

February 14, 2014

TO: School Committees
FROM: Diana F. Rigby, Superintendent
RE: FY14 Goals Mid-year Progress Report

A. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE GOAL

GOAL: By June 2014, communication strategies will be increased and varied for responding to disagreement and dissent, constructively resolving conflict, and building consensus throughout the school community.

Key Actions and Progress:

- 1. Lead principals and faculties to discuss TELL Mass data and implement site actions to improve teacher and school leadership conditions.**
 - During bimonthly Administrative team meetings, principals reported on their progress for improving the professional culture.
 - Alcott – Implemented recommendations for improvements in teacher leadership, student conduct, and non-instructional time. After each monthly faculty meeting, teacher feedback was collected to assess progress of TELL Mass recommendations: #1 “We are implementing our TELL Mass Plan in the areas of Time and School Leadership” – 97% agreed with additional thoughts, “Would be great to have half days again, Hopefully begin in August and end earlier in June”, Let’s make decisions and move on”. #2 “The Core Values activity helped me to better understand these values”- 95% agreed with additional thoughts, “ Made the information more clear”. #3 “ We are implementing our TELL Mass Plan in the areas of Teacher Leadership and School Conduct”- 95% agreed with additional thoughts, “One idea about student communication might be early on in school year (say half day Tuesday) have one grade level available for 30 – 40 minutes to answer questions, provide information about former students to next grade level teachers, if needed (a carved out time to help one another being surrounded by early on)”, But I think we could do more”, We should talk more about the CC with all subjects”, Are there only the 2 on the list?”
 - Thoreau – Implemented recommendations from Meg Anderson’s 2013 report and TELL Mass survey results in four areas: Communication, Collaboration, School Vision, and Leadership Opportunities. Thoreau’s principal created a Communication Team that meets monthly to discuss progress of implementation. Monthly faculty meetings have also addressed these areas of improvement and the following progress has been made: Communication - clear decision making process; Collaboration – Communication Team format, professional development

in Rtl, and new educator evaluation system; School Vision- Dignity workshop and 3 Be's (Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe); Leadership Opportunities – Faculty meeting format, "Spotlight on Thoreau Teams", All School Monthly Meetings, Communication Team, and Educator Evaluation team training.

- Willard – Implemented recommendations from the 2012-13 TELL Mass survey and faculty responded to a the following mid-year survey: #1 " Inform staff about the Admin mtg information in a more timely manner (morning bulletin)"- 100%, #2 "Implement revised Meeting schedule for grade level teams every six weeks" – 77%, 23% NA, #3 " Continue to support the needs of grade level teams to work together to collaborate for Common Core Planning " – 65%, 35% NA, #4 " Foster Trust and Respect between and among all constituents" – 95%, #5 "Continue to promote community-building activities in the building"- 94%, 5% NA, #6 " Promote collaboration, communication, and sharing among grade levels"- 85%, 13% NA, #7 " Provide flexibility within meeting structures to problem-solve issues that arise" – 92%, 5% NA.
 - Concord Middle School – CMS faculty recommended five actions to improve school climate in response to the TELL Mass survey results: Principal and Asst. Principal provide 24-48 hour response time for emails and conduct school rounds 2x week; CMS principal worked with the School Leadership focus group to increase communication for staff input and teacher leadership opportunities; A new format for leadership meeting minutes has been implemented; A pilot for flexible use blocks was implemented 2x week and will be evaluated ; and Principal worked with the Schedule Task Force to develop schedule options to maximize student programming and teacher collaboration time.
 - Concord-Carlisle High School – Implemented the following actions to address results of 2012-13 TELL Mass survey: Further developed working norms at: faculty, Dept. Chair and Admin team level, hosted a voluntary faculty meeting on concerns, received feedback on better communication between DCG & the department members (utilizing a clear decision loop that is noted on every DCG Agenda, hosting 1-to-1 conversations with dozens of faculty members and presenting findings from interviews to the entire faculty meeting, improved visibility of Admin in the building (halls, Dept. rooms and classrooms)and eating lunch with each Dept. multiple times per year, collaborating with DCG on every faculty meeting agenda, continued training n the new educator evaluation system and on protocols for analyzing student work at the Department Chair level as well as within the departments and working with the CCTA to present recommendations at a school committee meeting, and plan the use of a protocol to look at 2012 -13 TELL Mass data with a MTA facilitator.
- 2. Meet monthly with the CPS administration and CTA Executive Board to discuss and resolve labor issues using conflict resolution strategies.**
- CPS administrators and the CTA executive board have met 5x to discuss ways to increase non-instructional time to support professional collaboration.

- 3. Implement Dr. Donna Hick's Dignity model of conflict resolution to improve labor management relationships.**
 - CPS administrators, 9 CTA members, and 2 SC members have met together and separately to participate in Dignity training. Elements of dignity are practiced during meetings.
- 4. Meet monthly with CCHS administration, SC members, and CCTA to discuss and resolve labor issues using conflict resolution strategies.**
 - CCHS administration, SC members, and CCTA have met monthly to discuss labor contract issues . There are no grievances.
- 5. Implement social media tools to engage school community in conversations over time.**
 - Implemented "Your Voice Matters" and report is attached. Implemented Twitter and now have 271 followers.
- 6. Held teacher and parent forums and collected feedback during the Thoreau principal search.**
- 7. Distributed monthly district updates and worked with Communications manager to submit weekly Building Committee and School Committee updates to Concord Journal and Carlisle Mosquito.**

B. STUDENT LEARNING GOAL

GOAL: By June 2014, students in grades K-12 will master critical end of year grade level standards.

Key Actions and Progress:

- 1. Implement district core curriculum K-12 incorporating CCSS in ELA, Math, SS, and Science literacy.**
- 2. Implement common assessments in ELA and Math K5 and all subject areas grades 6-12.**
- 3. Identify appropriate intervention and adjust instructional practice.**

* Alcott - Using Atlas software, teachers completed the alignment of the CPS curricula with the Common Core standards in all content areas. Teachers worked in the summer and at the start of the school year to realign our curriculum to meet the Common Core standards. Teachers are meeting regularly with ELA curriculum specialist to discuss implementation of ELA Common Core standards. Math curriculum has been aligned to the Common Core Curriculum. Curriculum Specialists examining other math curricular to pilot for future. Common assessments (Teacher's College, GRADE, pre/post math assessments, Kathy Richardson, Writing On-Demand assessments) have been implemented and TRACK MY PROGRESS is

being piloted for grades 3-5 in ELA and grade 3 in Math. Mid-year student assessment data follows:

Open Response – Grade 5 (beginning of the year = 23%; mid-year = 80% meeting benchmark on common OR)

ELA (% above 80%)	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
DIBELS	80%					
TC		82%	81%	83%	74%	81%

Special education students made progress, but only 11% met mid-year ELA benchmarks.

Boston students made progress, but only 45% met mid-year ELA benchmark.

Math (% above 80%)	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Post-assessments			87%	86%	77%	88%
Kathy Richardson	79%	50%				

Progress Report averages:

Progress Reports (% reached benchmark)	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
ELA	72%	79%	75%	57%	75%	81%
Math	82%	72%	83%	78%	78%	93%

To identify appropriate interventions for struggling students, Alcott’s principal meets with each grade level team every six weeks for two hours to discuss individual student progress, and to develop a Personal Intervention Plan for students performing below benchmarks in math, reading, and writing. Online intervention programs, DREAMBOX and LEXIA have also been implemented to provide more practice in math and reading skills.

* Thoreau – Common assessments have been implemented and Grade level teams have met to review student assessment data to adjust instructional practices and to provide interventions. The i-READY program is used in grades 1-5 for math intervention, and for ELA intervention in two third grade classrooms. TRACK MY PROGRESS has been implemented to monitor student progress in reading.

Thoreau staff will be working with a consultant to revise their RtI strategies and tiered instruction.

* Willard - Working in partnership with Willard's ELA Specialist, Math Specialist, and Technology Specialist, Willard's principal has supported Willard staff in adapting curriculum and assessments to reflect the Common Core. Grade Level Team Progress Meetings have been held weekly since September 2013. Each grade level meets every six weeks for 3 hours and the meeting is facilitated by the principal. Within the framework of each meeting, job-embedded professional development related to the Common Core is provided to teacher teams. Grade Level Teacher Teams meet regularly (at least every 2 weeks) and facilitated Grade Level Progress Meetings are held every 6 weeks. During these meetings, common assessments are reviewed and analyzed. Teachers use the assessment data to inform and improve their instruction, adjust their practice, and implement appropriate intervention. In some cases, the intervention is Tier 1 and is implemented by the classroom teacher. Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions are implemented outside of the classroom by support staff. In addition, Grade Level Progress Meetings are utilized as opportunities to discuss Progress Monitoring data throughout the school year in order to adjust RtI groups and to adjust the focus of the interventions, as needed. The principal worked closely with the SPED staff, particularly the teachers of the 2 substantially Separate Classrooms, to address the needs of High Needs students. She met with both teachers to discuss strategies and students learning goals that would help to close this achievement gap. Both teachers developed Student Learning Goals that would promote improved decoding (lower grades) and improved fluency (grades 3 -5). In addition, both special education teachers of the Sub-Separate Classrooms attended a special writing workshop designed for Struggling Writer and are using these strategies to support their students. In order to improve the performance of these students in math, the math specialist is working with the special education teacher to help strengthen students' math competencies by implementing direct instruction in the Math Practice Standards. iREADY will also be implemented in the special education classroom to increase math skills. All teachers implement RtI as needed in their classrooms and, all teachers provide the level of scaffolding that students need to access the curriculum successfully. The majority of Willard teachers have invested significant time in the Sarah Ward Executive Functioning Training at Willard during the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school year. Because of the training, teachers have been implementing a variety of Sarah Ward EF strategies (Get Ready-Do-Done, Time Robbers, etc.). Teachers also provide differentiated opportunities for students through flexible reading groups, flexible math groups, differentiated writing opportunities, and the use of digital tools to demonstrate their learning.

* Concord Middle School – Common humanities rubric is in place for common assessments in English and social studies; draft is in process in science. All classroom teachers have set professional practice goals to implement varied formative assessments shared analysis, and adjusted instruction. Fall common assessments were administered in English, foreign language, math, science, and social studies, and midyear assessments are in process. Term 1 report card grades show 75% of 694 students earning B- or better in all subjects; English, math, science, and social studies; and by individual subject: English, 87%; Math 88%; Science 94%; and Social Studies 89%.

- Concord-Carlisle High School – Administration and department teams analyzed “D and F” reports on a quarterly basis and revised instruction based on error analysis. During the professional day, each department reviewed midterm results to adjust instruction for the next semester. Teachers targeted interventions for individual students who needed additional instruction and support. Senior students are on track to maintaining 100% Competency Determination based on the MCAS with 90% of special education students passing the November 2013 retest. An additional study strategies course has been provided for Boston freshmen and their GPA has increased during quarter #1. Administration worked with the Department Chairs and faculty to develop new courses for 2014-15 to meet the differentiated needs of students: Python, English in the Digital Age, AP Capstone, and Digital Photography. Teachers in each department are developing common assessments to measure student growth over time.

C. ADDITIONAL DISTRICT GOALS

GOAL: Foster a respectful and empathic learning environment in which all students become more responsible citizens.

- Alcott - K5 Mental Health Team provides leadership and support for teachers to implement Open Circle, Bullyproofing curricula and mindfulness activities. School Psychologist offers lunch bunch groups for students and individualized support for struggling students.
 - Thoreau- This year Thoreau implemented the 3 Be’s: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe. As positive reinforcement, students “caught” modeling the 3 Be’s receive a Bee award which is displayed on a hallway board, and a card to share with their family. The 3 Be’s are announced by students every day during morning announcements. A second Open Circle Teacher Leader was trained this year. The Open Circle curriculum continues in all classrooms. School Psychologist and social worker have developed team goals focusing on social skills and positive student interaction. The school has scheduled monthly “All School Meetings” to celebrate the school and the work being done by the students. The meeting in February focused on MLK. Fourth grade students read Martin’s Big Words, grade two students documented the life of MLK, third grade students shared their “Dreams” and the whole school sang a song led by the music teacher.
 - Willard - All K-5 teachers implement Open Circle. They deliver the Open Circle curriculum and use the language and concepts of Open Circle to guide their classroom routines, their interactions with students, and to promote pro-social behavior inside the classroom and outside of the classroom. The Peace Table serves as an optional approach to a facilitated session of problem solving and conflict resolution.
- * Concord Middle School – *CMS Stands Together* curriculum was completed in a five-plus-one format: the curriculum and goals were introduced at an assembly in each building which was followed by five instructional modules conducted between December and February. All students read *Wonder*, and the ELA baseline assessment was based on the book. Four new student initiated clubs have been

introduced this year: debate, origami, dungeons and dragons, and engineering. A formal process by which students can be involved in the PTG grant request cycle has been introduced, and the student leaders will facilitate this process for 2014-15 school year.

* Concord-Carlisle High School – Faculty collaborated with the Advisory Coordinator to strengthen Advisory program for all students. Anti-Defamation League (ADL) provided training for faculty and 25 students leaders to address the issues of race and bias with proactive strategies. The student leaders completed a three day seminar to prepare them to lead the ADL work during Advisory. School administrators collaborated with town organizations to sponsor Chris Herren who spoke to all students about making healthy decisions and avoiding substance abuse. Parents and students have been engaged as partners in school-wide decision making through Student Senate, School Advisory Council, and Parents Association Executive Board.

GOAL: Implement the new Educator Evaluation system with a focus on continuous improvement for teaching and learning.

- CPS teams from each school site have completed training from Teachers 21 on the five -step cycle, rubrics, self-assessment, goal setting, and gathering evidence. Each school site team has successfully trained their respective staff in each stage of the new system. All aspects of the new evaluation system to date are being completed by CPS educators. Teachers21 has worked with Concord Middle School Administrators and Department Chairs on calibrating observation reports. They have visited classrooms and learned new techniques for writing effective observations. A workshop with Teachers21 was held for all K-12 evaluators on calibrating observation reports and assessing performance for formative assessments. Baseline Edge has been implemented as the technology platform for the supervision and evaluation system. All educators have been trained and are successfully using the forms, evidence boards, and interactive features. The CTA and administration are scheduled to meet in March to review progress to date.

GOAL: Provide students and staff with the resources, materials, and infrastructure to support high quality learning environments.

* The district administration worked with school principals, central office, and both school committees during Fall 2014 to prepare FY15 budgets and to respond to the Finance Committee's budget data request. The core budgeting principles included the following:

- Students and their learning are at the center of decisions;
- Teaching and learning conditions matter for student success;
- Requested resources for programs, services, and activities reflect the districts' core values of academic excellence, respectful and empathic community, professional collaboration, educational equity, and continuous improvement;
- Maintain balance between responsive and reasonable operating budgets and taxpayers; funding for the new high school project.

We met regularly with the administrative team and school committees to discuss the FY15 budgets and presented at three Finance Committee meetings in October and November, and at the Town Coordination Meeting in December. The Concord Finance Committee adopted the final guidelines on November 21, and the School Committees adopted the FY15 budgets on December 10, 2013. Included in the budget book are the Finance Committee presentations and the School Committee adopted budgets for FY15.

The districts continue to maintain excellent academic programs while meeting challenging funding goals. We have been able to sustain current programs without exceeding finance committee guidelines while enrollment and special education costs have continued to increase. State funding levels have stabilized but have not been increased to reflect expanded State data and reporting requirements. While our core budgeting principle of focusing all resources to support student learning and growth remains unchanged, an increasing portion of FY2014 CPS resources continue to shift towards enrollment driven staffing, special education and transportation needs. Conversely in FY2013, the CCHS resources had seen decreasing needs in special education, and this occurrence is not continuing in FY2014 as former K8 students are now entering the 9-12 setting. The district goals approved by the school committees provided direction to the budget process to support student learning opportunities. The district administration and school committees' work was reflective of the new \$92.5M high school project's cost impact on taxpayers and collaboratively worked with the finance committees to develop responsible FY2014 budgets. The FY2014 CPS school budget at \$31,140,538 represented a 4.65% increase above the FY2013 appropriation, and the FY 2014 operating budget for CCHS, \$23,886,464, increased 1.01% above the FY2013 level. Both the CPS and CCHS budget requests were below levy limits and matched guidelines developed by the finance committees, and for the seventh consecutive year did not require overrides. Both school districts managed successful year-end closings, and the Regional School district will increase the CCHS Technology Stabilization Fund by \$245,000. The Regional School District also committed \$300,000 towards its OPEB liability in the year-end closing process. CCRSD's strong Excess and Deficiency (E&D) fund balance for the previous fiscal year has been certified at the 4.9% level. The AAA bond rating has been maintained and the December 2012 \$32,500,000 Bond sale was assigned the highest possible rating by Moody's Investors Service on the borrowed funds at an effective interest rate of 3.0%.

In regard to the FY2015 budget development process we are pleased to extend our no override budget requests to an eighth year with a 3.0% CCRSD operating budget increase, and a 4.17% CPS increase. The five year average operating budget increase for the high school district decreases from 2.97% to 2.58%, and the CPS five year average increases from 2.75% to 3.23%. When contrasted to override driven five year average increases for Fiscal Years 2000 to 2004 of 7.6% for CPS and 7.1% for CCRSD the districts have demonstrated their commitment to developing budgets that support high academic achievement while recognizing fiscal constraints. The historical trends demonstrate the commitment to bring budget increase requests in as low as possible while maintaining strong academic programs.

The FY2015 budget development process begins with identification of escalating needs and cost drivers. Our process encompasses the aggregate needs of our two-

school district, K12 system, the K8 Concord Public Schools and the 9 – 12 Concord-Carlisle Regional School District. Each district is distinct and legally requires a separate budget. There are eight collective bargaining units within the K12 system and the cost escalation within the contractual labor agreements must be reflected in the budget development process along with other cost increases in utilities, equipment, materials, enrollment changes, and other operating requirements. The most significant cost drivers in each district and representing the largest cost component in our system are the Concord Teachers Association (CTA) and the Concord-Carlisle Teachers Association (CCTA) contracts. The FY2015 Finance Committee approved and CPS School Committee adopted budget requests a 4.17% increase of \$1,300,000, or \$32,440,538. \$732,178 is required for CTA contract obligations, \$265,029 is required for enrollment driven staffing and instructional material increases, replacement of technology devices (computers, Activeboards, network components, etc.) at Willard and CMS require \$365,000 and operating needs and utilities cost require \$187,358. Collective bargaining costs in the building service workers, bus drivers, secretarial, maintenance contracts require \$110,000, and \$35,483 is required for non-collective bargaining employee escalation.

The needs above total \$1,695,048 and exceed the Finance Committee Guideline of \$1,300,000 by \$395,048, To meet the Finance Committee Guideline CPS has built the following reductions into our FY2015 request: a reduction in the special education out-of-district tuitions budgets of \$217,681, a \$60,000 elimination of two secretarial support positions (1.0 FTE at CMS, and .6 FTE at Ripley), a reduction in increased requests for professional development and building maintenance of \$23,575 and \$18,792 respectively. In addition to these actions we are seeking voter approval at Town Meeting to use \$75,000 of existing monies in the Concord Public Schools Technology Stabilization to meet the technology replacement needs at the Concord Middle School and the Willard Elementary School. Please note that the Special Education Out-of-District tuition decrease is mainly associated with movement of students from the K8 level to the 9 – 12 level as reflected in the following CCRSD cost drivers information.

The FY2015 CCRSD budget development process identified the following cost drivers for the Regional High School budget: \$384,029 required for anticipated CCTA contract obligations, an increase of \$273,046 required for Other Post-Employment Benefits (future Retiree health insurance benefits) funding, an increase in Special Education Out-of-District tuitions of \$328,152, and a Transportation Services increase of \$61,249 for increased operating costs. These cost drivers total to \$1,046,476 and exceed our \$719,042 increase by \$327,434. The FY2015 Concord Finance Committee guideline operating budget allows a 3.01% increase of \$719,042 or \$24,605,506. The \$24,605,506 operating budget level was adopted by the Concord-Carlisle School Committee. In our initial operating budget request, the following reductions were made: \$50,000 in computer hardware, \$27,345 in utilities, \$50,000 in legal costs, \$62,500 in capital outlay and maintenance costs, \$20,500 in insurance, and a net decrease of \$59,795 in other line items were included in the Regional District's initial budget plan. Subsequently, in order to meet the Finance Committee Guideline, additional reductions were necessary to close the remaining \$57,294 shortfall. These included elimination of a Ripley based secretarial position at \$25,000, and reductions in several instructional materials and athletic accounts totaling \$32,294 were implemented.