

**FINAL REPORT ON DISTRICT AND BOARD GOALS
JUNE 2008**

District Goals

1. To improve student achievement on standardized assessments with special focus on HSPA math and special education.

The report on student achievement was presented to the Board and to the public at the August 2007 regular meeting. Based upon this information, school level goals were developed which addressed activities to increase student performance levels on all assessments. Action plans were also created to address identified needs. These were all reviewed with faculty and staff at the opening of school faculty meetings. A review of the secondary level math sequence and program was conducted during the fall. Based upon these meetings, a recommendation was made to increase the graduation requirements in the area of mathematics to four years and to add an additional course in the area of college prep mathematics. These were approved by the Board of Education and will be implemented in September 2008. An additional writing course was added at the senior level for implementation in September 2008 to address some writing deficiencies.

An analysis of data on the performance of special education students was concluded by the Child Study Team Director and shared with members of the child study team and the principals. Additional grade level and subject area meetings were conducted monthly in all school buildings with a particular focus on improving student performance on assessments. The Child Study Team Director monitored IEP requirements in order to assure that all students were receiving appropriate instruction and appropriate accommodations for the testing program. Principals and supervisors were continually monitoring resource center and special education classes to be sure that they are adhering to regular curriculum and the infusion of test taking strategies.

Beginning in January 2008, the HSPA review program for at risk students began. This program is by invitation and is directed to at risk students providing them with additional preparation for the HSPA that will be administered in March. Test preparation reviews for students in grade 8 were conducted in March.

All of the activities that were designed for the effort to improve standardized assessments were carried out throughout the spring months. The HSPA results for the total school population were reported back to us informally on May 16th. The report shows that our high school students on the HSPA achieved approximately a nine per cent improvement in the math proficiency levels, which was the major goal in this area. We do not yet have the disaggregated data, but that will be reported on during the summer. Needless to say, the special focus on the high school math has resulted in the improvement that we were seeking. This is a cumulative effect of changes in curriculum and instructional practices that have been put into place over the last several years, including the strengthening of the program requirements for all of our students.

2. To review and consider recommendations for school safety and security.

In summer 2007, Stone Gate Security Associates reviewed their completed security audit with district administrators. Following this, the audit was reviewed with building administrators. Stone Gate conducted initial staff training in the week preceding, and the day before, the opening of school. This training included all employees of the Board

of Education. In September 2007, Stone Gate reviewed the security audit with the Board of Education and recommendations were prepared for facility improvements in the security area.

Throughout the fall, Stone Gate and administrators worked to revise and update district and building security plans. In December 2007, Stone Gate met and conducted a review of the new plans with the district level administrators and building principals. A NIMS training for administrators and members of the building crisis management teams was conducted and a meeting with the parent groups was held on January 29, 2008.

In late February, local emergency management, fire, police, and all district officials, conducted a tabletop exercise simulating a wind sheer occurring during the school day that forced us to shelter in place. This activity was viewed as very successful. Subsequent to that, there was a meeting of the Borough Emergency Management Committee, including school officials, to provide for coordinating activities among all of the parties. The district has now contracted with a company to provide a parent communication alerting system that will be in place for the opening of school. This will provide voice, text, and email messages to parents in both emergency and non-emergency situations. Finally, we are in the process of submitting a grant with the local police department that will provide for several of the facilities improvements that will upgrade and improve lighting, security cameras, motion detectors, and other recommendations at all of the district schools.

3. To provide activities and programs that support student wellness

Throughout the fall, school nurses, the principals, and the supervisors of physical education, health and technology reviewed curriculum programs and activities. In the area of Internet safety, additional lessons on Internet safety are being provided throughout the grades and across the curriculum. In particular, our middle grades computer specialists and the district technology director have been involved in attending state-mandated training in the area of Internet safety. Information generated was used to develop programs in several instructional areas.

In the area of physical education and health, the revisions in the middle grades program are having a desired effect. It has been well received by students and will continue throughout the spring. Additional fitness equipment has been budgeted for and plans are being developed for the addition of fitness circuits' construction at both middle schools. The school nurses, in collaboration with the building principals, undertook the review of activities and initiatives in the buildings and it appears that significant numbers of activities and initiatives are already underway throughout the district.

Throughout the remainder of the school year, activities continued in all of the district schools to promote and support student wellness. There have been enhancements to the information that has been provided in computer classes at the middle grades level regarding Internet safety. At both elementary schools, there were programs regarding fitness and safety that involved entire school activities with support from the PTAs. Scooterville, which was done at Washington School, was an especially interesting and fun period for students at that location. Similarly, the Wellness Program sponsored by the PTA at Lincoln School was enjoyed by all. Curriculum changes at the middle school continue to have positive results and we are awaiting the results of the Rutherford Education Foundation Grants Program for the installation of a climbing wall at Pierrepont School.

Board Goals for 2007-2008

1. To review and, if necessary, revise the district mission statement in accordance with NJQSAC

The existing mission statement, which appears in district policy #6010 was reviewed by administrators and supervisors and the proposed revision was presented to the Board Policy Committee on Monday, January 28th. The policy was approved by the Board.

The district mission statement was revised and approved by the Board so that this goal was met.

2. To complete a Board self-evaluation and develop a Board professional development plan in accordance with NJQSAC

The Board of Education completed the Board self-evaluation as facilitated by NJSBA Field Representative Cathie Sousa. The results of the self-evaluation were reviewed at the Board's public meeting on January 14, 2008 and recommendations for a professional development plan were considered.

Additional discussion on a Board professional development plan was done at the May meeting. Follow up on that will need to be continued for a plan to be in place for the upcoming school year.

3. To develop a financially responsible and develop community support

In September 2007 the Board, acting as a committee of the whole, established budget parameters for 2008-2009. Considering the local community tax burden and economic climate, the Board established a goal of having no budget increase for 2008-2009. In November the Board, acting as a committee of the whole, reviewed facility needs including capital improvements. They also reviewed staffing configurations, enrollments, and program needs. Throughout the same time period, district budget managers prepared budget appropriations requests for consideration. The initial preliminary budget was presented to the Board of Education and the public at the meeting on January 14, 2008 by the Superintendent and Business Administrator. This final budget contained an increase of 1.6%, which was close to the target of no increase that was directed by the Board.

Activities were conducted throughout the spring in a concerted effort with all constituencies to garner community support for the school budget. The budget election on April 15, 2008 was successful with the budget being passed by a considerable margin. This is the seventh budget in a row to have been approved by the citizens of Rutherford, which indicates that community support continues to be strong. The plan for the education of the community in the finance area will be continued in the upcoming year.

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