

Newton Public Schools
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Dr. G. Kennedy Greene
Superintendent

Dr. Alfred Savio
Business Administrator

To: Board of Education
From: Dr. G. Kennedy Greene
Date: February 26, 2019
Re: Progress Report on the District Action Plan

1. Goal #1: Strengthen student-centered learning to increase student achievement.
 - a. *Differentiate instruction to promote student centered learning and build classroom RTI capacity.*
 - i. Implementing multi-tiered systems of support for literacy and mathematics.
 - ii. Focusing classroom observations on elements of student centered learning as part of Danielson model.
 - iii. Adopted state model for administrative evaluations with instructional improvement as a key element.
 - b. *Concentrate instructional improvement resources on mathematics.*
 - i. Focused Title I, Title II, Title IV, and local resources on mathematics instruction.
 - ii. Worked with consultants at all school levels to promote and extend best practices in mathematics instruction.
 - c. *Facilitate broader access to highly engaging in-person and online professional development paths.*
 - i. Introduced a new district web resource through which professional development activities could be gathered and shared.
 - ii. Made professional development through online means using student-centered learning techniques a focus of the opening in-service.
 - iii. Continuing to research alternatives for professional development delivery through more personalized means.
 - iv. Approved a team of technology committee members to attend conferences such as NJECC and Techspo to explore what other districts are doing in this area.
 - d. *Complete Phase 2 of the Curriculum Plan by adding assessments, instructional strategies, resources, and at-risk modifications to the teacher-implemented curriculum.*
 - i. Dedicated unit meetings and in-service time to curriculum writing activities as noted.

- ii. Approved release time and curriculum stipends to supplement existing in-school work.
 - iii. Worked with administrative team to ensure regular progress toward Phase 2 objectives.
 - e. *Promote mindfulness as a strategy to strengthen student focus and productivity.*
 - i. Held book discussions on mindful leadership and instruction with staff members as follow up to summer reading activity.
 - ii. Implemented a middle school mindfulness curriculum as part of specials program.
 - iii. Encouraged practice of mindfulness by students through mindful moments, yoga, and other strategies.
2. Goal #2: Promote equity in access to services and resources for vulnerable children and their families to increase student achievement.
- a. *Implement Choose 2 Connect (C2C) as the five-year 21st Century Community Learning Center successor to Project Launch.*
 - i. Planned C2C during Spring and Summer 2018 including programming, hiring, scheduling, etc.
 - ii. Opened C2C for grades 3-8 in September 2018.
 - iii. Documented regular participation of over 200 students in the program.
 - b. *Build on current efforts to provide social-emotional learning and direct health and social services to students and families.*
 - i. Worked with Youth Advocate Programs to provide clinicians for mental and behavioral health services at Halsted and the High School.
 - ii. Partnered with Atlantic Health to provide Challenge Day and Altitude programs for middle school students.
 - iii. Secured multi-year donation from Thorlabs to offset costs of mental and behavioral health supports for students.
 - c. *Partner with local providers to expand preschool and aftercare access.*
 - i. Planned for expanded preschool with administrative team as well as partners First Impressions, Heald Start, and Project Self-Sufficiency.
 - ii. Opened free, full-day preschool program at Camp Auxilium for 45 students in January 2019.
 - iii. Expanded aftercare at Merriam to include preschool children.
 - d. *Coordinate character education initiatives among the schools.*
 - i. Met with school leaders to discuss plans for greater collaboration.
 - ii. Continued co-planning of major events such as Week/Month of Respect and Violence Prevention Week.
 - iii. Encouraged interschool visitations and activities to promote common character themes.

e. *Promote mindfulness as a strategy to strengthen student focus and productivity. (see Goal 1)*

3. Goal #3: Enhance school safety, security, and sustainability to increase student achievement.

a. *Employ digital applications to enhance student and staff security.*

- i. Confirmed our use of existing apps Swift K-12 (broadcast alerts, part of our existing PowerSchool student information system), Remind (free student messaging), and StopIt (free anonymous reporting of safety and behavioral issues).
- ii. Researched and compared multiple products (e.g., Raptor, Rave, Share911, SchoolGuard, Punch Alert, NaviGate) for tasks such as visitor screening, user-initiated 911, incident locator, student accountability).
- iii. Newton Police purchased Rave for user-initiated 911 and incident locator.
- iv. Purchased Raptor Technologies Visitor Management System (visitor screening and user-initiated 911) and working to implement for Spring 2019.

b. *Raise public awareness about district safety and security planning.*

- i. Planned and implemented reunification drills involving all three schools in Fall 2018.
- ii. Discussed district security enhancements at public board meetings and through social media posts.
- iii. Hired additional security monitor for afterschool activities at Merriam using aftercare surplus.

c. *Build on current efforts to provide social-emotional learning and direct health and social services to students and families. (see Goal 2)*

d. *Plan for facility improvements to address security needs and safety measures in all school buildings.*

- i. Walked through each building in August 2018 with school and district personnel to identify security needs.
- ii. Made security enhancements high priority items during public planning session with Board of Education.

e. *Pursue an Energy Savings Improvement Program (ESIP) to improve energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.*

- i. Conducted local government energy audit to determine potential for ESIP.
- ii. Outlined plan to move forward with seeking an energy services company for the ESIP.

f. *Promote mindfulness as a strategy to strengthen student focus and productivity. (see Goal 1)*