

Newton Public Schools
57 Trinity Street ♦ Newton, NJ 07860-1831
973-383-7392 phone ♦ 973-383-5378 fax
www.newtonnj.org

Dr. G. Kennedy Greene
Superintendent

Dr. Alfred Savio
Business Administrator

To: Board of Education
From: Dr. G. Kennedy Greene
Date: May 26, 2020
Re: Progress Report on the District Action Plan

1. Goal #1: Strengthen student-centered learning to increase student achievement.
 - a. Implement iReady mathematics diagnostics and intervention in grades K-8.
 - i. iReady system was purchased and installed during the summer. Elementary and middle school students completed the diagnostic portions of iXL and iReady in the fall. Lessons using the platform began during the winter months and continue to be used as part of remote instruction.
 - ii. iReady data is uploaded into Performance Matters, the assessment and analytics components of PowerSchool.
 - iii. Merriam staff were trained on December 6, December 18 and January 20 to assist with the rollout of the platform and to identify and instruct small groups in classrooms with targeted learning needs of individual students.
 - b. Develop standards-based report cards in grades 3-4.
 - i. All K-4 report cards for the first marking period were done through PowerTeacher Pro as an initial step toward standards-based report cards for grades 3-4.
 - ii. MAS developed a standards based template on PowerTeacher Pro.
 - iii. HMS and MAS staff met in February to discuss standard based report cards. Next steps for HMS will be to convene the Grading Policy PLC to develop a plan of action to create and consider standard based report cards and modifications to our current grading policy.
 - c. Modify school schedules for grades 5-8 to provide more time for mathematics instruction and for grades 9-12 to provide common planning time.
 - i. Halsted created and implemented a block schedule with extended periods for ELA, math, and science.
 - ii. The High School created a new schedule called Brave Forum to accommodate club meetings and common planning time for staff. It is being implemented on a planned basis.
 - d. Implement digital learning management systems.
 - i. PS Performance Matters (formative assessment and data analysis platforms linked to

- SIS) - MAS and HMS staff have been trained in this system, school leaders have reviewed data to ensure accuracy, additional time to be scheduled with trainer to input intervention criteria.
- ii. PS Perform (staff evaluation platform linked to PDPs and SGOs) - system is in place and operating, PDPs and observations were produced using the system. Evaluations ceased as of March 13 based on the Governor's executive order.
 - iii. PS Professional Learning (professional development platform linked to staff evaluation process) - as implementation was underway it became apparent that the system would not meet our intended needs, implementation was stopped and refunds have been received.
- e. Proceed with Phases 2-3 of the Curriculum Plan by adding assessments, instructional strategies, resources, at-risk modifications.
- i. Dedicated in-service time to curriculum writing activities, approved release time and curriculum stipends to supplement existing in-school work.
 - ii. Supported administrative team to ensure regular progress toward Phase 2-3 objectives.
 - iii. Monitoring progress presently. Met with the County Educational Specialist to review QSAC curriculum requirements. Our plan is on target to be completed by the end of the summer.

2. Goal #2: Promote equity in access to services and resources for vulnerable children and their families to increase student achievement.

- a. Build on current efforts to provide social-emotional learning and direct mental health and social services to students and families.
- i. A workgroup with representatives from all three schools met with Rutgers MHTTC staff on September 24, October 21, November 20, and December 12 to develop a mental health resource map as a communication tool for parents, staff, and high school students. The plan was going through final processing for distribution before the school closure and was released in April.
 - ii. Additional clinicians have provided mental health services.
 - iii. A presentation on social-emotional learning initiatives in the district was given to the Board in January.
- b. Focus professional development on trauma-informed care, enhancing resiliency, and social-emotional learning.
- i. September 3 AM in-service topics included suicide prevention and trauma-informed care for all staff.
 - ii. September 3 PM in-service was focused on advanced mental health first aid training provided for crisis response team members.
 - iii. Webinars are available for all staff to access voluntarily.
 - iv. Crisis response team members took part in January 20 in-service on these topics.
- c. Partner with local providers to expand preschool and aftercare access.
- i. Two new classes were opened by community partners: one at Project Self-Sufficiency

- and one at Head Start.
 - ii. One additional integrated district preschool classroom was opened in September. Moved preschool disabilities classes from Merriam to Camp Auxilium.
 - iii. Planning for 2020-21 includes a second preschool classroom at First Impressions.
 - iv. Worked with Norwescap to secure child care license and subsidies for aftercare fees for qualified families.
- d. Participate in a consortium of school districts to promote student excellence through equity.
- i. Gathered interested school leaders in the region to an introductory meeting on June 24.
 - ii. Secured 20 school districts from Sussex, Warren, and Morris counties for this initial year of the consortium.
 - iii. Over 140 different individuals attended at least one of the six sessions offered for the year. The final session was canceled due to the school closure.
- e. Host a second Family and Community Connection Event.
- i. Planning meetings were held in August and September.
 - ii. Event was held at Newton High School on October 3, with 38 partners and over 200 parents and children in attendance.
 - iii. A third event is being planned tentatively for Spring 2021.
3. Goal #3: Enhance school safety, security, and sustainability to increase student achievement.
- a. Employ digital applications to enhance school accountability for students.
- i. Completed Rave Smart911 profiles for all district facilities to assist police in an emergency.
 - ii. Implemented IdentiMetric scanning at the High School to increase efficiency in managing students who arrive late to school (allowing them to get into class faster), and to track students who exit and enter campus for lunch.
 - iii. Developed the Community Cares communication protocol with Newton PD to alert school administrators regarding adverse childhood experiences suspected during law enforcement activities.
 - iv. Reviewing the RAVE Panic Button as a means to implement Alyssa's Law.
- b. Construct security vestibule at Halsted and harden vestibules at Merriam and High School (e.g., window film, vestibule windows)
- i. Vestibule window was purchased for High School to be installed over winter break
 - ii. Vestibule window for Merriam was completed before the school closure
 - iii. Vestibule for Halsted has been an ongoing project. Work has continued steadily and inspections are being processed.
- c. Install higher grade security cameras, recording systems, and emergency alarms

- i. Cameras purchased and installed at each building prior to opening of school.
 - ii. New system installed at Camp Auxilium, replacement system installed at Halsted.
 - iii. State regulations for use of security funding were published in December. We are in the midst of preparing the application for funding for the security items to include Alyssa's Law compliance and the Halsted security vestibule.
- d. Design and build sustainability projects such as rain gardens, rain barrels, and outdoor classroom spaces
 - i. Rain garden planned and installed at Halsted.
 - ii. Rain barrels built and installed at High School.
 - iii. Wallkill River Watershed Alliance has secured additional grant funding a permeable asphalt project at Halsted.
- e. Pursue investment grade audit with Honeywell; develop and begin implementation of energy savings improvement plan (ESIP)
 - i. Honeywell produced the investment grade audit to flow into the Energy Services Plan (ESP).
 - ii. Third party evaluator CDM Smith completed the work and BPU approved the plan.
 - iii. ESIP bid financing has been approved by the Board.