



LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

REBECCA E. MCFALL, ED.D.
SUPERINTENDENT

To: School Committee
From: Rebecca McFall
Re: Mid-Year Superintendent's Annual Plan 2013 – 2014, Progress Update
Date: January 2, 2014

Superintendent's Annual Plan for Evaluation

The goals identified for the Draft Superintendent's Annual Plan 2013 - 2014 for evaluation are aligned with the recommendations set forth in the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation, Part VI: Implementation Guide for Superintendent Evaluation.

Goal 1: Effective Coaching of Principals and Central Office Administrators Related to Educator Evaluation (District Improvement)

The Superintendent will develop, amongst evaluators, a common understanding of the "Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice" and set and model high expectations for the quality of content, student effort, and student work district-wide and support administrators to uphold these expectations consistently. The Superintendent will ensure that evaluators look for and identify a variety of teaching strategies and practices that are effective in meeting the needs of the full range of learners in our classrooms. (Indicator I – B)

Strategic Objective

Educator Growth: Build educator expertise and a shared vision of effective teaching through the new educator evaluation system, professional collaboration, and professional development.

Key Actions

1. Work directly with evaluators through Administrative Council and individual coaching to develop a shared vision of teaching and learning.
2. Regularly analyze the level of student engagement and learning expectations by analyzing the work students are doing during observations against the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.
3. Develop evaluator skill in conducting observations of teaching, coaching educators, and providing meaningful feedback.
4. Calibrate the practice of evaluators to ensure that the evaluation of educator practice is carried out consistently across the district.

Benchmarks

1. Administrative Council meetings focus on building evaluator capacity and skill as evidenced by Administrative Council agendas.



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2. Evaluator feedback demonstrates focus on high-level learning and the instructional strategies that result in high-level learning.
3. Performance level ratings of lessons observed by teams of evaluators demonstrate consistent understanding of effective teaching practices.

January Progress Update:

As of the end of December, 2013 we have had eight Administrative Council meetings. All eight meetings had agenda items related to educator evaluation and this trend will continue. Implementing the evaluation system is a major focus of our work this year and requires a large amount of administrator time and effort to ensure that we are developing a meaningful, purposeful, and consistent process.

In order to meet Goal 1: **Effective Coaching of Principals and Central Office Administrators Related to Educator Evaluation**, we have spent time in Administrative Council viewing video lessons together and discussing our observations related to the "5 Key Questions for Learning" and the "Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice"- Rubrics. The goal of this work has been to develop our common understanding of what effective instruction looks like that meets our definition of authentic, high-level, and engaging learning experiences for students. In addition, we have focused on consistent approaches to written feedback following an observation. Administrators have worked together to craft written feedback and also to review and critique each other's written feedback. Administrative Council meeting agendas have been provided to the School Committee as documentation of this work.

During bi-weekly meetings between the superintendent and principals, joint observations of Lincoln Public School classrooms are carried out. Following the observation, the superintendent and principal discuss what they observed. The principal identifies at least one piece of feedback he or she will share with the teacher to reinforce the high quality teaching and learning observed and at least one piece of feedback that will move the teacher forward in their practice. A focus of this discussion is on ensuring that our feedback is focused on high-level cognitive demand, either reinforcing it when observed or providing feedback that helps a teacher consider how to raise the level of cognitive demand. On several occasions, the superintendent has reviewed the written feedback the principal provided to the teacher and provided the principal with written feedback on his or her feedback. Samples can be provided on request.

During the Administrator Summer Retreat, principals shared student work samples for group analysis related to cognitive demand using Bloom's Taxonomy. We will continue this work in Administrative Council on January 14th when we look at another lesson plan provided by one of our teachers and analyze the lesson and the student work samples for the level of cognitive demand. The work in Administrative Council combined with supervisory meetings and joint observations, is raising the level of awareness and focus on the level of cognitive demand in our classrooms. As the administrative team feels confident that they have a consistent vision of appropriate high-level cognitive demand, I anticipate that there will be more focused work with faculty to develop their understanding and vision of appropriate, high-level cognitive



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demand and the instructional practices required to provide these learning opportunities for students.

The principals with the director of technology and the superintendent spent an afternoon observing classrooms together and discussing our observations and possible feedback. There was a great deal of valuable discussion. As a result, in our next session together, we will observe only one classroom and delve deeply into the process of observation, analysis, and feedback. Mary Sterling and Stephanie Powers are also carrying out joint observations with administrators.

In the new evaluation system, performance ratings are not given for every observation. Performance ratings are given in formative and summative evaluations. As we move into this part of the evaluation process, more attention will be paid to our calibration of performance ratings.

Goal 2: Pilot DESE Student Feedback Surveys (District Improvement)

Work with DESE as a pilot district to develop and implement student feedback surveys. (Indicator I-B, IV-A)

Strategic Objective

Curriculum and Instruction: Refine Curriculum and Instruction to strengthen the engagement and achievement of all students.

Key Actions

1. Participate in the development and implementation process to pilot DESE model student feedback surveys.
2. Analyze the results provided by the surveys to determine district/school strengths and needs and develop a baseline of data related to student engagement.

Benchmarks

1. Student feedback surveys are developed and implemented twice during the 2013 – 2014 school year.
2. Feedback is provided to the DESE on the survey items.
3. Results of our student surveys are analyzed and a baseline of data is established for the purposes of assessing district change in the future.

January Progress Update:

The superintendent participated in DESE workshops to provide input and feedback on Student Feedback survey development on October 7th and 9th, 2013. These workshops consisted of three hour evening sessions of working in groups to review draft survey questions and provide feedback related to their relevance to the evaluation standards and indicators, the developmental appropriateness for the intended grade level, and the likelihood that the students would be able to provide valid information. Following these workshops, the revised questions were sent out for additional review and feedback. The superintendent with assistance from the



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assistant superintendent and Lincoln School 5-8 principal provided additional written feedback to the survey development team. As a result, the DESE survey development team requested that the superintendent provide additional feedback on questions originally designated for grades 9-12. The superintendent provided the requested feedback.

The first administration of the pilot survey will take place from February 3rd - February 14th. The second administration of the pilot survey will take place from March 31st - April 11th. We will be participating in a conference call in January to learn more about the administration of the survey.

Goal 3: Carry Out the District Strategic Plan (Professional Practice)

Lead the district in aligning goals and practices with the District Strategic Plan in order to focus district resources on identified actions that we believe will positively impact student learning. (Indicator IV-E)

Key Actions

1. Communicate the District Strategic Plan to all stakeholders.
2. Ensure that all educators, including the superintendent, develop professional practice and student learning goals aligned with the Strategic Objectives and Strategic Priorities.
3. Provide resources and support to the administrative team to carry out the action steps to achieve the Strategic Objectives.
4. Assess progress towards achieving the Strategic Objectives.

Benchmarks

1. The Strategic Plan is presented to the faculty at the Opening Day Community Meeting, at faculty meetings, and is used during evaluation professional development sessions for goal setting.
2. All educator evaluation goals are related to the School Improvement Plan and District Strategic Plan.
3. School Improvement Plan goals are aligned with the Strategic Plan.
4. Reports of progress towards meeting the Strategic Objectives will be provided to the School Committee.

January Progress Update:

In the spring of 2013 the School Committee and Administrative Team developed the District Strategic Plan for 2013 – 2015. During the Summer Administrative Retreat, the Administrative Team began to develop Strategic Priority Maps for each Strategic Priority. These maps provide details regarding the work to be carried out, the timeline, and the resources required. The process of developing the District Strategic Plan and the Strategic Priority Maps led to a high level of ownership amongst the Administrative Team. In turn, the School Improvement Plans are aligned to the District Strategic Plan and all educator evaluation goals are also aligned with the District Strategic Priorities. As a result, the district is more effectively focusing its efforts and resources towards the priorities identified as having the greatest potential impact on student learning.



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The District Strategic Plan represents a cultural shift for the district. The school community as a whole has fully embraced this shift and as a result, there is a high level of coherence in the work being done across the district.

When we submitted our Strategic Priority Maps to the School Committee in October, we indicated that we would provide the Strategic Priority Map at a later date for the following priority: Continue to refine our implementation of Goal Focused Intervention Plans (GFIPs) At this time, as indicated in our Mid-Year Strategic Plan Report, we have determined that we do not have the capacity to carry out additional work on this priority this school year. School based administrators and curriculum leaders continue to refine the work being done related to GFIPs, however, a more comprehensive review and possible refinements are being put on hold. All other Strategic Priorities are On-Target as outlined in the Strategic Priority Maps.

Goal 4: Data Collection and Analysis (Student Growth)

Determine the primary data collection and analysis needs of the district. Monitor the progress of students identified as “high needs” and the progress of our students in the METCO program and monitor student growth using the District Determined Measures being piloted. (Indicator I - E)

Strategic Objectives

Assessment and Data: Use assessment and data to effectively promote and monitor student growth

Responding to Student Needs: Respond Skillfully to the academic, social emotional, and physical needs of all students

Key Actions

1. Work with the Assistant Superintendent and the entire Administrative Team to determine the primary data collection and analysis needs of the district.
2. Review and evaluate data management systems and other tools that allow faculty and administrators to utilize data to inform instruction and programmatic decisions.
3. Assess the effectiveness of our practices based on student growth.

Benchmarks

1. Development of district plan for piloting District-Determined Measures.
2. Pilot the implementation of the District-Determined Measures.
3. Analyze the results of the District-Determined Measures with additional focus on our “high needs” students and our students in the METCO program.
4. Identify Student Growth goals for the 2014-2015 school year

January Progress Update:

Led by the Assistant Superintendent, a plan for piloting District-Determined Measures was developed. Working with curriculum leaders and faculty groups,



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discussions were carried out in the fall regarding appropriate assessments and measures to be used as our student growth measures at each grade level and in each discipline. The plan submitted to the DESE exceeded the minimum requirements in anticipation of full implementation in the coming school years. The plan submitted to DESE can be provided upon request. Collection of baseline data is in progress. Depending on the measures used, data will be available in the spring or fall to assess the usefulness of the measures as well as the growth of our students. A School Committee Report on District Determined Measures is currently scheduled for May 8, 2014.

In concert with our development of the District Determined Measures, a District Data Systems Team has been established. This team is determining the high priority questions that our data should help us answer and is working to review and assess available tools to meet these needs. To date, work has been done with administrators, faculty, and curriculum leaders to review and assess possible on-line mathematics tools to be piloted. At this time, no final decisions have been made regarding piloting.



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To: School Committee
From: Rebecca McFall
RE: Mid-Year Progress Update on Priority Elements
Date: January 2, 2014

Identified Superintendent Performance Elements agreed upon by Superintendent McFall and the Lincoln School Committee:

Standard I: Instructional Leadership

The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes powerful teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

I-A-2 Lesson Development Support

Supports administrators to learn and establish effective strategies for ensuring that educators develop well-structured lessons with challenging, measurable objectives and appropriate student engagement strategies, pacing, sequence, activities, materials, technologies, and grouping.

We continue to use our "5 Key Questions for Learning" to focus our work on teaching and learning. These questions focus on specific, measurable objectives; authentic learning experiences for students that engage them in purposeful learning; strategies that provide opportunities for students to meaningfully engage with each other and the teacher; differentiated experiences; and assessment of learning that meets the objectives. The administrative team's focus on observing lessons together and discussing the teaching and learning we see has provided many opportunities for conversation about the areas outlined in this element. This will continue to be an area of focus for the administrative team. I believe that our vision of effective teaching and learning is in development and will continue to solidify over this school year and the next. When administrators feel more confident in their instructional knowledge and ability to assess instruction, there will be more consistency of coaching faculty and evaluation.

The administrative team is also focusing on developing a shared understanding of what constitutes high-level cognitive demand. This work is directly tied to instruction. Using Bloom's Taxonomy to guide our work, we are looking at lesson plans and student work together to discuss the level of cognitive demand required as well as how the lesson plan or assessment could be changed to increase cognitive demand. I believe that this is the most important work we can do to improve teaching and learning in our schools.

We are one of nine districts who volunteered to pilot the DESE Student Feedback Survey this school year. We have provided input in order to ensure that there are questions that help us gauge student perception of challenge and cognitive demand, amongst other things, in our classrooms. I am interested in reviewing the results of these surveys.



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I-B-2 Quality of Effort and Work

Sets and models high expectations for the quality of content, student effort, and student work, district-wide and supports administrators to uphold these expectations consistently.

See above. In my regular bi-weekly meetings with principals we observe classrooms together. Our focus in discussion is always on the quality of content, the level of cognitive demand, and the level of student engagement and ownership of learning taking place. We discuss the feedback that should be given to the teacher to reinforce work being done or to coach the teacher to increase the level of cognitive demand, engagement, and learning expectations.

I-D-1 Educator Goals

Supports administrators and administrator teams to develop and attain meaningful, actionable, and measurable professional practice, student learning, and where appropriate, district/school improvement goals.

All administrators have developed meaningful, actionable professional practice, student learning and district or school improvement goals. The goals of every administrator and faculty member are aligned to the District Strategic Plan. The superintendent checks in with principals and central office administrators during bi-weekly meetings regarding their progress on their goals. Assessment of progress towards meeting goals will be carried out at the mid-cycle formative assessment in February.

I-E-2 School and District Goals

Uses data to accurately assess school and district strengths and areas for improvement to inform the creation of focused, measurable district goals. Provides support to principals in their efforts to create focused, measurable school goals.

The district is in a phase of redevelopment regarding assessments that can provide us with the data needed to inform our practice and assess our effectiveness. The development of District Determined Measures and the establishment of the District Data Systems Team to identify tools are helping to inform where we are and where we need to go. It has proven challenging to find assessments and instructional tools that effectively and efficiently provide support to students, assess progress, and provide a system of data management. Our work in this area will be on-going.

Standard II: Management and Operations

Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.

II-E-1 Fiscal Systems

Develops a budget that supports the district's vision, mission, and goals. Allocates and manages expenditures consistent with district/school-level goals and available resources.

The development of the District Strategic Plan has provided the Administrative Team with much greater focus on the priorities of the district. In turn, the Strategic Plan has created focus for the budget in ensuring that our resources are being used to meet our district priorities. We have developed the FY15 budget in a fiscally responsible manner taking enrollment and staffing into account and working to develop improvement



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initiatives within the budget guideline that will move the district forward in achieving the goals set forth in the District Strategic Plan.

To date, we are managing the FY14 budget to meet the district needs without over expending in any area of the budget. We have made adjustments to the FY14 budget allocations in order to provide the required funds for two legal settlements this fall. This has required making reductions to multiple budget areas.

Standard III: Family and Community Engagement

Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school and district.

III-B-2 Family Collaboration

Sets clear expectations for and supports administrators to regularly engage families in supporting learning at school and home, including appropriate adaptation for students with disabilities or limited English proficiency.

The principals keep me abreast of issues in their buildings requiring communication to the parent community as a whole. We frequently discuss the need for communication and the contents of such communications. In addition, there are often individual families that meet with the principal, coordinators, and central office administrators, or me to discuss their child's needs and their experiences. I frequently follow up with administrators and/or parents to ensure that communication is being carried out proactively. The administrators and I consult on specific actions to be taken to engage families in conversation regarding the provision of accommodations or programmatic changes for their child. I have met with approximately 6 families this fall to discuss their experiences in our schools. In each instance, I have followed up with the principal to discuss communication and next steps.

I work closely with the Assistant Superintendent to understand our ELL program and the students we serve. This year, we have seen an influx of ELL students that has required an increase in ELL staffing. In addition, the number of new comers with little English proficiency has required adjustments to the service delivery model. We continue to make adjustments to the services provided and assess how students are doing.

I receive bi-weekly updates from the Administrator for Student Services on students in Out of District placements or who may require placement. We discuss the process and how families are involved and engaged in the discussions and decisions.

I have been working with principals about their presence as the instructional leader of their school and ways to communicate to families about their instructional vision and the work being carried out with faculty. We will continue to explore ways to communicate with families about the vision of the district and the work that is taking place in schools to achieve our vision.



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Standard IV: Professional Culture

Promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

IV-A-1 Commitment to High Standards

Fosters a shared commitment to high standards of teaching and learning, for all administrators, with high expectations for achievement for all.

See all of the above.

We continue to monitor the growth and progress of our students considered "high needs" as well as monitoring possible achievement gaps based on race. When checking in on administrator's progress towards meeting student learning goals, results are always looked at with regard to student demographics and how our "high needs" students are doing. A clear expectation has been set for ensuring that all students receive the support and challenge they need to grow as learners.

IV-D1 Continuous Learning of Staff

Leads all administrators and teams to reflect on the effectiveness of interactions with faculty and students. Ensures that administrators use data, research, and best practices to adapt practice to achieve improved results.

Supervisory conversations with principals and central office administrators focus on the professional practice, student learning, and school or district improvement goals established in their educator evaluation plans. As we discuss their progress, we review the data collected and discuss appropriate next steps for their work. If necessary, adjustments to their work are discussed and agreed upon. During this process, I share relevant research articles with administrators and they share resources with me as well. Often a large part of these conversations revolve around the administrators interactions with faculty who are carrying out the work and/or collecting the data.

IV-E-1 Shared Vision Development

At all grade levels, continuously engages administrators, staff, students, families, and community members in developing a vision focused on student preparation for college and career readiness, civic engagement, and community contributions.

The district work related to our "high needs" students, including: Goal Focused Interventions (GFIPs), student learning goals, the focus on the "5 Key Questions for Learning", cognitive demand, and student engagement is all aimed at ensuring each of our students is prepared for college and career as well as civic engagement and community contributions. Each of our schools provides opportunities for students to become involved within their community. These opportunities range from food drives and fundraisers to fun runs, volunteer opportunities, and the writing of a warrant for Town Meeting. As we continue to develop our vision for student engagement and ownership of learning, I anticipate more "authentic" opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate their learning.

IV-F-3 Consensus Building

Builds consensus within the school district community around critical school decisions, employing a variety of strategies.

Examples of my work related to consensus building can be found through the following processes:



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LTA Collective Bargaining Agreement Negotiations – Development and discussion of proposals
School Year Calendar Development – focus groups, survey, development of draft calendars
Class Size – presentation of data, parent coffee
Evaluation – On-going supervisory conversations
Administrative Council Meetings and Central Office Administrator Meetings – Decision are made regularly in a variety of ways i.e. collect input but decision made by Superintendent, consensus, majority, etc.



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To: School Committee
From: Rebecca McFall
Re: Additional Evidence Towards Superintendent Standards
Date: January 2, 2014

A progress update towards meeting proficiency related to identified priority elements is provided in a separate document. This memo serves to provide additional information regarding work done to demonstrate proficiency related to other elements of the Superintendent Rubric.

Standard I: Instructional Leadership

This fall, in addition to my bi-weekly meetings and joint observations with principals, I have made unannounced 2-hour visits to two schools. During these visits, I observe the overall functioning of the school i.e. transitions in hallways, lunch operations, students outside of class during instructional time, etc. I visit a number of classrooms across grade levels for short periods of observation. If possible, I shadow the principal for a period of time. In the two visits this fall, I was unable to shadow the principals. Following my observations, I provided the principals with a summary of my observations accompanied by discussion.

Standard II: Management and Operations

I have established the District Safety and Security Advisory Committee made up of school administrators, faculty, school committee, police department, fire department, HAFB, and parent representation. This committee will review our current practices and make recommendations for improvement.

I have planned and developed the search process and search committee for the Assistant Superintendent opening. I have personally reached out to members of the education community that I would like to see apply and have received favorable responses. Formal advertisement of this position as well as the Coordinator for Student Services on the Hanscom campus will be in the Globe and on-line as of January 5, 2014.

Negotiation of LTA Collective Bargaining Agreement is in progress.

Standard III: Family and Community Engagement

Families are included on the distribution of the Superintendent's Bulletin to assist with keeping families aware of the current focus and happenings in the district and school.

Parents regularly attend the Superintendent Office Hours held for 2 hours every other week. (7 parent visits this fall)

I regularly meet with parents who request meetings to discuss their experiences in the schools and their child's experiences. These conversations are followed by conversations with principals and additional follow up with families. (at least 6 meetings this fall)

Standard IV: Professional Culture

Agendas for Administrative Council meetings provided
July presentation at MASS conference on administrator evaluation
November presentation at New Superintendent Induction Program on Strategic Plan development