

District Goals 2011-2012

In the Needham Public Schools, we believe in:

Scholarship *Learning ~*
Community *Working together ~*
Citizenship *Contributing ~*
Personal Growth *Acting courageously ~*

And we commit to:

District Goal #1: Advance Standards Based Learning

To refine and continue to put into practice a system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that enables each student to be engaged in challenging academic experiences that are grounded in clearly defined standards.

Objective #1:

Teacher teams and administrators will identify essential content and learning expectations for each grade level/subject area that are aligned to state standards and will clearly communicate them to students and parents.

Objective #2:

Teachers will incorporate common assessments, collaborative data analysis, and specific feedback into their instructional practice.

Objective #3:

Students in all classrooms will have the opportunity to increase their achievement because they experience instruction that is differentiated and grounded in best research practices.

Objective #4:

Teachers will provide students (and parents) with explicit feedback regarding their progress towards meeting identified learning objectives.

Objective #5:

Teachers will experience professional development and supervision programs that provide learning opportunities which are job-embedded and enable them to: acquire rigorous and relevant content knowledge; implement best instructional strategies; receive support and guidance; and promote individual career growth.

District Goal #2: Develop the social, emotional, and wellness skills of all students.

To ensure that students will develop social and emotional competencies that enable them to be self-aware and to develop healthy and productive relationships for work and for life.

Objective #1:

Students will experience a sense of participation, wellness, and safety in response to meaningful adult and peer relationships within a caring school environment.

Objective #2:

Students will develop social competence, problem solving skills, a positive sense of identity, autonomy, and a sense of purpose through consistent, layered, and effective instruction of social and emotional skills at all levels.

Objective #3:

Parents will be offered opportunities to become informed about complementary practices to support social and emotional skill development for their children.

District Goal #3: Promote Active Citizenship

To ensure students have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate productively in the local and global communities and to commit to action as learners and citizens.

Objective #1:

Students will engage in age appropriate service activities that enable them to contribute to or act on local or global social needs and that provide them opportunities to develop social, civic, and academic skills through reflection and analysis of their efforts.

Objective #2:

Students and staff will develop competencies to enable them to understand and effectively address matters of diversity, racism, ethnocentrism, and bias in the context of the pluralistic communities in which they live.

Objective #3:

Students will develop proficiency in a language other than English and develop the cultural, technological, and civic skills necessary to adapt and respond to the conditions of 21st century global change.

District Goal #4: Ensure infrastructure supports district values and learning goals.

To build and carry out a sustainable plan for financial, building, technological, and human resources that enables our learning goals and is responsive to student and school needs.

Objective #1:

School leaders will engage in long-range planning that supports sustainable school infrastructure and operations.

Objective #2:

School administrators will implement modern and efficient information systems and training opportunities to manage school and district operations, enhance communication, enrich collaboration, and sustain teaching, learning, and administrative environments.

Objective #3:

School staff will create a safe and healthy work place that promotes a positive work ethic and reflects the district's core values.

A school and community partnership that creates excited learners, inspires excellence, and fosters integrity.

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Objective #1:

Teacher teams and administrators will identify essential content and learning expectations for each grade level/subject area that are aligned to state standards and will clearly communicate them to students and parents.

Action Steps	Facilitator(s)	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish essential content and learning expectations for middle and high school curriculum maps. Implement K-5 writing maps and complete the development of K-5 reading maps. 	Principals, Teachers, Dir. Program Dev. K-12 Curriculum Leaders*	2011-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for staff to develop an understanding of the new MA Common Core frameworks and they have opportunities to identify implications for instruction and assessment. 	Principals, Teachers Dir. Program Dev. K-12 Curriculum Leaders*	2011-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct Foreign Language program review to evaluate its effectiveness. 	Dir. Prog. Dev. Dir. Foreign Language	2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor progress in addressing the recommendations from English Language Arts Program Review. 	K-12 ELA Curriculum Leaders,* Principals, Teachers Dir. Program Dev.	2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot and implement the revised human sexuality program. 	Principals, Dir. Health & Wellness, Wellness teachers, Dir. Prog. Dev.	2011-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the new elementary math program, <i>Think Math!</i> In grades 3-5. 	K-5 Principals, K-5 Math Curriculum Leader, Teachers,	2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General and special education staff will partner to provide effective mainstream curriculum learning expectations, modifications, and program development. 	Principals, Spec. Ed. Directors Special Ed Teachers, Team Chairs	2011-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align IEP goals to the new Common Core frameworks. 	Principals, Spec. Ed. Directors Special Ed Teachers, Team Chairs	2011-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vertically articulate special education programming from pre-school to post-graduate. 	K-12 Curriculum Leaders* Principals, Spec. Ed. Directors Special Ed Teachers	2011-2013
	* includes Dir., Dept. Chairs, Coord., Instr. Specialists	

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Objective #2:

Teachers will incorporate common assessments, collaborative data analysis, and specific student feedback on student performance into their instructional practice.

Action Steps	Facilitator(s)	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop, refine and administer at least two common assessments in each grade, subject area or course at each level. 	Director Program Dev., Principals K-12 Curriculum Leaders,* Teachers	2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School based teams will analyze data from various relevant sources (MCAS, district, grade/course common assessments) and use the information to: develop goals for students' learning, modify instructional practices, provide intervention as needed, and facilitate student transitions between grades. 	Principals/ Asst. Principals K-12 Curriculum Leaders* Teachers, Special Educators	2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the recommendations from the Special Education Program Review and determine implications for instructional practice, professional development, and service delivery models. 	Spec. Ed. Directors, K-12 Curriculum Leaders,* Principals, Special Ed Teachers Principals, Dir. Student Development, Dir. Program Development <i>*includes Directors, Dept. Chairs, Coordinators, Instructional Specialists.</i>	2011-2012

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Objective #3:

Students in all classrooms will have the opportunity to increase their achievement because they experience instruction that is differentiated and grounded in best research practices

Action Steps	Facilitator(s)	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of online tools in middle and high school classrooms to enhance curriculum and instruction practice. 	Dir. Program Dev., Principals MS/HS Curr. Leaders, Teachers Dir. Technology, Tech Specialists	2011-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use flexible grouping and scheduling practices at middle school and elementary levels to provide additional differentiated experiences for students. 	Dir. Program Dev., MS Principal, MS Curr. Leaders, Dir. Technology, Teachers, Instructional Tech Specialists	2011-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for general education and special education teachers to further their understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instructional practices for English Language Learners - Instructional practices for special education students - Differentiated instruction - Effective co-teaching practices and other models of instruction - Standards-based practices (mapping, assessments, rubrics, grading) - Effective student feedback (6+1 writing traits rubric) 	Dir. Student Dev., Dir. Program Dev., Principals, Teachers, K-12 Curriculum Leaders* Director of Human Resources, Principals, Dir. Program Dev., K-12 Curriculum Leaders* <i>*includes Directors, Dept. Chairs, Coordinators, Instr. Specialists.</i>	2011-2013

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Objective #4:
Teachers will provide students (and parents) with explicit feedback regarding their progress towards meeting identified learning objectives.

Action Steps	Facilitator(s)	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review prototype and plan for implementation of a standards-based reporting system for grade 2. 	Director Program Development K-5 Principals K-5 Curriculum Leaders Directors (including Sped) Teachers	2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that teachers help students to understand academic learning goals and Common Core standards and provide feedback on their progress towards meeting those goals. 	Principals, Teachers, Director Program Dev., K-12 Curriculum Leaders,* Teachers <i>*includes Directors, Dept. Chairs, Coordinators, Instructional Specialists.</i>	2011-2013

Objective #5:
Teachers will experience professional development and supervision programs that provide learning opportunities which are job-embedded and enable them to: acquire rigorous and relevant content knowledge; implement best instructional strategies; receive support and guidance; and promote individual career growth.

Action Steps	Facilitator(s)	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot and assess the proposed new mini-observation and evaluation model at Hillside and High Rock. 	Dir. of Human Resources Principals, Asst. Principals Teachers	2011-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine common teacher knowledge/competencies that staff is required to demonstrate/acquire prior to receiving professional status. 	Dir. Human Resources Dir. Program Dev., Dir. of Student Dev. K-12 Curriculum Leaders* Teachers <i>*includes Directors, Dept. Chairs, Coordinators, Instr. Specialists.</i>	2011-2012

District Goal #2: Develop the social, emotional, and wellness skills of all students

To ensure that students will develop social and emotional competencies that enable them to be self-aware and to develop healthy and productive relationships for work and for life.

Objective #1:

Students will experience a sense of participation, wellness and safety in response to meaningful adult and peer relationships within a caring school environment.

Action Steps	Facilitator(s)	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate current advisory practices through student and staff surveys and interviews, determining student perceptions of having an adult to talk to and the efficacy of current programs. Choose and implement school climate survey tools which can be used to solicit student, teacher, parent perspectives on aspects of healthy schools, such as high expectations, school connectedness, parent and community involvement. Teachers will fully implement the 2nd Step program, bullying and cyber-bullying curricula grades K-8, advisory and high school mentor homeroom, resulting in decreased incidents of bullying and cyber-bullying, as measured by student/ teacher surveys, MWAHS data and student focus group input. 	Director of Student Development Principals Assistant Principals Guidance Director Director of Community Education & Planning Directors of Special Education	2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish transition structures that facilitate adult-student and student/ student relationships for all students as they move from one school building to the next. Particular attention will be paid to members of special populations including, but not limited to students of color, gay and lesbian students, students with disabilities and English Language Learners. 		2011-2013

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To ensure that students will develop social and emotional competencies that enable them to be self-aware and to develop healthy and productive relationships for work and for life.

Objective #2:

Students will develop social competence, problem solving skills, a positive sense of identity, autonomy, and a sense of purpose, through consistent, layered and effective instruction of social and emotional skills at all levels.

Action Steps	Facilitator(s)	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SEL Steering Committee will develop assessments in order to monitor the district's progress toward meeting individual and SEL program goals. 	Director of Student Development Principals	2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SEL Steering Committee will develop SEL orientation seminars for new staff and administrators. 	Director of Community Education & Planning	2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SEL Steering Committee will make recommendations to the Professional Development Committee regarding annual SEL coursework offerings for staff and administrators Preschool through grade 12. 	Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Steering Committee Director of Human Resources	2011-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Positive Coaching Alliance program for Pollard student-athletes and parents and Needham Youth Sport Organization leaders, coaches and parents. 		2011-2012

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To ensure that students will develop social and emotional competencies that enable them to be self-aware and to develop healthy and productive relationships for work and for life.

Objective #3:

Parents will be offered opportunities to become informed about complementary practices to support social and emotional skill development for their children.

Action Steps	Facilitator(s)	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a parent program for preschool through grade 12 parents/guardians, to provide education and support in developing their children’s social and emotional skills. • Develop webpages (Social and Emotional Learning and Bullying Prevention) on the Needham Public Schools website to provide current and useful parent information and materials. • Provide workshops for parents regarding the “Social Thinking Curriculum” which is being implemented throughout the district by special educators, speech therapists and classroom teachers. 	<p>Director of Student Development</p> <p>Principals</p> <p>Director of Community Education & Planning</p> <p>Directors of Special Education</p> <p>Director of Guidance</p>	<p>2011-2013</p>

District Goal #3: Promote Active Citizenship

To ensure students have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate productively in the local and global communities and to commit to action as learners and citizens.

Objective #1:

Students will engage in age appropriate service activities that enable them to contribute to or act on local or global social needs and that provide them opportunities to develop social, civic, and academic skills through reflection and analysis of their efforts.

Action Steps	Facilitator(s)	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue developing a school and district service learning team that guides efforts to integrate service activities and opportunities within classrooms, schools, and the district. • Continue to integrate service learning activities and opportunities into the curriculum and communicate these to the school community. 	Community Service Learning Coordinators Principals Department Directors/Chairs	2011-2013

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Objective #2:

Students and staff will develop competencies to enable them to understand and effectively address matters of diversity, racism, ethnocentrism, and bias in the context of the pluralistic communities in which they live.

Action Steps	Facilitator(s)	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish support structures for students and staff of color, including mentoring opportunities and affinity groups. • Ensure resources and documents are in place to assist ELL students and their families. • Continue to implement the Disabilities Awareness Program at each elementary school. • Engage the District Leadership Team in a study of cultural proficiency as it relates to our work with students, staff, and families. 	Director of Student Development Human Resource Director METCO Director	2011-2013

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Objective #3:

Students will develop proficiency in a language other than English and they will develop the cultural, technological, and civic skills necessary to adapt and respond to the conditions of 21st century global change.

Action Steps	Facilitator(s)	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess online learning opportunities at Needham High School and develop plan for further student participation. 	High School Principal Director Program Development	2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities for students to engage in experiences that develop STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math), civic, economic, and intercultural awareness and skills. 	Middle School Principals Department Director Elementary Principals	2011-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore international collaborations to promote learning and student and staff educational exchanges. 		2011-2013

District Goal #4: Ensure infrastructure supports district values and learning goals.

To build and carry out a sustainable plan for financial, building, technological, and human resources that enables our learning goals and is responsive to student and school needs.

Objective #1:
School leaders will engage in long-range planning that supports a sustainable school infrastructure and operations.

Action Steps	Facilitator(s)	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually engage in long-range financial and infrastructure planning to better understand the “big picture” and inform the resource allocation process. 	School Committee Superintendent	2011-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the physical condition and/or programmatic suitability of the Mitchell and Hillside Elementary Schools, Pollard Middle School and the School Administration Building. 	Director of Financial Operations	2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop sustainable technology plan that addresses 21st century skills, assistive technology requirements and modern administrative systems. 	Director of Technology & Innovation Director of Student Development	2011-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for and maintain adequate operational resources to maintain school facilities and equipment in good working order. 		2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve communication with the School Community about long-range resource planning activities and priorities. 		2011-2012

District Goal #4: Ensure infrastructure supports district values and learning goals.

To build and carry out a sustainable plan for financial, building, technological, and human resources that enables our learning goals and is responsive to student and school needs.

Objective #2:

School administrators will implement modern and efficient information systems and training opportunities to manage school and district operations, enhance communication, enrich collaboration, and sustain teaching, learning, and administrative environments.

Action Steps	Facilitator(s)	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot and evaluate the use of iPads in grade 8 to determine their effectiveness for enhancing and differentiating learning in a 1-1 instructional model. • Advance communication and collaboration among teachers, parents, administrators, and the larger community through regular use of listservs, wikis, blogs, calendaring, and cable programming. • Procure and implement a multi-functional special education information system for managing student Individualized Education Plan (IEPs) and related processes, such as Medicaid direct service claims processing. • Develop a human resource information management system. • Procure and utilize data integration services to link components of the overall information system and to improve the accuracy and consistency of information contained in the information subsystems. • Implement system to permit on-line and electronic payments of school fees, in conjunction with the Town. 	<p>Superintendent</p> <p>Director of Media and Technology Services</p> <p>Director of Human Resources</p> <p>Director of Media and Technology Services</p> <p>Director of Financial Operations</p>	<p>2011-2013</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an Administrator Compensation Study Committee • Continue the work of the Teacher Compensation Study Committee • Improve web-based communication with parents and other members of the school community. 		<p>2011-2012</p>

District Goal #4: Ensure Infrastructure Supports District Values and Learning Goals

To build and carry out a sustainable plan for financial, building, technological, and human resources that enables our learning goals and is responsive to student and school needs.

Objective #3:

The School Department will create a safe and healthy work place that promotes a positive work ethic and reflects the district’s core values.

Action Steps	Facilitator(s)	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify critical areas where staff turnover is likely and work with affected departments to develop a comprehensive retention and succession plan. • Implement the professional development program for clerical staff. • Conduct regular market compensation studies to ensure competitive salaries. 	Director of Human Resources Director of Financial Operations	2011-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene a Study Committee to improve the Unit D job descriptions and evaluation instrument. 		2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene a Study Committee to improve the Unit C evaluation instrument. 		2011-2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a handbook for administrative staff on administrative information systems (Aesop, etc.) 		2011-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a staff handbook for all employees. 		2011-2013

Glossary

Academic Achievement: The relative success of students in learning and mastering the school subjects that they study, as measured by tests of the knowledge and skills that were taught. Some educators believe that academic achievement should include a broader sample of performances than just test scores.

Achievement Gap: Persistent differences in achievement among different groups of students as indicated by scores on standardized tests, grades, levels of educational attainment, graduation rates, and other data. Narrowing or closing this gap is one of the rationales for standards-based reform, which aims to ensure that additional attention is paid to low-performing students and that expectations are similar for all students.

Action Research: The systematic investigation by teacher of some aspect of their work to help them improve their effectiveness. Action research requires that the participants identify a question or problem and then collect and analyze relevant data. It differs from conventional research in that the participants study an aspect of their own work in the classroom and intend to use the results themselves.

Assessment: A test. An assessment may be part of a system for testing and evaluating individual students, groups of students, schools, or districts. Different types of assessment instruments include achievement tests, minimum competency tests, developmental screening tests, aptitude tests, observation instruments, performance tasks, and authentic assessments. Assessment may contain questions in any number of formats—multiple-choice, short response, and open-ended response.

Benchmarks: Any specific, measurable goals or objectives for students to meet at various points during the school year. Benchmarks are sometimes represented by samples of student work either from current students or from students from previous years. A set of benchmarks can be used as checkpoints to monitor student progress in meeting performance goals within and across grade levels.

Common Assessments: An evaluation developed by a group of teachers who teach the same grade, subject, or course on a common unit of study for the purpose of using the data for making decision about improving instructional practice.

Content Standards: Standards that describe what students should know and be able to do in core academic subjects at each grade level. The purpose of content standards is to create a common curriculum, so that all students have access to the same curriculum and so that teachers know what they are supposed to teach.

Curriculum Frameworks: A grade-by-grade description of the curriculum that will be taught in each of the subject areas as determined by a state's educational agency. They determine what teachers will teach and what students are expected to learn.

Data-Based Decision Making: The process of making decisions about curriculum and instruction on the basis of analysis of classroom data, school data, or the results of standardized tests.

Differentiated Instruction: A form of instruction that seeks to maximize each student's growth by recognizing that students have different ways of learning, different interests, and different ways of responding to instruction. In practice, it involves offering several different learning experiences in response to students' varied needs.

Formative Assessment: Evaluation carried out, often continuously or periodically, for the purpose of gathering information to improve student performance; teacher performance; and instructional methods, programs, and products.

Global Education: Academic programs devoted to the study of the histories, cultures, geography, economics, and governments of the world. The emphasis is on the study of cultures over the study of political history and struggles for power between and within nations.

Learning Outcomes/Expectations: An objective that states a goal or benchmark that students are expected to meet at a particular grade level in a particular subject. Specific expectations of what students are supposed to know or be able to do as a result of a specific course or learning activity.

Professional Development: Learning opportunities that are designed to increase the professional knowledge and skills of teachers who are currently working in the schools.

Research-Based: A descriptor of a program or policy that relies on credible, long-term studies of its effectiveness in practice.

Service Learning: Service learning refers to community service by students in a non-school setting. It aims to deepen students' social learning and to promote problem solving by having them engage in socially useful activities in the local community. It also provides them opportunities to discuss their experiences and to frame their learning within the context of current social issues.

Social and Emotional Skills/Competencies: Social-emotional skills, or 'emotional intelligence', is the name given to the set of abilities that allows students to work with others, learn effectively, and serve essential roles in their families, communities and places of work. Research shows that social-emotional skills can be taught to students and that their presence in classrooms and schools improves academic learning.

Standards-Based Learning:

Unified system of research based practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment that are focused on student learning. It is characterized by clearly defined expectations for students (i.e. standards), instructional strategies that give students multiple ways to learn and assessment practices that provide meaningful feedback for students.

Summative Assessment: Evaluation used to document students' achievement at the end of a unit or course or and evaluation of the end product of a student's learning activity.

* Excerpted from Diane Ravitch, *Ed Speak* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2007)