

Final Report on the District Goals for the 2014-15 School

July 2015

1. To increase student achievement in writing by developing a comprehensive writing program for grades K-12.

A committee of teachers from across the district met throughout the year to develop a comprehensive writing program. Mr. Brian Ersalesi, the Supervisor of Language Arts, chaired the committee.

The committee's mission was to create a formal writing philosophy that:

- Is Common Core aligned.
- Has universal language.
- Is vertically aligned.
- Is rigorous, yet modifiable for all student populations.

The committee:

- Surveyed all teachers in all grades to research the current practices of teaching writing in all grades.
- Surveyed all teachers in all grades in order to develop a needs assessment.
- Reviewed current texts in use.
- Reviewed new samples from publishing companies.
- Determined that a "homegrown" approach to writing is best for the district (rather than a purchased one).

The committee:

- Wrote the framework and used the Common Core Standards to create a scope and sequence.
- Created standardized topics/assessments.
- Created standardized rubrics for each grade level.
- Inserted grade specific standards, activities, and assessments into each curriculum.
- Benchmark writing assessments will be used to assess the program in 2015-16.

2. To implement a district-wide study for a Blended Curriculum resulting in a five-year action plan to revise curriculum, develop a budget, and acquire and implement grade level appropriate technology platforms for students.

The Blended Curriculum Committee, chaired by Mr. Charles Ryan, the Supervisor of World Language and Social Studies, met throughout the year to develop a five-year action plan to revise curriculum, develop a budget, and acquire and implement grade level appropriate technology platforms for students.

- A district-wide committee completed building level research/needs assessments regarding blended learning curriculum and technology platforms.
- The district-wide committee prioritized a hierarchy of technology and curriculum needs for each grade level.
- Upon completion of the technological platform needs assessment, Mr. Ryan met with the superintendent, district business administrator and director of technology to create a budget analysis to fully implement blended learning technological platforms for the next 3-5 school years. In addition, an REF Grant was submitted and awarded for the next five years.
- A pilot program to begin the implementation of blended learning curriculum and platforms in each grade level for the 2015-2016 school year was developed.
- A community meeting was held in May to inform the community of the progress of the Blended Curriculum study.
- Teachers serving in the pilot met in June and will take part in professional development in the fall. The pilot will begin in November. The REF grant will fund the pilot.

3. To develop a middle school schedule to be aligned with the requirements of the Common Core Content Standards.

Dr. Shannon Hopkins, the Director of Guidance, has chaired a committee of Middle School educators to examine the development of a middle school in the district. The Middle School is the most expedient way to develop true middle school curriculum.

- The Middle School Committee met in September to discuss a formal proposal to present to the BOE for approval.
- It was decided at that point to pursue the research on a true middle school model pending Board of Education approval.
- Mr. Hurley and Mr. Kelly visited Lyndhurst to tour the modular units they employed to expand an elementary school.

- Mr. Hurley continuously updated the PT Council and the Board of Education on the progress of the committee's work.
- The district's architect, Mr. Kellen Chapin, reviewed the use of modular classrooms at Union School and developed an analysis and cost projection.
- In December, a presentation was made to the Board of Education by Dr. Hopkins highlighting the pertinent research to support the findings and seek approval to continue the investigation into a middle school model.
- In January the committee met with Mr. Hurley who outlined the tasks of the committee moving forward.
- The committee researched and developed a projection for courses, staffing, and scheduling for a 6-8 and 7-8 middle school models.
- The superintendent conducted a community meeting on May 26 to solicit feedback regarding the middle school proposal. He also met with faculty and staff on June 9 to get their input.
- On June 15, a presentation was made to the Board recommending that a study be completed this summer to propose the development of an upper elementary school (grades 4-6) at Pierrepont and a middle school (grades 7-8) at Union.