

FY14 District-Wide Goals

Year One of Strategic Plan 2013-2018 FINAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Presented below are the four themes with accompanying goals/objectives, actions and final accomplishments.

THEME I – Achievement

Goal

Curriculum, instruction and assessment necessary to support 21st century learning and effectively meet the needs of all students are consistently used in all classrooms.

Strategic Objective 1: The needs of all learners across the spectrum of abilities and backgrounds are consistently anticipated, planned for and addressed by all staff.

Action: K-12 teachers will learn and/or revisit UDL principles. In turn, they will apply UDL principles in curriculum alignment to the Common Core and in developing district-determined assessments.

Final Accomplishments

- Elementary UDL Study Group convened from October 2013– January 2014 with 10 elementary teachers participating.
- UDL goals were implemented in all elementary-level School Improvement Plans during their PLC meetings throughout the school year.
- UDL was a focal area for the District Data Leadership Teams with all schools using UDL principles and strategies in the school logic models.
- HRMS professional learning for SY 2013-14 focused on content-area literacy through close reading strategies (Common Core standard) to promote accessibility for all students in the content curriculum.
- DHS departments developed assessments to be used as district-determined measures with the UDL principles in mind.

Strategic Objective 2. A rigorous, research-based, aligned curriculum that integrates real world applications is employed across the district.

Actions: (a.)

1. K-8 teachers will align content-area curriculum (Science, Social Studies, etc.) to the Common Core literacy standards
2. Content-specific teacher groups will align current curriculum to their respective content curriculum framework.

Final Accomplishments

- The alignment and revision of the elementary ELA curriculum resulted in common unit assessments and a report card, both aligned to the CCSS.
- An Elementary Social Studies and Science Study Group was convened to have the elementary teachers develop an understanding of close reading strategies for informational text in the content areas of Social Studies and Science. This group met for 20hours this spring.
- HRMS content-area literacy initiative focused on close reading of text as emphasized in the ELA Common Core. All subject area teachers implemented and assessed close reading strategies by developing specific lessons with this emphasis in their existing content units.

Actions: (b.)

Content-specific teacher groups will align current curriculum to their respective content curriculum framework (Common Core Mathematics and ELA as well as Next Generation Science Standards) (obj. 2).

- Elementary teachers implemented the Common Core aligned elementary Mathematics curriculum units developed during SY2012-13.
- HRMS sixth grade Mathematics teachers implemented new Common Core aligned Mathematics units (CMP3).
- HRMS adopted a new middle school Common Core aligned Anthology text.
- The Danvers Writing Focus Group identified outcomes and products for the K-12 writing standards articulated in the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts And Literacy.
- DHS Algebra II teachers aligned their curriculum to Massachusetts Common Core and are developing *Curriculum Embedded Performance Assessments* (CEPAs) for each unit to assess student understanding of standards.
- The DHS English department examined the ELA curriculum through the lens of text complexity and developed plans to revise units.
- The DHS Science department incorporated the science practice of graphical analysis into scientific experiments.

Strategic Objective 3. Highly effective instruction using diverse and targeted strategies to address the learning needs of all students is in evidence in every classroom.

Action: Through Professional Learning Community (PLC) work in aligning to Common Core, teachers will reflect on and unpack the content and implied pedagogy in the standards.

Final Accomplishment

- All schools set student-learning goals providing a focus for teachers to unpack content standards and make meaning of the implied pedagogy. Teachers collected data on student outcomes in meeting these standards and determined needed adjustments.

Strategic Objective 4: A balanced system of assessments and related data is in use by all teachers to inform instructional decisions.

Action: Teachers will develop district-determined measures following the guidelines of the DESE

Final Accomplishments

- The five District-Determined Measures (DDMs) were piloted in the Danvers Public Schools this year. The five measures were in the areas of elementary ELA, elementary mathematics, middle school mathematics, high school writing to text, and K-12 Physical Education (non-traditional subject area).
- The majority of HRMS and DHS teachers adopted the creation of DDMs as their professional practice goals.
- As required by the Massachusetts DESE, a list of Danvers Public Schools' District Determined Measures was submitted to the department on May 30, 2014.

Strategic Objective 5: Every teacher and all students effectively use technology tools in teaching and learning.

Action: Technology use will be integrated as needed to support student access to the curriculum and the alignment to the Common Core and Next Generation standards.

Final Accomplishments

- All elementary classrooms with a Smartboard utilized the Investigations software to support visual models of mathematical content.
- DHS teachers used new devices (SmartBoards, laptop carts and document cameras) to deliver their curriculum to students.

THEME II - Family and Community Engagement

Goal

Productive partnerships are established and sustained with families and the community to support the district's mission.

Strategic Objective 1: A welcoming, inclusive environment where diversity is appreciated, valued and celebrated is evident in all schools.

Actions: Each principal discusses with his/her school-based team and makes improvements as needed. (physical signage, security, office greetings, welcome to new families, parent orientations for transition years - K, 5-6, 8-9, display of student work)

Final Accomplishments

- Family and community engagement is essential for starting the year in a positive and successful way. This fall, whether it was a Back to School Bash and Barbecue or Roller Palace Night or a Back to School Breakfast, all schools welcomed their students and families for the 2013-2014 school year.
- A common thread was among all seven schools during the months of September and October. Open House Evenings, as well as, Grade Five Induction nights invited parents to learn about their child's teachers, classroom expectations, and curriculum.
- Further, communication to families via Connect Ed or through newsletters were sent home in September, along with monthly calendars with various school events. In addition, reminders regarding monthly SEPAC meetings are sent via Connect Ed messages and agenda items for SEPAC are displayed at each school.
- Public displays of welcome signs, student artwork, and samples of student work have also increased among the schools.
- Finally, school rallies and school meetings provide a monthly opportunity to profile the school's commitment to diversity, bullying-prevention, and community service, as well as, showcasing a variety of talents within the school community.

Strategic Objective 2: Communication systems and strategies are skillfully used to establish trust and to cultivate parent and community understanding and support of the district's goals and practices.

Actions:

1. District and all school websites are updated and maintained
2. District works with DCAT to produce three shows - Fall - DHS project, Winter - Olweus Anti- Bullying and Spring - Health and Wellness
3. District Personnel shares the new strategic plan - vision, mission and goals at PAC's, coffee talks, School Councils, DEEP, DanversCARES, SEPAC, Title One and other community events

Final Accomplishments

There are three strategies for addressing the communication systems as a means to cultivating parent and community understanding and support of the district's goals and practices.

- First, the district and school websites will be updated. In September 2013, the Danvers High School website was launched. In February 2014, the new district

and middle school websites were launched. The five elementary schools' websites will launch September 2014.

- Next, the district has collaborated with DCAT to produce three videos, entitled - DHS virtual tour, Olweus Bullying Prevention and Healthy Schools, Healthy Kids. Also, DCAT volunteers are producing a monthly show, Danvers Educational Watch. All can be found on www.danverstv.org.
- Finally, the superintendent has presented at a parent meeting at each school. The meetings included PAC, School Council and Principal Coffee Talk.

THEME III - Human Resources Management and Development

Goal

A well-qualified, highly effective staff is employed by the district and provided meaningful professional growth opportunities that support them in meeting the needs of all students.

Strategic Objective: District hiring policies and practices reinforce continuing employment of a well-qualified, highly effective staff.

Actions: Administrators will use meeting time to discuss, question and clarify expectations for hiring, mentoring, contractual obligations (such as sick, comp. and vacation time) and read all employee contracts. Current practices and procedures around hiring, retention and unsatisfactory performance will be evaluated and a procedural protocol/manual for administrators will be developed. This is also a negotiation year for the teacher contract and time will be spent discussing the needs of the district.

Final Accomplishments

- During the 2013-2014 academic year, the committee met and reviewed some policy changes that were ultimately discussed by the policy subcommittee of the Danvers School Committee. Specifically, the hiring policy was changed to reflect the changing dynamics in the job market and the structures and procedures we use to hire. Our changes were approved formally at School Committee.
- The Personnel Handbook is in the process of being revised by the subcommittee. This will be the 3rd edition. The revised handbook will be ready for a first reading at the August School Committee meeting.

THEME IV - Management and Operations

Goal

District and school leaders effectively use all resources available to them to consistently and cohesively ensure a safe, efficient and effective learning environment.

Strategic Objective 1: The district's staffing and organizational structures complement strategic plan priorities.

Action: Develop needs assessment to identify additions to staff.

Final Accomplishments

- A projected 3-year organizational chart for technology has been created outlining current staffing for each level and suggesting future increases in staffing. Charts for elementary and student services were developed to ascertain current staffing and future needs during the budget process.

Strategic Objective 2: Communications systems between and among schools are effective.

- Actions:**
1. Post annotated versions of logic models on school and district websites.
 2. Create and implement district-wide calendar.
 3. Immediate incorporation of district vision and mission statements into all standard staff and school communications.

Final Accomplishments

- Through site-based schoolwork and in conjunction with the Data Leadership Meetings, Logic Models were finalized and posted in late May. School council goals will also be uploaded onto the new school websites as they are completed. The logic models and school council goals will be updated yearly for the history of the strategic plan.
- Both school-based and district-wide list serves are in use to provide efficient and timely communication to faculty/administrative teams and committees.
- Following the launch of the district website, the district-wide on-line calendar was established in February. Access was given to all Administrators and Secretaries during the spring.
- References to district Vision and Mission statements were found in Staff handbooks and Opening Day statements, in fall, 2013. Weekly faculty and staff newsletters also contain these references across the district. Following the lead of Danvers High School, the Middle School and elementary schools are including the DPS Mission Statement in daily morning announcements.

Strategic Objective 3: All school environments enhance student engagement and learning.

- Action:**
1. Coordinate physical supports as needed as shown in Themes 1 & 3.
 2. Implement Food Services production closer to service (batch cooking), along with upgraded quality products at DHS.
 3. Establish Food Services transition plan for Middle School.

Final Accomplishments

- Coordination continues with DPW to meet any needs that curriculum and faculty have including the installation of SmartBoards in elementary schools.
- Opened a self-serve salad bar at DHS for both students and faculty consisting of fresh vegetables, cheeses and a daily choice of chicken or fish to compliment it.
- Implemented separate serving stations at DHS for both hot and cold sandwiches

(individually prepared at the customer's request), entrees, soups, and nacho bar.

- Opened our DHS CAFE for students and faculty both before school (7:00 AM), and after school 4:00 PM, providing: fresh bagels and other baked goods, fruits, smoothies and both hot and cold drinks, all selected with "nutritional value" in mind.
- Upgraded the quality of food products being offered. Specifically, the cold cut selection was changed to Thin and Trim meat products to better serve the nutritional needs of the students and staff. This change has met with tremendous success. Additionally, batch cooking has been implemented for many menu options to help ensure freshness.
- "Try It Tuesdays"--The management of the DHS food services staff has decided to begin "Try It Tuesdays" targeting the "brown baggers" that don't buy their lunch. The goal is to increase sales and, at the same time, convince the students that the school lunch program has changed for the better.
- Implemented "Point of Sale" system where the student's and/or their parents replenish regularly their credit accounts, so that they may purchase food products without having to use cash.
- The Middle School Transition Plan for Food Services has completed to incorporate many of the ideas used as that of the high school. Over the spring, different ideas have been tested including a taco bar and deli bar.

Strategic Objective 4: Stability is provided to the budgeting and planning process and alternate sources of funding are expanded.

- Action:
1. Identify parameters of multi-year budget plan.
 2. Continue DEEP fundraising for technology district-wide.
 3. Promotion of funding sources for Thorpe Library project.

Final Accomplishments

- Multi year budget parameters and template was developed and reviewed with the Administrative team. Administrators submitted multi year budget information with their FY15 budget requests. The draft parameters and results were shared with stakeholders during the FY15 budget process for feedback.
- DEEP continues to fundraise and develop a plan for the remaining funds needed for technology district wide.
- The Thorpe Library continues to look at funding sources including the ongoing book sale over the fall and a fashion show this spring. The spring fashion show was very successful and additional fundraisers are being planned for next school year.

Strategic Objective 5: The district's technology resources adequately support student learning expectations and district requirements.

- Action:
1. Upgrade 2 computer labs at the Holten Richmond Middle School
 2. Upgrade all necessary software across the district to support student learning.
 3. Replace all outdated teacher computers in the 5 elementary schools.
 4. Complete the installation of a wireless environment in the 5 elementary schools.
 5. Bring all new labs, and relocated labs at DHS on-line.

Final Accomplishments

- Upgraded 2 computer labs at HRMS - completed by Sept 4, 2013 school opening.
- Upgrade software - Completed for FY2014 and ongoing as software providers upgrade programs.
- Replace teacher computers in 5 elementary schools - Completed by Nov.27th
- Complete installation of wireless environment in 5 elementary schools - Completed by Nov.27th
- Bring all new DHS labs on line - completed by Sept 4, 2013 school opening.

INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL GOALS

FINAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DANVERS HIGH SCHOOL

- Successful opening and completion of the new Danvers High School.
- Fall open house for the neighbors and families
- Dedication of the new building
- Implementation of a fledgling Senior Internship at DHS. Twenty-five students participated in the internship. Depending upon the number of Advanced Placement exams, self-selected internships lasted anywhere from 5-20 days. Our Internship Fair yielded a successful showing of work in elementary and preschools, at a radio station, a fire station, a geriatric center, a pediatrician, an engineering firm, a public relations company and a realtor, to name a few. We hope to continue this plan next year.
- Our 3rd year of the Massachusetts Math and Science Initiative came to a close. Students taking AP courses participated in 3 Saturday AP Preparation sessions per course. Many of our teachers were asked by MMSI to teach these courses. Attendance rates were high.
- DHS hosted a round of Dramafest - the first in 10 years.
- All of the departments have completed developing District Determined Measures as part of the new Educator Evaluation system.
- Curriculum work and revisions were ongoing throughout the year and now reflect the most recent editions of the Common Core.
- DHS students participated as part of a pilot in the new PARCC examination.

HOLTEN-RICHMOND MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Holten Richmond Middle School is proud of the professional work that has taken place so far this year. In the areas of curriculum and instruction (Goals 1,2,3) HRMS staff has:

- Shared ELA, Math and Science MCAS data and engaged in Data Driven Dialogue
- Crafted and finalized learning goals in department based groups & created action plans to execute the work.
- Observed “close reading” lessons and designed lessons by grade level and across all curriculum areas including exploratory courses.
- Used protocols to refine recently executed “close reading” lessons.
- Looked at student work to gauge progress toward student learning goals and help to guide decisions about adjusting practice.
- Shared “close reading” practices school-wide using the “Plant the Seed” protocol. This tool for a structured discussion about best disciplinary literacy practices allowed for teachers to begin thinking about how this work moves forward next year.
- Took feedback from staff on pilots of Mathematics Intervention course and supported social studies and science courses in Grade 8.
- Continued use of common planning time to score and analyze common assessments.
- Continued implementation of Word Generation Program across all curriculum areas.
- Literacy Leadership Team demonstrated and modeled effective subject based literacy strategies.
- Literacy Leadership Team helped plan professional development that
- matched our literacy vision, using data to drive decisions.

GREAT OAK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Great Oak has connected all professional learning time to the achievement of our School Improvement and Student Learning Goals. Great Oak has targeted vocabulary as its primary focus for instruction and support for student growth in Language Arts.

As a faculty, the concepts and strategies of the Representation principle of Universal Design for Learning have been studied and incorporated into each team’s Student Learning and Professional Goals. As a result, multiple forms of representation of vocabulary are evident throughout the school, and UDL is integrated into lesson planning at each grade level.

Special Education faculty is increasingly co-teaching and supporting students within the classroom. Monthly Student Study Teams and weekly Special Education Status meetings provide an opportunity to review the RTI process and determine appropriate interventions.

Throughout the year, communications home to families have emphasized Literacy strategies being taught at each grade level. Newsletters, teacher websites and a series of Literacy Coffee Talks (January through April) all shared strategies that families can use at home to support their children's reading. This year's W.O.R.M. Week features Reading and Science as its theme, and the school is holding its first Science Fair June 5th.

A highlight of the year was Great Oak's hosting of the district's Instructional Rounds team in mid-April. Thirty-four teachers, K-12, observed eighteen classrooms, focusing on evidence and implementation of our vocabulary instruction and UDL strategies. Great Oak appreciates the support of their families, the district and the community in their efforts to best support students this year.

HIGHLANDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Goal #1

Highlands School faculty will develop an understanding of the principles of Universal Design for Learning and will apply those principles to the design and implementation of lessons.

Faculty at Highlands has begun the process of understanding and implementing the Principle of Representation in the design and implementation of lessons. With the support of our K-12 Curriculum Director, Mary Wermers, Elementary Curriculum Director, Julie Posternack, and Principal, the staff has been provided an overview of UDL, been given a close-up look at how the first principle impacts lesson design, and has begun to explore current lessons. Highlands staff are now reviewing math lessons with a goal of embedding Representation into lessons. Student work will be analyzed and presented at common planning meetings and at future Professional Learning Community meetings. Additionally, plans are underway to have Highlands' staff meet with middle school teachers who have working experience with UDL. Time within the district professional development schedule (i.e. Early Release Days and Data Team meetings) will be allocated for further professional dialogue about UDL.

As we near year's end and revisit the UDL goal, accomplishments include:

- Successful implementation of Highlands Professional Development Plan focused on UDL principles.
- Professional collaboration with HRMS math teachers
- Identification of potential barriers to effective student learning.
- Facilitation of one PLC Meeting by Maureen Carroll, Special Education teacher.
- Lesson Planning that incorporates Principle of Representation with introduction of EDC Strategy Cards.

Goal #2

Highlands School Faculty will be provided with increased opportunities for Peer Observation.

- Scheduled to begin Spring 2014. In order to effectively implement Peer Observation at Highlands, several prerequisites had been identified to include: defining a Student Learning Problem, completing Student Learning Goals and Professional Practice Goals, and an introduction to UDL with application to lesson planning and instruction.

- Goal #2 will be moved to Winter 2014 – the criteria that had been established for this goal will apply to the new school year.

Goal #3

Highlands School will continue to focus on building a school culture that involves administration, faculty, staff, students, and families in partnerships dedicated to continuous learning and growth.

- Our first Parent/Child Evening of Learning was a Literacy Event held in October for our Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade families. Reading teachers, Sheila Bell and Rose Day, collaborated with Title 1 tutor, Marie Archung and classroom teachers to plan an evening dedicated to Early Literacy Development. With a goal of providing experiences in numerous learning activities that support our youngest learners and that could be practiced at home, this evening was a complete success with more than 60 students in attendance.

- After-School Programming began in early October and is now in its second six-week session to conclude on February 13. At that time, Highlands Kids' Club will commence following February vacation and continue for six weeks. In partnership with Highlands' parents, we continue to explore additional programs to offer students.

- DCAT After-School Programming was held February 2014. Students produced a Welcome to Highlands Video that will be provided to new families.

- A fall 2014 Parent Math Workshop will be held for families of students in third, fourth, and fifth grades. Feedback that followed the Literacy Evening indicated that many Highlands' families would attend.

RIVERSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

On April 29th, Riverside's Council met to review the K12 Insight Yearly Survey from Parents. Overall feedback was positive. Riverside continues to be a welcoming and inviting school where communication between families and staff is highly valued. Areas around special education and technology continue to have a need for improvement.

School Advisory Council reviewed the 2013-2014 School Improvement Plan.

Goal 1 focused on understanding the principles of Universal Design of Learning. During a spring administrative meeting, Julie Posternack, Elementary Curriculum Director, introduced teachers to the principles of UDL and how these principles can be implemented to daily lessons. Riverside's faculty and support staff continued to work on the school's learning goal during Professional Learning Community times, Early Release, and Administrative Meetings. These conversations also supported the principles of UDL. As a result of this time and the strategies implemented, the following outcomes are anticipated: *Students will learn critical thinking strategies, students will move towards increased independence when solving multistep problems and answering text-dependent questions in ELA, and students will understand feedback and will be able to apply it to subsequent tasks.* Assessments in both ELA and Math, CEPA testing, anecdotal observations, unit tests, formal and informal assessments, were among the various resources used to drive instruction and gather data to support the school's learning goal of critical thinking.

Goal 2 concentrated around providing appropriate enrichment activities to foster higher level of thinking for all students. Programs such as Book Club for fifth graders, Destination Imagination for students in grades kindergarten thru fifth grade, and math enrichment after school program proved to be successful for students. Furthermore, Riverside collaborated with DCAT and was able to offer an after school program for students in grades three thru four to learn about videography, how to make movies, and how to use the camera.

Goal 3 concentrated on providing opportunities for students in making healthy choices in peer interactions and physical activities. In addition to Olweus Anti-Bullying meetings and Open Circle curriculum, Riverside partnered with DanversCARES and piloted the iChoose Campaign. Students were recognized for making positive choices, such as accepting others and fostering friendships. In addition, morning and after school enrichment programs such as, Running Club and Zumba continued for students in Grades K-5. Currently, there are 60 participants in Zumba, and 50 in Running Club. Running Club has also partnered up with the Mighty Milers Club where students are encouraged to reach a certain amount of miles to qualify for awards and medals. Each student has set a goal to run at least 26.2 miles.

The School Advisory Council has begun the process of writing the 2014-2015 School Improvement Plan.

The 2013-2014 school year was a successful year for Riverside. Students, families, and staff continue to focus on working together to foster a positive learning.

SMITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Goal 1: Smith School will implement a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework in Kindergarten through fifth grade to enhance student achievement in ELA.

Expanding RTI to include grades 4 and 5 this year has led to continued growth and a more global focus on data and student growth. Schedules that were revised last year were kept in

place in order to emphasize uninterrupted literacy blocks, common planning time and flexible groupings. The following specific steps have been implemented in this process:

- Approximately 10% of Smith students were given additional reading intervention in grades K-5.
- 22% of those students were released, no longer needing intervention.
- Less than 1% of those students were referred for special education services.
- Student progress and needs are monitored closely at all grade levels and reviewed with staff members including the elementary director of curriculum, RTI coordinator and literacy coach.
- Student study team process has become more systematic and driven by real-time data.
- Ongoing professional development around literacy has fostered links across grade levels in regards to instructional strategies and academic language, leading to deeper collaboration.
- Specialists have increased participation in parent meetings.
- New methods and materials have been implemented and evaluated.
- Student progress visible/tangible to parents and teams.
- New team members have been identified to provide wider range of instruction/practice for students.

Goal 2: To develop an understanding of the principles of Universal Design for Learning and to apply those principles to the design and implementation of lessons.

Smith School professional development, purposefully connected to the district's ongoing literacy and math work, has been designed to help teachers develop a greater understanding of the diversity of learners in the classroom, and how the principles of UDL can provide a framework for reaching all students. The following specific steps have been implemented in this process:

- Smith School teachers and instructional aides studied the basics of Bernice McCarthy's 4MAT system, in order to develop a greater understanding of their own learning style as well as the diverse learners in the classroom.
- Teachers studied the principles of UDL and made changes to units of study. Examples include:
 - use of manipulatives in story writing as well as math
 - multi-modal presentations and assessments, students able to express knowledge in variety of formats.
 - integrated lessons/presentations: art, poetry, music, movement provide deep, meaningful ways for students to show what they know.
- Increased use of thematic lessons and units, teaching in a theme based way, using many modes of instruction to completely cover a topic, including integration across curricular areas. ex: reading fiction and nonfiction on pilots and airplanes...integrated activities, history objectives and creating a flying machine in art; animal habitats study-involved close reading of texts, song, poetry, diorama presentations.

- Social/emotional learning ex: Olweus school-wide project culminating in a school-wide “We Are” statement developed from the classroom statements and voted on by the entire school: “Smith School is a respectful, hardworking and mindful community of learners.” Mindfulness in the classroom, grades 4 and 1; Zones of Regulation used by all.

Goal 3: Smith School will develop reliable resources to effectively communicate celebrations, curriculum, vision and mission.

In reviewing the 2013 Perspective on Schools survey and the district’s strategic plan, the Smith School Council decided increased communication with parents and stakeholders was an area in which Smith School could improve. Smith School already has in place many family oriented traditions, and has worked to complement these with increased transparency and information sharing this year. The following specific steps have been implemented in this process:

- Teacher/principal websites. Parents and students report using these websites.
- Ivan G. Smith Facebook page; weekly Items of Interest
- List of dates months ahead of time per parent requests
- Increased use of Connect Ed
- Mural project-parent painting day/teacher painting day
- DPS mission statement read every morning
- Improved Homework Club
- Extra help sessions as needed
- Classroom flyers with events, curriculum and behavior updates
- Increased communication with DCAT-major events taped for families
- Solidified expectation of phone calls to parent regarding SST process or report card issues

THORPE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Grade level teams, Kindergarten through grade five, adopted strategies from the *Representation Guidelines*, a major part of the *Universal Design for Learning Principles*, and integrated them into Thorpe’s 2013/2014 Action Plan Logic Model. One specific example was the development and implementation of Open Response Rubrics (4 points) to score common assessments (K-5) for trimesters one, two and three. The trimester 3 results indicated a school-wide improvement (over 10%) in student’s critical thinking skills when responding to Open Response/Text Dependent questions in ELA common assessments.

A major fundraiser to replace Thorpe’s existing library and create a 21st century Learning Commons, was held in February. The fashion show, *Lights, Cameras, Learning Commons*, raised over six thousand dollars, and close to ninety students participated. More than 500 family members and friends attended the event, held in the DHS Auditorium, and the majority of Thorpe’s staff was involved in some phase of the production. Preliminary plans to construct the space have been approved by the town’s Department of Public Works, with Phase One being implemented during the summer of 2014. Phase One plans include

creating additional space in the existing library by removing permanent shelving and replacing it with portable furniture. As well as the purchase and installation of advanced technology, i.e., E-Reader cart, Smart Board, and additional computers for students to conduct research, collaborate on group projects and presentations.

Over sixty Thorpe families attended Thorpe's Literacy Night held on March 6, 2014. Parents were invited to attend workshops prepared by Thorpe's Reading Teacher, Rebecca Flaherty on *Just Right Books*, and the district's Elementary Librarian, Karen Sekiguchi, *What is a Learning Commons*. During the presentations children enjoyed a cultural enrichment provided by Thorpe's PAC, related to literacy.

The students and staff from NECC, New England Center for Children, successfully integrated into the Thorpe community. During the year, NECC teachers attended Thorpe Administrative Meetings to provide staff with information about autism and their program. Four out of the five students in NECC were able to attend specialist's classes on a regular basis, and one student was able to participate in a regular education classroom for portions of every day.

The construction of the outdoor classroom in one of Thorpe's courtyards was completed in April. Students from classrooms throughout the school are have already enjoyed this beautiful space to hear and read stories. This project was inspired to honor the memory of Eileen McGuirk, a former Thorpe employee, who loved children and reading. Various fundraising events were held during the 2012/2013 school year to raise money for this special memorial, which will benefit the students of Thorpe for many years in the future.