

FY22 Superintendent's Goals

Mid-Cycle Update

Student Learning

Organize and implement phase one of the district's diversity, equity and inclusion strategic objectives.

- ✓ Identify and onboard a DEI coach/trainer. [August 21]
- ➔ Establish and implement a differentiated training plan for improving the district's cultural competency.
 - Established and executed plan for 2021-2022 year
 - Summer '22 Leadership retreat will focus on planning for the 2022-2023 and will build on work from this school year
- ➔ Identify strategies to diversify workforce
 - DESE – Diversification of Workforce Working Group [June '22]
 - Key Take Aways - Strategies should include:
 - Creating a community and working environment that is culturally competent and invested in DEI work as means of to recruit and retain a diverse workforce (this is the work being done with Michael Eatman)
 - Expand reach of recruitment efforts (this was done by using a broader posting platform including Indeed/Monster/LinkedIn/Facebook)
 - Financial incentives such as tuition reimbursement, housing allowance and signing bonuses.
 - Applied for the MERSD team to participate in part two of training [22-23]
- ❖ Establish a DEI task force to solicit and incorporate student, faculty, and community input.
 - *This approach is being reconsidered and will be a topic for our summer DEI Leadership Workshop.*
- ➔ Communicate and support established diversity, equity, and inclusion work.
 - *Regular updates and School Committee Meetings*
 - *Highlight work of students and staff on social media and schoolwide communications*
 - *Use strategic initiative references when possible to reinforce communications and requests*

Reflection:

DEI was the area that received the most attention after COVID. We were able to establish a relationship with Michael Eatman in August '21 and focus the first semester work on building the capacity of building leaders to work in partnership with him on delivering professional development opportunities to their staff.

Mr. Eatman is guiding us in the implementation of the five components of Cultural Competence: Awareness, Attitude, Knowledge, Skills, and Practices. The learning experiences endeavor to support educators in becoming more aware, intentional, and purposeful as they engage the school community. Work with Michael included 10 to 20 hours of individual principal coaching as well as four sessions of team coaching and development of common Understanding of equity. Additionally, he provided staff elementary and secondary workshops and assisted principals in the development and delivery reflection exercises intended to build awareness and challenge thinking.

As a result of the training program, participants will have a greater awareness of their own cultural beliefs, behaviors, and those of their colleagues. In addition, they will learn practices that can intercept perspectives that negatively impact community growth. Finally, staff will have a greater appreciation for and commitment to their responsibilities as leaders in shaping an inclusive learning community for students and adults alike.

We have taken initial steps in this area, but I foresee this to be a 3-5 year project before we begin to realize the cultural change necessary to meet our strategic initiative.

Through our work this year, we were able to identify and address key equity issues in the areas of intervention, time on learning, and service delivery. Restructuring of the interventionist model and the implementation of an elementary districtwide master schedule has been put in place for Fall of '22 to address these issues.

Professional Practice

- Cultivate positive and productive labor management relations.
 - Engage in collaborative bargaining to negotiate a new three-year META contract.
 - In collaboration with SC Negotiation Subcommittee and Finance Subcommittee seek input from School Committee and town partners on concerns, constraints, and outcomes.
 - This is ongoing
 - In collaboration with SC Negotiation Subcommittee and META Leadership:
 - ✓ Identify timeline and method for bargaining.
 - Completed with the decision to move to traditional bargaining
 - Organize and prioritize work to be completed and establish subgroups if needed.
 - This is primary work of summer 22
 - Strive to have large financial components (salary/health care) completed prior to the completion of the FY23 budget season.
 - Estimated Date for completion 1.15.22
 - Finalize new/revised language
 - Complete Draft Contract to SC for approval March.
 - Approval and Ratification
 - General Member Ratification early April
 - Final SC vote May
- This initial timeline projected (outlined above) yielded a one-year agreement with the understanding that we would begin work on a three-year agreement in the Spring of '22. That work has begun, and the goal date for completion is October 30th. This will allow for ratification from both SC and META in November prior to budget development.
- Hold monthly meetings with META co-presidents for communication and joint problem solving.
 - Reestablish monthly school-based principal/ union rep meetings

Meeting frequency has increased, but still tends to be issue driven rather than routine proactive check-ins.
 - ❖ Begin process of establishing a Teaching Assistant Contract (if time allows timeline can be accelerated/ at this time target completion date Spring 23)

This assumed the three-year teacher contract would be completed this year. Negotiation team has discussed and agreed that this work will begin immediately following the completion of the META three-year contract.

Reflection:

Of critical importance to the strategic implementation of the strategic vision for the district is a high functioning and committed faculty. The pandemic and ongoing discussion about town finances have made the environment for contract negotiations a difficult one. Knowing we would be looking at divergent expectations for the outcomes of the contract, this goal was identified as a key area for focus for the '22 and '23 school years. The objective was to begin early and have multiyear financial settled by the time budget development began, and that was not realized. As a result, the agreement from round one of negotiations was to enter into a one-year stay put contract with the goal of completing a new three-year contract negotiation by the Fall of 22. We are on track for that currently.

Complicating variables included inability or concern about meeting in person due to the pandemic, significant financial constraints which limit options in negotiations, requests from town boards to limit annual growth through salary COLA. Additionally, school committee membership changes during the negotiation process, newer META leadership and a change in their MTA representation led to a loss of institutional knowledge and experience with the process. These variables led to a slowdown in negotiations and a shift from our past practice of IBB (interest based bargaining) work to a more traditional format of proposal exchange but with the commitment to maintain a collaborative spirit.

This goal was classified under professional practice because an open contract can lead to distress and morale issues among staff, which inhibits the implementation of strategic initiatives. In observation of other communities, one can see the impact on teachers when they lack the security of a contract and an uncertainty about their financial future. This ultimately impacts the quality of the educational environment for students and may result in decreased services when teachers begin to employ tools like work to rule. Completion of a fair contract that balances the financial constraints of the community and the needs of the faculty is the top priority entering the FY 23 school year.

District Improvement

Ensure funding for a stable, multi-year budget and capital improvement plan through collaboration with town and community partners.

- Develop and pass a budget that maintains quality and forward progress maintaining efficient practices but shifting to greater advocacy for increased funding to the District.
 - ✓ Establish a multi-year plan to address growing reliance on reserve funding
 - ✓ Establish a target date for seeking an operational override
- ❖ Redesign of annual budget document. (Carry Forward from FY21)
- Through Collaborative meetings work to educate town boards on the current state of schooling and expanded social service responsibilities that we carry.
 - Meet with town boards to provide budget process workshops
 - Determine methods/mechanisms for creating a safety net for assessment shifts caused by the application of the regional agreement apportionment formula
- Commission a needs assessment and establish timeline for key capital improvements including replacement of Essex Elementary School.

Reflection:

As with contract negotiations, financial stability of the District is key to achieving our strategic goals. If a stable and reliable financial structure isn't realized, it will remain a priority area focus with District time and energy going to managing decline. This will counteract the progressive student-centered vision set forth in our strategic plan.

This year we were successful in executing all steps identified in the initial goal except for the key priority of obtaining increase funding for the schools and the long-term goal of reformatting the budget doc document.

The District and School Committee focus next year will be on the successfully obtaining town committee endorsement for and ultimately voter support for a proposition 2 ½ override to increase revenue for schools.

General Goals Related to Multi-Year Projects

Complete open projects.

- Complete strategic planning work and district improvement plan by mid-October

Overview documents were complete by Mid-October with full action plan schedule for completion summer '22.

- ➡ Bring Memorial Project to a close.
- ➡ Bring Essex Playground Project to a close.

COVID-19 Emergency Management

Manage the COVID-19 impact while minimizing disruption to learning and providing for the health and safety of students and faculty.

- ✓ Implement a layered mitigation model that allows for the maintenance of full in-person learning.
- ✓ Maintain complementary remote and in-person instructional delivery contingency plans should conditions require a shift in delivery mode.
- ✓ Provide ongoing two-way communication with all stakeholders via social media, web meetings, and email to keep the community members informed of changing conditions and protocols.

KEY

- ✓ Complete
- ➡ In process on schedule
- In process behind schedule
- ❖ Not addressed at this date