

Long Range Strategic Plan
Acton Public Schools
Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools

This plan was spearheaded by a committee of stakeholders (educators, parents, citizens of Acton and Boxborough, and school committee members) between the fall of 2010 and the fall of 2011. Significant effort was made to collect input and feedback from the larger school community.

The ultimate plan lays out the districts' mission and values, as defined by our larger community, as well as a series of goals intended to help the districts meet those ideals. Over the next five years, the districts will strive to meet these goals in order to fully prepare our students to be life-long learners, critical thinkers, and productive citizens.

Mission

To prepare all students to attain their full potential as life-long learners, critical thinkers, and productive citizens of our diverse community and global society.

Values

As a community, we value:

- An environment that promotes social development and emotional and physical well-being for the entire school community.
- An excellent academic program that prepares all students to achieve their individual potential.
- Diverse extracurricular opportunities accessible to all students that provide for student growth.
- A community that welcomes and respects the differences among us.
- Literacy, communication and technology skills for life long learning.
- Educational policy and resource decisions informed by research and evidence.

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

Values Addressed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Strategies:

- Provide students with increased counseling services.
- Create an advisory program at the secondary level that provides every student with a one-on-one relationship with an adult.
- Fully implement social and emotional curricula at the elementary schools.
- Partner with community organizations to expand extra-curricular and intramural offerings for all students.
- Increase communication about community offerings for youth by expanding school and district websites.
- Examine and determine appropriate staffing and funding to provide diverse opportunities for all students.
- Provide increased opportunities for safe and fun activities for adolescent students during off-school hours.
- Maximize use of facilities and grounds to provide additional space for activities.
- Broaden and improve supervision of elementary students during unstructured time (e.g. bus, recess).

Measurable Outcomes:

Year 1

- Determine baseline numbers of student participation in community-based and school-based extracurricular activities.
- Use existing Senior Survey to document baseline satisfaction with school climate.
- Inventory and publish on website community-based opportunities for students.
- Through budgeting process, advocate for additional counseling personnel at the secondary level.
- Develop plan and conduct staff training for implementation of advisory program at the high school in fall 2012.
- Conduct feasibility study of lower fields for expansion of space, including cost.

Year 2

- Implement advisory program at the high school.
- Identify, through building-based approaches, areas of concern in unstructured time at the elementary level.
- Partner with the community to offer additional extra-curricular opportunities for students during after-school and unstructured time.
- Create a matrix of the social/emotional curricula at the elementary schools detailing progress towards full implementation, as defined by each school.

Years 3-5

- Use existing Senior Survey to document satisfaction with school climate after introduction of initiatives.
- Collect data regarding effectiveness of increased after-school activities for students.
- Re-allocate resources to meet school-determined needs regarding unstructured time.

- Determine creative approaches to meet counseling needs of students

Connection of Goal to Value:

At the core of students' educational experiences are the relationships they form with adults and with each other. As a school district, it is our responsibility to provide the time and resources to ensure that each student has the opportunity to develop those relationships and be provided with a variety of activities to encourage their overall academic, social, and emotional development.

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.

Values Addressed: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

Strategies:

- Review and articulate what all students should know and be able to do at each grade level.
- Determine classroom-based authentic assessments of student learning.
- Create opportunities for students to monitor their own progress.
- Expand learning approaches by creatively leveraging resources from students' families and local communities.
- Promote the development of a deep and multifaceted understanding of global issues.

Measurable Outcomes:

Year 1

- Communicate to the school community the learning goals specific to disciplines, courses, and grades.
- Develop and/or identify tools to assess students' progress towards learning goals.
- Review present internship program and make recommendations for continued growth of the program to enrich student's learning experience outside classrooms.

Year 2

- Implement assessment tools to inform educators about the progress of individual students.
- Explore possibilities for students to monitor their own progress.
- Broaden internship opportunities for high school students.
- Develop international exchange activities accessible to all students from in-classroom internet-based activities to international field trips.

Year 3

- Assemble expert panels (external to immediate school community) to provide critical feedback to students.
- Review current family and community involvement and recommend activities that continue to build and sustain a comprehensive program of partnerships.
- Refine curriculum to promote better understanding of ourselves and others.

Year 4 and 5

- Implement activities that engage families in nurturing emotional intelligence of students.

- Enable student-led activities to address matters related to ethical global issues.

Connection of Goal to Values:

By achieving this goal, we will provide students with a learning environment that promotes emotional, social and intellectual development. With well-articulated learning goals and authentic assessment of progress, we can realize our value of promoting academic excellence that allows all students to achieve their individual potentials. Refining curriculum to promote better understanding of ourselves and others will further strengthen recognize and honor the differences among us. Partnership with local community and participation in international exchange programs afford our students first-hand knowledge and experience of today's workplace and global society.

Goal 3

Hire and retain high-quality educators and provide supervision, evaluation, and a systemic, focused plan for professional growth that improves student experiences

Values Addressed: 1, 2, 5, 6

Strategies:

- Attract and retain the staff most capable of meeting the needs of our learners.
- Adopt and implement a new educator evaluation system, which provides all educators with valuable feedback to improve practice.
- Create structures for faculty to work together to understand student learning and growth in light of teacher practice.
- Revise professional development program to align with other district goals.

Measurable Outcomes:

Year 1

- Ensure that 100% of our educators are determined to be highly qualified by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- Develop rubrics, timelines, and process for teacher and administrator evaluations consistent with Massachusetts Standards for Educator Evaluation.
- Survey staff about the efficacy of principals and administrators. Continue to evaluate administrators annually.
- Identify reasons for teachers leaving and other trends by reviewing five year list of teacher retention rates.
- Develop tools to measure student growth over time in each department/grade level.
- Explore new structures for teachers to meet and collaborate.

Years 2-5

- Ensure that 100% of our educators are determined to be highly qualified by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- Maintain 95% or better teacher retention rate (excluding retirements).
- Implement new evaluation system in all schools and departments.
- Incorporate multiple measures of student growth over time into teachers' evaluations.
- Supervisors will see all professional staff in classrooms several times throughout the year.

- Develop individual professional development plans and goals based on system goals and self-reflection for each teacher and administrator.
- Every educator will belong to a collaborative group that meets regularly to review student work and discuss instructional practices.
- Survey faculty to provide data about teacher satisfaction, work load and the efficacy of the new evaluation system and the professional development program.

Connection of Goal to Value:

Hiring and retaining high quality educators will contribute to an environment that promotes social, emotional, and physical well-being, an excellent academic program, literacy and critical thinking skills and researched based decision making about the allocation of resources. A valuable teacher evaluation system and professional development opportunities that provide growth for educators lead to high quality instruction.

Goal 4

Create a teaching and learning environment in which all students use information, technology, and communication tools in sophisticated ways to enhance learning

Values Addressed: 1, 2, 5, 6

Strategies:

- Develop a plan that would allow each student access to technology when educationally appropriate.
- Investigate and address issues that may constrain the participation of students who are economically disadvantaged, students with special needs, english language learners, or those with other issues.
- Integrate technology learning goals with academic goals across the curriculum.
- Identify staffing levels to provide appropriate technical and instructional support for students and teachers.
- Provide training for teachers to incorporate online interaction into their curricula.

Measurable Outcomes:

Year 1

- Issue students district-owned email accounts at the High School to enhance communication amongst peers and teachers while giving students the opportunity to learn and utilize a professional email account
- Pilot “Google Apps for Education” at the High School to explore the benefits of the online communication/collaboration platform
- Complete network assessment to identify elements that are in need of an upgrade or replacement to fulfill service and growth needs
- Begin planning process to update district website and online technology resources
- Create student-led Technology Help Desk to provide more support for teachers and students using technology and equip students with life skills in technical support, troubleshooting, and listening to others

- Implement ongoing technology-related professional development that builds capacity for technical skills and provides teachers with opportunities to practice, share ideas, and discuss technology in meaningful ways
- Create set of K-12 technology learning goals that support the Massachusetts Technology Literacy and Information Fluency Standards and Benchmarks and communicate to the school community
- Pilot new help desk ticketing system to track and manage support metrics, resolve performance issues of the current proprietary system, and provide exceptional customer support

Year 2

- Enter into a 4 year lease of MacBook Pro laptops to provide Acton Public School teachers with a powerful and familiar instructional tool that features new educational components and applications.
- Implement Storage Area Network (SAN) and cloud data storage to begin consolidation of aging hardware platforms, meet storage demands of our end-users, and reduce hardware and operating costs
- Implement new help desk ticketing system district-wide
- Release new district website
- Explore equitable and consistent technologies in the classroom that support K-12 technology learning goals
- Identify issues with students, teachers, and administration that may need to be addressed through policy measures
- Continue technology-based professional development program for teachers aligned with common learning goals for students

Year 3

- Upgrade wireless infrastructure at High School/Junior High to meet projected demands
- Execute server virtualization to further reduce operation and hardware costs and improve disaster recovery
- Implement assessment tools to inform educators about the progress of individual students technology skills
- Develop policies that ensure equitable access to technology to all students

Year 4-5

- Implement plan that allows all students access to technology when they need it
- Ensure a sustainable professional development plan for teachers that can meet K-12 technology learning goals
- Utilize faculty and student surveys to assess their experiences in technology use

Connection of Goal to Value:

In order to fully achieve their potential in the 21st century, all students must have multiple opportunities to develop technological skills.

Goal 5

Adequately resource the two districts with investment budgets that grow beyond level service each of the next four fiscal years to achieve all long-range strategic goals

Value Addressed: 6

Strategies:

- Examine the costs and benefits associated with regionalization.
- Determine and operationalize staffing required to meet long-range goals.
- Collaborate with town leadership to develop funding strategy to meet goals.
- Examine how funds might be better re-allocated to increase services for students.
- In accordance with Goal 1, state specifically personnel needs and determine cost implications in each fiscal budget for FY13, FY14, FY15 and FY16.
- In accordance with Goal 2, determine curriculum, instruction and assessment goals and cost implications in each fiscal budget for FY13, FY14, FY15 and FY16.
- In accordance with Goal 3, determine evaluation, supervision, and professional development goals for all employees and associated costs with this goal in each fiscal budget for FY13, FY14, FY15 and FY16.
- In accordance with Goal 4, detail costs associated with providing a technology enhanced teaching and learning environment in each fiscal budget for FY13, FY14, FY15 and FY16.

Measurable Outcomes:

- Calculate investment growth number and add to budgets for fiscal years 2013-2016.
- Accept biannual report of regionalization study committee.
- Report to School Committee biannually on collaboration with town leadership groups for consensus on investment budget solution.
- Perform external audits every other year to determine additional efficiencies in operations.

Connection of Goal to Value:

Educational practices and policies must be determined based on the best available research and evidence. However, in these economic times, decisions and policies are often stifled by budgetary considerations. Careful planning, in combination with ongoing measurement of outcomes, allows for educational programming that reflects best practices.