies:

1. "Health and Wellness" will be strongly considered as the theme for the 2013-14 school year.
2. The physical education teacher and school nurse will be invited to take part in planning activities focused on this theme.
3. The School Council will sponsor at least one event related to this topic.
4. This topic will be the subject of all-school meeting presentations and performances.
5. Outside of the school day activities, such as "Walk to School", or other enrichment activities, will be encouraged.
6. Food Services will be contacted to work with us on nutritional education.
7. Communication (such as newsletter articles) will be sent out to parents.

Responsible parties: Principal, Merriam Faculty, School Council

Outcome: Members of the Merriam community will have a greater awareness of the importance of health and wellness, and will have opportunities to put that awareness into practice.

Target Date: May, 2014