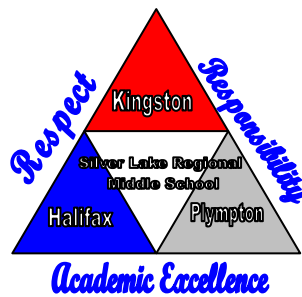


Silver Lake Regional Middle School



School Improvement Plan 2008 - 2009

*Mr. Dennis A. Azevedo
Principal, SLRMS*

Silver Lake Regional Middle School Council 2007-2008

Dennis A. Azevedo, Principal

Kathy Benash, Teacher

Laura Fiore, Parent

Sue Hayes, Parent

Robin Kincaid, Parent

Liz MacFarlane, Teacher

James Lormer, Parent

Lisa Reilly, Parent

Lynda Saviano, Parent

Michelle Smith, Parent

Sue O'Leary, Community Member

I. Preamble

In accordance with Section 53 of Chapter 71 of the Acts of 1993, the Silver Lake Regional Middle School Council was established on October 14, 1993. The current 8 member Council consists of the principal (as mandated), the assistant principal, two teachers from the school selected through staff nominations, 4 parents of students attending the school (volunteers elected by the Parent Teachers Organization and self-volunteers) to represent each of the three towns of Kingston, Halifax, and Plympton. One parent on the Council represents the Title One interests.

By law, the basic duties of this Council are to assist the principal in developing a Parent Survey, educational goals for the school, identifying the educational needs of the students, reviewing the annual budget and formulating a School Improvement Plan. Our Council also reviews the *Student Handbook* on an annual basis.

During the 2007-2008 school year, the Council held eight regular meetings, all in compliance with and in the spirit of the Open Meeting Law (Chapter 30A, Section 11A 1/2). In this, the 13th year of the Council's existence, we reviewed the goals set forth in last year's School Improvement Plan and spent the majority of our time in discussions related to formulating a plan to improve math MCAS performance, development of a Parent Survey, assisting and making recommendations on budget, schedule, and school program, finalizing the contents for a *Parent and Student Resource Guide* for the new Silver Lake Middle School, changes to the *Student Handbook*, and creating the *School Improvement Plan for 2008-2009*.

II. State and Union #31 & Silver Lake Regional School District Goals

Massachusetts Department of Education Mission Statement:

"To improve the quality of the public education system so that students are adequately prepared for higher education, rewarding employment, continued education, and responsible citizenship.

We carry out our mission in partnership with Massachusetts school districts and other organizations that provide educational programs and services. Students, parents, teachers and other educators, elected officials, business and community leaders, and the public all are stakeholders in the work of the Department to improve schools and raise student achievement."

Union #31/Silver Lake Regional School District Mission Statement:

"Union #31 and Silver Lake Regional School District over time serve the same population of students. To that end a plan for excellence includes articulation across grades and among schools defining our union/region as a school system in practice. Communication, collaboration and cooperation underlie the effective delivery of the curriculum. While respecting the characteristics of each individual community in the tritown area that are reflected in the elementary schools, we strive to have equity among all students who meet at the region. We share common performance goals, educator quality, learning environments and accountability to each town and the education community at large."

DISTRICT GOALS

Goal #1: Teaching and Learning

To provide all students with a comprehensive, high quality education to ensure students' performance at the proficient or advanced levels in all core subjects, starting with proficiency in Mathematics and English Language Arts by 2013-2014.

Goal #2: Organizational Development

To develop and support a school and community partnership and organizational structure that uses data to drive decision-making.

Goal #3: Finance and Facilities

To provide financial support and safe and healthy learning environments for teaching and learning.

III. School Vision and Mission Statements

The Philosophy and Vision of Silver Lake Regional Middle School is taken directly from Turning Points 2000:

To ensure the success of each individual child.

The **Mission Statement** of Silver Lake Regional Middle School is:

Silver Lake Middle School is a community built on respect, responsibility, and academic excellence. Our mission, in collaboration with students' families and the larger communities, is to foster social, emotional, and academic growth in our middle level learners. In a healthy, safe environment, students are challenged by rigorous academics and encouraged by dedicated staff to discover and embrace their own unique abilities and talents. We seek to promote a pattern of lifelong learning that will best enable our students to be contributing members of society and meet with success in a rapidly changing world.

This mission encourages and challenges students to:

- Master basic skills and demonstrate knowledge, preparing them to meet or exceed local, state, and national performance standards
- Become effective communicators
- Develop individual abilities and talents
- Exhibit positive social development and cooperative interaction
- Apply problem solving methods to responsible decision making
- Demonstrate behaviors that show respect for themselves and others

IV. School Improvement Goals

Our school improvement goals are divided into *long-term* and *short-term* goals. Section A contains the long-term goals. Long-term goals have been identified by the School Council as worthy of implementation but possess an ongoing, continuous nature which precludes realization within any given academic year. Section B reports on the short term goals and achievements for our 2007-2008 plan and Section C identifies the short term goals being established for the 2008-2009 plan. Short term goals are those the School Council has identified to be realized with the next academic year. In some instances, specific activities, related objectives, assessment, oversight, and evaluation measures may be applicable to both long-term and immediate goals. In all cases, short term goals support long-term goals which, in turn, support both the school's *mission* and *vision*, as well as district goals.

A. LONG-TERM GOALS

1. To identify and support teacher professional development plans to be consistent with District and School Development plans, as well as goals identified by the *No Child Left Behind* mandates.
2. To continuously assess the needs of our school community relative to the latest educational and societal research and proactively offer programs and course offerings that are current.
3. To explore and enhance, as practical, technology (as described by the Massachusetts DOE program, *Project Lead The Way*) for Silver Lake Regional Middle School that will continue to prepare our students for success at the high school, in the workplace or institutions of higher learning.
4. Create and implement mechanisms to improve communication with students, teachers, the PTO, and the School Council.

B. REPORT ON SHORT TERM GOALS FOR 2007- 2008

1. **GOAL:** Improve MCAS math scores. Continue all existing strategies to improve math scores. Additionally, the math department will utilize their monthly meetings to continue their review of the implementation of integrated lessons and units of study. Finally, the math department will conduct a 2006 Summer Workshop for the following:

- Fine tuning the curriculum guides now that have now been taught from them for a year
- Working on incorporating unit assessments that are given by all teachers of a particular grade at the end of a unit of instruction.
- Becoming more familiar with how to incorporate the technology component of the Prentice Hall textbook series.

The key part of this goal is the development and implementation of unit assessments. Based on the results of unit assessments, teachers can then adjust their curriculum to address specific areas that need attention.

RESULTS: Spring 2007 MCAS results in mathematics showed impressive improvement. Grade ... The restructuring of the Math Lab in grade 7 allowed for more in-depth coverage of the seventh grade learning standards from the Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Framework. The Math Lab shifted its focus from strengthening remedial skills to assuming responsibility for curriculum content. Specifically, the Math Lab curriculum assumed responsibility for the learning standards indicated under the Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability strand of the framework. In doing so, Silver Lake Middle School is more closely meeting the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics recommendation that students at this grade level receive one hour of mathematics daily. Further, the philosophy of the mathematics department is that remedial skills should be taught in the context of new material, and not in isolation. This focus has allowed the seventh grade mathematics teachers to more deeply explore other areas of the curriculum, including operations with integers, geometry concepts, and algebraic and proportional reasoning.

The seventh grade teachers have developed four common assessments, one for each of the four seventh grade curriculum units. Many of the assessment prompts were taken from previously released MCAS exams to ensure common language and expectations with the state of Massachusetts. Although the assessment were not all completed in time to administer this year, they will be used next year. Using common assessment tools will open the door to collegial discussions about instructional practices and student learning.

The grade eight Algebra I curriculum has been revised to more closely match the Algebra I course offered at the high school, while still incorporating the eighth grade learning standards outside the Patterns, Relations and Algebra strand. The revision reflects the fact that students are coming with more exposure to algebraic concepts in previous grades.

2. GOAL: Improve MCAS ELA and reading scores. The 2006-2007 school year will have a strong focus of ELA and reading curriculum development. To achieve this goal, to be measured by MCAS test results, the following work will occur:

- ELA teacher workshop to select and integrate selected novels into the grade 7 and grade 8 curricula
- ELA teacher workshop to integrate district and state standards into a consistent curriculum at each grade level
- Professional in-service days to be dedicated to a “reading across the curriculum” approach
- Creation and implementation of writing assessments in grades 7 and 8 that will transition smoothly to the grade 9 competency-based model at the high school

RESULTS: ELA scores on the 2007 MCAS indicate continued improvement. 78% of seventh grade students scored in the Advanced and Proficient range, the highest percentage in three

years. 84% of eighth grade students scored in the Advanced and Proficient range, a slight increase from the previous year – the first year of the eighth grade MCAS. This year’s on-going curriculum work has yielded the following which will be implemented in the 2008-09 academic year: the creation of an essential question for each grade level that thematically connects literature and writing experiences; selection of required novels and writing genres per term for consistency and alignment with framework standards; development of Advanced courses final exam; continued development of a focused reading curriculum on strategies for informational reading; design of professional development training for all math, science, and social studies staff in reading process and strategies in the individual disciplines; creation of reading process/strategies posters for every classroom and a reference sheet for all students; formal administration and departmental scoring of two open response questions – all seventh graders; departmental MCAS analysis to determine areas of strength and weakness; research and elimination of the seventh grade Advanced course to address the need to provide more direct, explicit writing instruction; utilization of a normed, diagnostic reading placement test for grade six students.

3. **GOAL:** To expand our anti-bullying program to include assemblies for both seventh and eighth grade students. These programs will include a presentation to seventh graders of “Doin’ the Right Thing” performed by the actors from Deana’s Fund. This educational play is centered around how bullying manifests itself in school, how bullies draw their power from the lack of intervention of bystanders, and how the seemingly “uninvolved students” can become involved and bring bullying to an end. It concludes with a lively question-and-answer period where our students have the opportunity to discuss their experiences with the actors and brainstorm about solutions. This presentation is planned for September 6, 2007.

The eighth grade assembly will be presented by the staff of the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC), directed by Dr. Elizabeth Englander of Bridgewater State College. This assembly will provide our students with information about how bullying and cyber-bullying should be handled, how to help others who are victims, and how to recognize and prevent bullying behaviors within themselves. This presentation is planned for September 14, 2007.

RESULT: This goal was met when both presentations were made at the Middle School early in the academic year. The information provided, and the subsequent discussions about bullying and the importance of having respect for others, helped to set a positive climate in the school and start the year off “on the right foot”.

In addition to the “Doin’ the Right Thing” and MARC presentations, an evening presentation for parents was held in October. This presentation was given by Mark Dunderdale of the Plymouth County District Attorney’s Office and focused on cyber-bullying and internet safety. Mr. Dunderdale noted that adults, as well as teens, need to be careful on the internet. He highlighted for parents the need to watch how much information they are sharing, how computer viruses can be detected and avoided, and how best to protect your identity when conducted business via the internet.

4. **GOAL:** Create a Mission Statement Development Committee with its goal to create a new, stakeholder-driven mission statement for the middle school. This committee will consist of administrators, teachers, parents, and students. The plan is to be approved in the 2007-2008 school year, with the development of the mission statement to be addressed in the 2008-2009 school year.

RESULT: The Mission Statement Development Committee met several times over the course of the school year and gathered input from many sources including students, teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and parents. The Committee carefully analyzed the information and created a meaningful mission statement which was unanimously accepted by the Middle School staff. A copy of this mission statement is attached to this plan.

C. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GOALS FOR 2008-2009

1. **GOAL:** Continue to strengthen the curriculum, the delivery of instruction, and assessment practices in order to raise student achievement. The following are specific areas that will be addressed:

- Continued alignment and revision as necessary of the mathematics curriculum
- Increase the communication between the grade 7 mathematics teachers and the Math Lab teacher in order for students to connect the learning in both classrooms
- Creation of common unit assessments for grade 8 Pre-Algebra and Algebra
- Continue to share best practices with a focus on the National Council Teachers of Mathematics process standards for teaching mathematics.

2. **GOAL:** Continue to strengthen student learning through data analysis, curriculum alignment, instructional rigor, student-centered experiences, and formative and summative assessments. The following are specific areas that will be addressed:

- Continued alignment and revision, as necessary, of reading and English curricula
- Continued focus on writing through implementation of 6-trait writing and formal administration of open response questions
- Increased literary experiences across genres
- Use of formative and summative assessment data to improve/enhance instruction
- Continued departmental dialogue and collaboration addressing student learning and best practices instruction

3. **GOAL:** To continue to implement our anti-bullying programs for both the seventh and eighth grade, expanding on our focus with eighth grade students. As the “Doin’ the Right Thing” presentation is so well-done and well-received by students and faculty alike, we will again bring this educational play to the Middle School in the early fall. The play, performed by actors from Deana’s Fund, will focus on how bullying manifests itself in school, how bullies draw their power from the lack of intervention of bystanders, and how the student bystanders can safely become involved and bring bullying to an end.

Eighth grade students will again be presented with anti-bullying material from the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center, but will also have a presentation about recognizing and addressing the signs of depression and suicide. Since studies show that students who are the target of bullying often experience depression and a sense of low self-worth, it is important to combine this information in a comprehensive manner and offer suggestions to students on how best to understand their feelings and seek solutions.

Additionally, we plan to bring a representative from the Plymouth County District Attorney's office back to Silver Lake Regional Middle School for a parent information evening on internet safety. With so many of our students using the internet not only as a forum for entertainment, but also for communication (both positive and negative) with their peers, it is imperative that parents be provided with the tools they need to help ensure their children's safety.

4. **GOAL:** To focus professional staff attention on the issue of assessment. Particular areas of concentration will be creating assessments which are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, yet still allow students with diverse strengths to demonstrate their acquisition of knowledge in various ways. Further, we will work toward the gradual introduction of final exams and other objective assessments which allow staff to assess consistently, across subject areas and grade levels, if students have mastered the material presented to them and met the standards for particular units and/or subjects.

Efforts to assist staff in this goal will be to provide in-service professional development surrounding how best to create reliable, objective assessments. Staff will further be encouraged to attend individual professional development opportunities in this area. Monthly department meetings will have assessment as a primary focus, and each monthly faculty meeting will have a segment dedicated to Best Practices. This Best Practices element will consist of one or more teachers presenting to their peers examples of how they are using technology, a new form of assessment, or some other innovative concept in teaching or evaluating their students. Further, in the 2008-2009 school year, increased structure is being imposed upon "team time", with a goal toward having teams share curriculum ideas and challenges in a consistent and helpful way with their teammates.