A Community of Learners


TO: School Board
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May 20, 2014

Background

The following report summarizes the progress of Strategic Planning efforts during the 2013–2014 school year in five major areas: Communications; Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Metrics and Reporting; Operations; and Technology. Each section includes an overview of the year’s work, a list of achievements in each goal area, and a section that outlines the status of upcoming goals. The status of goals section includes an explanation of goals recommended to be discontinued in the future, goals to be completed within the next one to three months, and goals that are expected to bridge into the 2014–2015 school year.
Communications

Overview

The Communication Department serves as a liaison between the District and the Community. Effective communication ensures engagement and strengthens partnership among all constituent groups. Ten discrete communication goals were developed as part of the Strategic Plan. These include implementing a comprehensive communication program that was introduced in 2011-2012; sharing curricular, fiscal, and school achievement updates; surveying community and staff members to ensure satisfaction with District communications; supporting staff with communication needs; identifying opportunities to communicate consistency, K-9 alignment across the District, and implementation of Common Core State Standards.

Achievements

- Completed Strategic Plan Working Document and corresponding communication materials (in print and on the web) developed to inform all stakeholder groups of the Plan, its goals, and real-time goal progress.

- Increased staff, parent and community satisfaction with District communications through frequent, high quality publications and communiqués.

- Supported multiple communications that specifically addressed consistency and alignment issues, along with the introduction of the STAR assessment.

Status of Goals

The majority of the Communication Goals extend through 2016-2017. Throughout each year of the plan, the communications department will evaluate the success of each goal area and changes will be made to the District’s Communication Plan. More formal feedback will be solicited by stakeholders through surveys to determine on-going communication needs. Specific communication needs surrounding, conferencing, differentiation, Common Core State Standards, and K-9 alignment are being reviewed following the completion of this year’s annual survey.

Discontinue:

No goals are recommended for discontinuation at this time.
**Complete in 1–3 Months**

Before July 1, 2014, a report on the communication plan addressing Goals 7-10 will be presented to the Administrative Team for review. Furthermore, the spring 2014 annual survey results will be prepared for the Board and administrative team to preview as part of goal setting for the 2014-2015 school year.

**Bridge to 2014–2015**

Moving into 2014-2015, Goals 7-10 will play a more significant role in the overall implementation of the Communication Plan. Moreover, a 2014-2015 Communication Plan for the District that outlines publications, areas of concentration, and vehicles for distribution will be developed and presented to the School Board for approval.
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment

Overview

The Curriculum Office Strategic Plan goals focused on year one of the Curriculum Review Cycle for Kinetic Wellness, Social Emotional Learning, and Science. All three content areas focused on developing mission and belief statements as well as Overarching Essential Questions and Overarching Enduring Understandings. Language Arts completed the K-8 writing curriculum that was adopted by the Board in March. Math and World Language entered into year three of the review cycle, which involved the full implementation of the revised curriculum for math and the program re-design for World Language. Finally, Fine Arts developed cornerstone assessments to anchor their curricular units that will be collaboratively assessed within and across the grade levels to assess student growth.

The Curriculum Office also continued to monitor goals for the STAR assessment, Instructional Time Study, differentiation, staff development, and began to set the stage for the Partnership Assessment for Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) in 2014-2015.

The DPS portion of the Strategic plan in 2013-2014 has focused on the development of the District’s RTI framework and services, improving the staff’s data literacy, and improving special education practices and processes.

Achievements

- Math Curriculum Review
  - Implemented curriculum KUDs grades K-8
  - Revised the K-8 scope and sequences
  - Developed a KUD revision process that began in the spring and will continue into the summer.
  - Provided common professional development experiences

- Language Arts Curriculum Review
  - Finalized writing curriculum KUDs for grades K-8
  - Adopted a K-8 spiral for writing units
  - Drafted a Language Arts materials adoption position paper
  - Conducted the District Writing Assessment grades 3-8
  - Provided professional development days to collaboratively score the District Writing Assessment in grade level bands 3, 4-5 & 6,7,8.
○ Literacy facilitators developed a process for the Language Arts Committee to review District Writing Assessment data.

● Fine Arts Curriculum Review
  ○ Implemented cornerstone assessments
  ○ Met collaboratively to review the KUD implementation to determine necessary revisions

● World Language Curriculum Review
  ○ Implemented redesigned curriculum for Spanish grades 1-8 and French grades 6, 7 & 8.
  ○ Provided a materials recommendation to support TPRS and T/CI
  ○ Administered the Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA) for Spanish grades 4, 6 & 8 and French grades 6 & 8.
  ○ Engaged in common professional development to gain additional practice with TPRS pedagogy.

● Science Curriculum Review
  ○ Drafted mission and belief statement
  ○ Drafted overarching essential questions and overarching essential understandings K-8
  ○ Engaged in common professional development around the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

● Kinetic Wellness Curriculum Committee
  ○ Drafted mission and belief statement
  ○ Drafted overarching essential questions and overarching essential understandings K-8

● Social Emotional Learning Committee
  ○ Drafted mission and belief statement
  ○ Drafted overarching essential questions and overarching essential understandings K-8.

● Differentiation
  ○ Conducted staff development on differentiation in math with a focus on high readiness learners with Nanci Smith December 2013.
  ○ Drafted District Grouping Statement
  ○ Monitored and implemented year 4 recommendations

● STAR
  ○ Increased the SGP for grades 3-8 from 41 to 50 for math and reading
  ○ Revised staff and parent communications

● Consistency and Alignment
  ○ Developed action steps in the School Improvement plans to address consistency and alignment
  ○ Implemented curriculum review process according to Winnetka
Curriculum Review Cycles with 100% of reviews on target.
  ○ Collaborated with New Trier High School on the township committees for Math and Language Arts.
  ● The District RTI Committee has developed a process for RTI decision-making.
  ● A “draft” RTI handbook for use across the district has been initiated.
  ● DPS staff received training in how to access and analyze student data.
  ● A “draft” of a Parent Special Education Handbook has been developed.
  ● A special education building coordinators group has met regularly to review special education processes and procedures.

Status of Goals

Discontinue
The Curriculum Department will discontinue the goal “Implement staff development on providing effective feedback for learning.” Instead of approaching this as a discrete topic, effective feedback has been embedded in the professional development specific to the content areas as opposed to a global training. Research shows that job-embedded professional development is the most effective approach to enhancing teacher practice. Engaging in feedback training outside of the classroom context seemed counterproductive.

No goals assigned to DPS are recommended for discontinuation at this point.

Delay

It is recommended that the Social Studies Curriculum Review be delayed one year and instead be initiated in 2015-2016. The current committee structures and time available cannot accommodate an additional content area curriculum review. Adding an additional committee would stretch our ability to staff a robust committee. The professional development agendas planned for next year will continue to support year two of the math implementation, year one of the writing implementation, and the development of the curriculum KUDs for reading K-8. The Science Committee will also solicit feedback from staff on their progress towards goals outside of the committee meetings.

As we enter into the cornerstone assessment process, we find that we are still competing for time in terms of completing the KUD revision process. Since cornerstone assessments hinge on these revisions, the development of three cornerstone assessments is an aggressive goal given the need to develop, pilot and analyze the effectiveness of the assessments. The assessments that are developed will need to be reviewed not only for student impact, but also for validity. Did the assessment measure what it was intended to measure? It’s possible that a cornerstone assessment could require multiple iterations.
However, we are confident that our end product will be of very high quality and we are looking forward to its development.

**Complete in 1–3 Months**

Fine Arts and World Language
- Complete cornerstone assessment analyses

**Bridge to 2014–2015**

Science, Kinetic Wellness, and Social Emotional Learning will enter into year two of the curriculum review cycle. All three content areas will develop their KUDs and determine the necessary resources to support the curriculum, where appropriate. The Science teams will spend considerable time organizing the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) into coherent units of study for grades K-8. The Science Committee will also engage in a review of resources and best instructional practices to support the implementation in 2015-2016.

Math and Language Arts will continue with the implementation of the K-8 curriculum KUDs. The Math teams will utilize the revised K-8 scope and sequence and revised KUDs developed over the summer. The Language Arts Committee will write the KUDs for the reading curriculum and integrate the language standards into both the reading and writing KUDs for grades K-8. The implementation of both curricula will continue to be monitored for consistency and alignment by the math and literacy facilitators, as well as building principals.

The continued development and analysis of cornerstone assessments will be the major focus of the curriculum work for Fine Arts, World Language, Math, and Writing. The Fine Arts and World Language teams implemented the first round of cornerstone assessments this year, and will engage in collaborative analyses this summer to assess reliability, validity, and student achievement trends. Based on the initial student data, the Fine Arts and World Language teachers will likely revise the assessments or adjust them to align more tightly to the established learning goals. Teachers will also look at the learning trajectories across the grades in order to assess the long-term growth trajectory for students K-8.

The development of specific RTI entrance and exit criteria for reading and math will need to be identified and agreed upon. The RTI framework of services will need further development in each building, including: increased clarity regarding roles and responsibilities of staff, the use of research based interventions, and building specific professional development regarding RTI best practices. Increased communication and
collaboration with the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment department will be essential to provide clarity regarding how each tier within the RTI framework relates to one another. The District’s special education services should continue to develop an increased focus on remediating student academic skills. The schools will need to continue their efforts to support student homework completion and general student skill development through Tier I core curriculum.

The PARCC will also require the Departments of Curriculum, Student Services, and Technology to work closely together to develop actions plans for PARCC implementation in March 2015. While the technology infrastructure capacity has been confirmed to be sufficient, there is much to plan for in terms of creating student accounts, adding the appropriate student accommodations, and building logistics (which vary from building to building). The PARCC will also require a tight communication plan with parents and staff.
Metrics & Reporting

Overview

In the area of metrics and reporting, the major focus for this year was to complete the benchmarking process for aligning staffing to student enrollment. The Human Resources Department presented the final benchmarking plan, which included the staffing allocation model for specials and related studies. The District’s Dashboard was also maintained and updated throughout the year.

Achievements

- Quarterly dashboard updates were updated for student enrollment and staffing FTE.
- Quarterly dashboard updates were completed for the first three quarters of fiscal year 2014.
- The Board approved a staffing allocation model for the areas of specials and related studies on February 25, 2014.
- The 2014-2015 staffing plan implemented the annual, program, and benchmark adjustments that were established in 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014.

Status of Goals

Discontinue - No goals are recommended for discontinuation at this time.

Complete in 1–3 Months

Review feedback received from the Annual Community, Parent and Staff surveys to determine stakeholder satisfaction.

Bridge to 2014–2015

The District will need to continue to monitor the annual and program staffing adjustments to ensure the outcomes match the goal of aligning staffing to student enrollment while meeting student and program needs.

Fourth quarter financial dashboard information will be completed as part of the annual compliance audit. This process will begin in June and continue through the summer with completion in October or November.
Operations

Overview

The Human Resources and Business Office Departments focused a great deal of time and energy in the bargaining processes for the custodial/maintenance and teacher contracts. The custodial/maintenance bargaining process lasted more than a year, which was unanticipated. In addition, the WEA bargaining process has included more than 90 hours of negotiating and preparations. The recent notice that the entrance monitors and associates are joining teachers in the WEA also was unexpected and impacts the bargaining process.

A second major focus of the work this school year has been the development of a Philosophy of School Finance. The School Board’s philosophy was adopted in December and an implementation plan was developed. The Board amended Policy 4:10 Fiscal and Business Management and Policy 4:20 Fund Balances to align with Philosophy. At this time, the Financial Committee is looking at models for financial reporting.

In other areas, the District Office staff has been focusing this year on clarifying expectations and responsibilities. Both the Business Office and Human Resources Department have drafted roles and responsibilities for better alignment.

Achievements

- Aligned roles and responsibilities in the Human Resources Department.
- Provided 60 hours of Skyward training for staff to improve efficiency and productivity. This also improved the level of cross-training between staff and among departments.
- Approved a 5-year SEIU contract (2013-2017) for the custodial and maintenance staff, aligning to the Board’s financial philosophy.
- Initiated interest-based bargaining with the WEA (September 2014).
- Participated in the Regional Office of Education Compliance visit and received initial feedback that demonstrated improvement since the last visit.
- Provided training for the teacher evaluation tool for administrators and participated in PERA training to prepare for student growth measures.
- Introduced behavior-based interviewing processes with administrators and teachers.
- Implemented online open enrollment module and online time-off module in the employee management system, Skyward.
Status of Goals

Discontinue

The Business Office does not recommend the discontinuation of any goals at this time.

Complete in 1–3 Months

The main focus of the next few months includes completing the bargaining process with the Winnetka Education Association (WEA). The District will also receive the findings from the Regional Office of Education compliance visit to determine our level of improvement from the 2009 audit. The administrative team is participating in professional development related to the process of aligning the teacher evaluation process with PERA.

The Business Office will complete the re-alignment of its roles and responsibilities and then converge this work with that already completed by the Human Resources (HR) Department.

Bridge to 2014–2015

For the next school year, a major goal for the HR Department will be to develop a plan for including student growth goals in teacher evaluations, per PERA legislation. The District is broadening the teacher evaluation committee to include more representatives who will pilot student growth goal setting to inform the process. There will also be intensive training, an audit of student assessments, and a formal recommendation for the joint committee by the end of the 2014-2015 school year. In addition, the District will need to revise the evaluation tools for Educational Support Staff and the custodial/maintenance staff.

The HR Department will also develop a recruitment plan for teachers and administrators.

There will be a study conducted for student enrollment and school viability, per the Financial Subcommittee recommendation. This will need to be coordinated and managed by the Business Department and the Superintendent.

The FY2015 budget will be the first to be developed with alignment of cost and revenue parameters established by the School Board’s Financial Philosophy. The District’s 10-year life safety inspection will be conducted in late summer and will lead to development of a 10-year deferred maintenance plan.
Work will continue in 2014-2015 to complete implementation of financial planning software. This work was begun in 2013-2014, but not completed due to other District priorities.
Technology

Overview

Technology Strategic Plan goals for 2013–2014 focused on implementing iPads for a pilot group of teachers and students in Grades 1–8 to complete a year-one One-to-One Mobile Learning Initiative. The iPad initiative included rolling out iPads and other equipment and providing a comprehensive professional development program for teachers. In addition, a K–4 Technology Facilitator was hired to support the elementary buildings and infrastructure upgrades were completed in all buildings throughout District 36.

Achievements

- The One-to-One Mobile Learning Initiative proposal was presented to the School Board during the June 2013 School Board meeting (Technology Goal 1.A.i.a). The Board approved a year-one rollout with a budget of $200,000 at the August 2013 School Board meeting. The One-to-One Mobile Learning Initiative was implemented and studied during the 2013–2014 school year. Teachers participating in the year-one rollout received iPads in October 2013 and students received iPads throughout November 2013.
- The One-to-One Mobile Learning Initiative was implemented in one classroom each in Grades 1–4 with all three elementary buildings participating with at least one iPad classroom. The initiative in Grades 5–8 included one team per grade level. A total of 268 users participated in the year-one iPad rollout (Technology Goals 1.B.i.a and 1.C.i.a.).
- The School Board approved a K–4 Technology Facilitator position to be shared among the three elementary buildings at the August 2013 School Board meeting (Technology Goals 2.C.1.a and 2.C.ii.a). The new K–4 Technology Facilitator was hired in November 2013.
- A differentiated and supported staff professional development program was designed and delivered to all teachers participating in the One-to-One Mobile Learning Initiative and then offered as a series of WTI Sessions to all teachers and staff. The same program will be revised (based upon teacher feedback) and offered if the School Board approves an expanded iPad initiative. The program was taught by both the Director of Technology and the K–4 Technology Facilitator during the 2013–2014 school year. The professional development program was aligned to both the ISTE Technology Standards for Students and Common Core State Standards (Technology Goals 3.a.i.a, 3.a.i.b., 3.B.i.a, 3.C.i.a).
● Schoology, a cloud-based system for home/school communication, was selected and implemented during the One-to-One Mobile Learning Initiative (Technology Goal 4.B.i.a). All teachers and students (100%) had access to this system by December 2013 (Schoology is linked with PowerSchool, the District’s Student Information System) (Technology Goal 4.B.ii.a). All students in Grades 5–8 participating in the One-to-One Mobile Learning Initiative have accessed Schoology.

● Infrastructure systems including core systems, switches, and wireless were upgraded and added throughout the 2013–2014 school year (Technology Goals 4.C.i.a., 4.C.ii.a., 4.D.i.a, and 4.D.ii.a).

Status of Goals

Discontinue

No technology goals are recommended for discontinuation at this time.

Complete in 1–3 Months

Research was completed during 2013–2014 for the purpose of proposing a supplemental Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy in District 36 (Technology Goal 1.D.i.a and 1.D.ii.a.). This proposed policy will be presented to the Superintendent before July 1, 2014. The BYOD policy will not be proposed as the primary method for students to gain access to technology devices in District 36; rather, the proposed policy will allow students and staff to use their own devices on the District’s network for specific, curriculum-related purposes in addition to devices provided by the District.

Discussions began in 2013 with the building-level Resource Center Directors and Technology Facilitators at The Skokie School and Carleton Washburne School to update roles and responsibilities and to align the positions with the Common Core State Standards (Technology Goals 2.A.i.a. and 2.B.1.a). These updates will be presented to the Assistant Superintendent of Personnel and Educational Programming before July 1, 2014.

Bridge to 2014–2015

The iPad professional development program will be updated and offered to all teachers if the School Board approves an expanded One-to-One Mobile Learning Initiative for 2014–2015. Summer sessions and additional train-the-trainer sessions will be developed and offered if the iPad initiative is approved (Technology Goals 3.a.i.b. and 3.C.i.a).

Updates to the District 36 infrastructure will continue into Summer 2014 (Technology...
Goal 4.a.i.a.). New Mac Pro servers are installed and data migration and testing is scheduled to occur throughout Summer 2014. The majority of work is expected to be completed during July 2014, but some work may continue into August 2014. Work will be completed before staff and students return in August 2014. Work on the wireless system will continue into Summer 2014.

Schoology is recommended to continue as the cloud-based Learning Management System for District 36. As additional teachers and students join the One-to-One Mobile Learning Initiative (if approved), professional development and expanded use of the Schoology system will continue as part of the rollout (Technology Goals 4.B.i.a and 4.b.ii.a.).