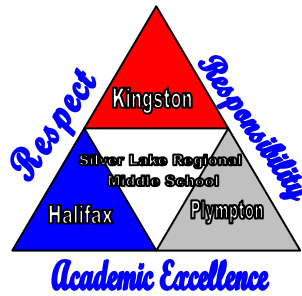


Silver Lake Regional Middle School



School Improvement Plan 2010 - 2011

Mr. Dennis A. Azevedo
Principal, SLRMS

Silver Lake Regional Middle School Council 2009-2010

Dennis A. Azevedo, Principal

Melodie Andrews, Paraprofessional

Kathy Benash, Teacher

Dan Bracken, Teacher

Barbara Chandler, Parent

Laura Fiore, Parent

Cindy Lynch, Parent

Christine MacDonald, Parent

Lynda Saviano, Parent

Michelle Smith, Parent

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 2009-2010 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 16th 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 2010-2011*.

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 2009-2010 plan and Section C identifies the short term goals being established for the 2010-2011 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 2009- 2010

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 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: The middle school MCAS results for mathematics continue to show a strong performance by the aggregate population and some improvement by the special education subgroup. Grade 7 results for mathematics continued to climb from the previous year and are substantially higher than the state average. Although our grade 8 results showed a slight decrease in the percentage of students who earned advanced or proficient compared to the previous year, this total is still 9 points higher than the state average.

Departmental meeting time was spent exposing the middle school mathematics teachers to the content, sequencing, and assessment tools in the new proficiency-based grade 9 Algebra I program. Decisions were made regarding which topics to de-emphasize or omit from grade 8 Algebra I in order to accommodate for shorter teaching periods and the need to include learning standards from geometry and measurement, as prescribed by the Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Framework. The Mathematics Coordinator demonstrated lessons in which geometry concepts were incorporated into the algebra curriculum.

Grade 7 teachers continued the implementation of common end-of-unit assessments and used the results to modify instruction and make informed curricular decisions. Some department meeting time was allotted for teachers to discuss the scoring of open-response assessment prompts and student results on common assessments. Collectively teachers were then able to make decisions about curriculum pacing and share strategies for more effectively teaching concepts where students' performance was unsatisfactory.

Teachers continue to grow in their comfort and ability to incorporate Smart Board technology into their lesson planning. This dynamic technological tool is a natural way to make learning more interactive and student-centered. Teachers have found that the technology components of the Prentice Hall classroom textbooks have some useful applications. Students have the ability to access the textbooks online and view online homework tutorials. Teachers and students can access additional assignments for remediation and/or enrichment.

2. GOAL: Improve MCAS ELA and reading scores. Continue to strengthen the curriculum, delivery of instruction and range of assessment practices to raise student achievement.

- 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 MCAS scores are consistently strong; overall student scores increased on the spring, 2009 test. In the seventh grade, 79% of students scored in the advanced or proficient range (a 2% increase in this figure from 2008). In the eighth grade, 86% of students received advanced or proficient scores (an increase of 9 percentage points from 2008). ELA and reading teachers continue to facilitate an individualized student examination of MCAS scores (despite the DESE's release of fewer test items). The activity results in student goal-setting to improve performance. In particular, the increased focus on Open Response writing in the 2008-2009 school year and again in the 2009-2010 school year resulted in some modest gains in Open Response scores. In 2008, all four Open Response items in both grades were rated below the stage average for each Open Response item. In 2009, each grade only saw *one* of the four Open Response scores at a below-average score. In both grades, the spring 2009 test also saw an increase in the highest item average score on Open Response items.

ELA teachers formally met in May 2009 to collaborate on drafting a revised writing folder to include specific writing expectations by grade level. In summer 2009, seventh grade teachers participated in a summer workshop to generate current and relevant additional resources for teaching the five-paragraph composition. Additionally, the seventh grade teachers created a list of Focus Correction Areas, arranged by term, including “Bonus FCAs” for more advanced writers. At the beginning of the 2009-2010 year, the seventh grade ELA teachers shared the resources created at that summer workshop and all ELA teachers began the pilot of the newly-created writing folder. The department will review the progress of the program at the end of the 2009-2010 school year, and again after the 2010 MCAS scores are reported.

Throughout the 2009-2010 school year, the ELA Coordinator shared resources and lessons and facilitated best practices in employing Pre-AP teaching strategies in all classes, especially in the eighth grade advanced class. In addition, two eighth grade ELA teachers attended a College Board Pre-AP workshop on close reading strategies; the teachers shared resources and modeled best practices at a subsequent department meeting. A 2010 summer workshop transition issues, particularly looking at vertical alignment and Pre-AP instruction and assessment in ELA classes is planned. Likewise, formal departmental time was granted for collaboration of the eighth grade *Merchant of Venice* unit, to expand the unit to all classes; the goal of incorporating new titles, mythology, nonfiction, Shakespeare, into the eighth grade curriculum remains relevant with continued departmental collaboration.

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 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.

RESULT: We were fortunate again this year to have the actors from Deana’s Fund come to the Middle School to present “Doin the Right Thing” to our seventh graders. Additionally, at the start of the school year, our guidance counselors conducted classroom presentations about bullying and cyber bullying. All students signed a banner, pledging to be kind to classmates and show respect to everyone at the Middle School. We further decided to continue the anti-bullying message in our choice of book for our One Book, One School program. All members of the student body, faculty, and staff read The Pretenders and discussed the topics of bullying, being a helpful bystander, and creating positive change.

On March 11, Plymouth County District Attorney Kristen Stone came to the Middle School to host two Internet Safety presentations for all of our students. She detailed for everyone how to conduct themselves appropriately when using social networking sites, texting, etc. As our students are now fully immersed in cyber communications, this workshop was a valuable vehicle to teach them internet etiquette and safety rules.

Ms. Stone did a similar presentation on March 15 for the parents in our district. We had a number of parents turn out to learn how they can keep their children, and their personal information/identities, safe on the internet. Ms. Stone advised parents about the behaviors that many teenagers engage in

when they are texting or visiting social networking sites, and she gave parents tips and tools to use when parenting in 2010.

The Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center had a “free assembly give-away” in December, and we were the lucky recipients of a brand-new presentation that focused on the unique elements of female bullying. All of our seventh and eighth grade girls attending this presentation in January, and the information dispensed was both enlightening and memorable. Girls were able to discuss, with the moderator, how they communicate differently from boys and how that translates to different behaviors with regard to bullying. Because girls tend to be more verbal at an earlier age, they also tend to be more effective when using words or written communication to alienate or upset peers. The MARC presenter spoke with our female students about the importance of using these strong verbal skills to lift people up and establish strong friendships. She also spoke with them about having respect for themselves and others, and making good choices before posting anything online.

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 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.

RESULT: A highlight of our faculty meetings this year has been the sharing of Best Practices. Several members of our faculty have demonstrated wonderful methods and approaches they use in their classrooms, many of them involving the wealth of technology that we are so fortunate to have at the Middle School. We have also continued our Monthly MCAS Open-Response Questions, and we have seen documented improvements in the skill and comfort-level our students are now demonstrating when they are faced with open-response questions, both in the classroom and on the MCAS.

C. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GOALS FOR 2010-2011

1. **GOAL:** Continue to strengthen the delivery of the curriculum through the modeling of lessons and best practices, as well as the assessment tools used to measure student achievement. The following are specific areas that will be addressed:

- Analysis of MCAS results using the Growth Model
- Continued and expanded use of common assessments in both grade 7 & 8
- Implementation of curricular and instructional modifications through assessment data analysis and examination of student work
- Curricular modifications based on new Common Core standards and/or the revised Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Framework
- Revision of Math Lab curriculum to incorporate the regular use of computers

2. GOAL: Continue to strengthen student learning through ongoing data analysis, promotion of student-centered instructional practices, and a review (and if needed, revision) of assessment practices. Notably:

- Continued implementation of common end-of-year assessment in eighth grade Advanced ELA; collaboration during department meeting time to expand this practice in all eighth grade classes as well as to develop and implement a similar assessment in seventh grade ELA.
- Professional development and collaboration in the area of differentiation, as it applies in the ELA classroom.
- Continued collegial sharing of best practices with a focus on student-centered instructional experiences.
- Professional development and collaboration with a district-wide focus on transitions between elementary and middle school and between middle and high school.
- Movement toward differentiation as relative to the school-wide Open Response initiative to scaffold more challenging Open Response items for advanced writers (presenting students with texts from higher grade levels).

3. GOAL: The problem of bullying, particularly cyber bullying, has become epidemic in nature. While the vast majority of bullying now takes place via cell phones, Facebook, and other cyber venues, our school is committed to shining light on the problem and delivering information to our students to help them stay safe, and treat others with respect, in their technology-rich world. We will bring in members of the District Attorney's Office to meet with both students and parents regarding bullying, its legal ramifications, and the most effective ways to keep children safe on the internet. Additionally, we will have members of the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center train staff on how to recognize bullying at its earliest stages, and how to intervene quickly and appropriately in order to maintain a climate of safety and respect in our building.

4. GOAL: Properly assessing student knowledge with consistent and fair instruments and methods continues to be an important focus of our professional development. To that end, we will continue to share our Best Practices during our faculty and team meetings, with further collaboration happening within and between departments on an ongoing basis. Faculty members are encouraged seek professional development regarding assessment practices. Our Monthly MCAS Open-Response Questions will begin again early in the school year, and teams will collaboratively correct the responses and work with students on how to improve the quality of their answers.

