

ANDOVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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TO: Andover School Committee Members
FROM: Sheldon H. Berman, Ed.D., Superintendent
SUBJECT: End-of-year report on superintendent goals for 2018-19
DATE: June 3, 2019

END-OF-YEAR REPORT ON SUPERINTENDENT GOALS FOR 2018-19

The 2018-19 school year continued the significant growth and improvement of the prior three years. Again, the work we have accomplished will set the stage for continued progress next year. As you will see in this report, all of our sprints achieved significant milestones. The morale in the district is positive. Most important, our students are experiencing the benefits of our many efforts to enhance instruction, provide authentic learning experiences, and create a more responsive and productive school culture.

Student performance continues to deepen and advance, as evidenced by earlier than expected improvements in MCAS results and also by exhibitions of work that stretch from robotics competitions to capstone presentations. Students are performing at exceptional levels in the academic arena, as demonstrated by the success of the Robotics Club and the SeaPerch Teams; the number of students named as National Merit Scholarship semifinalists, Scholastic Art and Writing Award winners, GeoBee state semi-finalists, Certificate of Biliteracy recipients, and other academic award recipients; and the number of students presenting Capstone Talks and sharing powerful Capstone Showcase displays. In addition, Andover has been highlighted as a state and national leader in personalized instruction (as the first Bright Spot district of the MAPLE consortium), social-emotional learning (recognized in the National Commission for Social, Emotional, and Academic Development's final report), and the education of students with language-based learning disabilities (article in *District Administration*). I am confident that these indicators are only the beginning, as we have established the conditions for success well beyond this year.

As in past years, these accomplishments are a credit to many people who contributed to this success. We have sought to promote a collaborative culture. Many teachers, instructional assistants, administrators and support staff have taken leadership roles. The innovations and improvements are the result of individuals feeling supported to take risks and pursue meaningful initiatives. The culture of a district is as important as its curriculum for it is the culture that inspires, motivates and encourages. Andover has a talented staff that works together and is willing to tackle new challenges. I'm very proud of our accomplishments this year and honored to be part of the team that has helped move the district forward in ways that this report will detail.

Following is the end-of-year 2018-19 progress report on the superintendent's goals. The seven goals outlined below are focused on long-term improvement efforts to strengthen the district's instructional program, classroom and school culture, decision-making effectiveness, and physical infrastructure, as well as its relationships with parents and the community. Because these are multi-year initiatives, the specific goals have continuity from year to year, building on the work of

the prior year and deepening or extending that work during the current year.

Although these goals are specific to the superintendent, achieving them requires the leadership efforts of the entire administrative team and the collective efforts of the entire staff. The report below reflects the work of that team as well as the work of many teachers and staff members.

GOAL 1: The superintendent will facilitate progress of the seven cross-functional sprint teams in order to move forward on the agile strategic plan: Literacy, AHS Personalization, Mental and Behavioral Health, Social-Emotional Learning, Accessibility, Progress Monitoring, and Innovation. (Standard IV: Professional Culture; Professional Practice Goal)

Evidence/Product: Each sprint moves forward on action-specific steps identified in the attached matrix to achieve their targets.

The progress of each sprint is reported in the attached document, with the exception of the literacy sprint, which is reported under Goal 3 below.

GOAL 2: The superintendent will work with the assistant superintendent for finance and administration and the director of facilities to make progress on: a) the district's capital plan and large facility projects, with particular attention to supporting the work of the AHS Facility Study Committee and the West Elementary School Building Committee, b) the MSBA process for renovation/replacement of West Elementary, and c) working with the School Committee, town leadership, community and other stakeholders to define and evaluate options for additional school facility improvements, including those at Doherty Middle School and a Pre-K facility. (Standard II: Management and Operations; District Improvement Goal)

Evidence/Product: Continued progress toward the renovation/replacement of West Elementary, the renovation of/addition to Andover High School, a capital plan for Doherty, a strategy for a Pre-K facility, and a viable capital improvement plan to address the needs of the other school buildings.

Key Accomplishments:

- ✓ Built security vestibule at AHS.
- ✓ Added sound enhancement to classrooms at all schools except AHS.
- ✓ Completed air conditioning of High Plain and Wood Hill.
- ✓ Entered feasibility phase of West Elementary building project.
- ✓ Submitted a revised Statement of Interest for AHS renovation/addition.
- ✓ Determined ways to address building needs at Doherty.

One of the most significant needs of the district has been the upgrading and renovation or replacement of our aging school facilities. We made this work a priority and accomplished a great deal this year. Our capital improvement plan moved some significant projects forward. We built a security vestibule at AHS and improved security throughout the district. We added sound enhancement to classrooms at all our schools except the high school. This past summer we completed the air conditioning of High Plain and Wood Hill, which made these school environments much more conducive to learning as we opened school. The work outlined for FY20 includes planning for the air conditioning of other schools and air circulation in the AHS field house, and also focuses attention on site work and roof replacement at Sanborn, high-velocity fans in the Dunn Gym, improvements to the West Middle play area, parking at Bancroft, and air conditioning of the gyms at High Plain and Wood Hill.

The West Elementary building project continues to move forward expeditiously. In December, we were accepted into the feasibility phase of the project by MSBA. Over the past year we convened a building committee, hired an owner's project manager (OPM), submitted a request for services (RFS) for architectural services to MSBA for review, and complied with all of MSBA's requirements for launching work on the project. In our meetings with MSBA, we were able to

receive authorization for an enrollment of 925, which will give us a good deal of flexibility to ensure we appropriately size the building, even if we eventually decide to build for a lower enrollment. In addition, the MSBA is willing to consider adding a preschool to the facility. We moved this project forward as quickly as we could in order to maximize our opportunity to address imminent needs at the high school.

Although the high school was not accepted into MSBA's program in this round, we continued to educate the community and key town boards about the conditions of the school and options for addressing those conditions, worked with the architect to refine work and cost estimates, prepared and passed a warrant article to continue making progress in solidifying cost estimates, and submitted a revised statement of interest. The Feasibility Study Committee continues to meet and move this project forward.

We also made significant progress in evaluating the needs of the Doherty Middle School building and assessing how we might best address those needs. Working with DiNisco Architects, we clarified the extensive building issues that Doherty faces developed a number of options for addressing those needs. DiNisco's final report gives us a vision of what a possible renovation might look like and provides guidance for the next steps we can take within the capital improvement plan to address the school's immediate needs.

In addition to addressing the capital needs for building improvements, we have also been exploring better ways of maintaining our buildings and managing custodial services. The town's hiring of an assistant director for plant and facilities has given us additional capacity to accomplish projects. We are also in discussion with the town manager about how this individual can best provide custodial supervision, including moving that supervisory responsibility out of the Finance Office. We are working on a proposal for moving that transition forward.

GOAL 3: The superintendent will work with the assistant superintendent of student services and the assistant superintendent for teaching and learning to enable the district to implement a strong core literacy curriculum and interventions that address students' reading issues, including issues related to dyslexia, by: a) launching a three-year phase-in of a new elementary literacy program through a year-long professional development program for all teachers; b) enhancing the use of such diagnostic tools as DIBELS, MAP, and early screening measures to identify students needing support and areas for program improvement; c) continuing professional development to deepen the skills and knowledge of teachers and instructional assistants in core curriculum and intervention approaches to address students' reading development; d) implementing computer-based accessibility tools and universal design for learning strategies for students and teachers; and d) expanding reading interventions and programs at the middle and high school levels. (Standard I: Instructional Leadership; Student Learning Goal) Literacy Sprint

Evidence/Product: Document the assessments in use for early identification, universal screening and progress monitoring; the professional development offered to both regular education and special education staff; and the program supports implemented at the middle and high school levels, with the long-range target of demonstrating improvement in students' reading performance, particularly for students with language-based reading issues. (We should begin to see improved reading performance on MAP and MCAS beginning with the 2020 administration of these assessments, as well as a reduction in the percentage of students identified as learning disabled in reading at the elementary level.)

Key Accomplishments:

- ✓ Expanded approaches to benefit students with language-based learning difficulties and dyslexia.
 - ◆ Assisted Boston Children's in validating new literacy screening instrument at kindergarten level.
 - ◆ Aligned high school annual assessments of IEP progress with other grade levels.

- ◆ *Introduced Language! Live for older students with difficulty in comprehension.*
- ◆ *Expanded use of Report Form to teach older students how to read for information.*
- ◆ *Established Eye to Eye peer mentoring program for students with learning disabilities.*
- ◆ *Devoted significant resources to professional development in multiple programs and strategies for reaching all students.*
- ◆ *Designed and implemented Literacy Tutor—an early literacy micro-credential for elementary-level paraprofessionals and trained 25 Literacy Tutors to date.*
- ◆ *Partnered with the Carroll School to offer Targeted Cognitive Intervention (TCI) in the 2019 summer reading clinic for middle and high school students.*
- ✓ *Deepened our core literacy program for all elementary students.*
 - ◆ *Invested in the Fountas & Pinnell Reading Program for grades K-5.*
 - ◆ *Provided extensive professional development in Reader's Workshop for all elementary teachers.*
 - ◆ *Acquired additional children's literature to increase the equity, access, quality and volume of elementary classroom libraries.*
 - ◆ *Created ten elementary literacy laboratory classrooms for modeling demonstration lessons.*
 - ◆ *Continued to integrate literacy with social studies and the arts through the development of One Community, One Nation (OCON).*
- ✓ *Created three middle school writing laboratory classrooms as host learning environments where our teachers engage in peer sharing of lessons.*
- ✓ *Achieved AVID certification for AHS based on the school's progress in implementing AVID reading and writing approaches in grades nine and ten.*

Because this goal has been the primary focus of our instructional efforts, the following is a very detailed report on the work and progress of the literacy sprint and of district leaders and teachers.

This year, we continued our aggressive, multi-pronged approach to literacy intervention to address language-based learning difficulties and dyslexia. Areas we targeted for further development include assessment, professional development, program development, key interventions, strategic partnerships, and community outreach.

Assessment

We made progress in many areas of assessment, including screening, individual diagnostic assessment, progress monitoring, and summative assessment. This year, we had an exciting development in our screening program. Screening measures are short assessments that check students' development of discrete foundational literacy skills. The Gaab Lab for Developmental Neuroscience at Boston Children's Hospital is developing an innovative new type of literacy screening app. The Boston Early Literacy App is designed to assess the language and pre-literacy skills that are most closely associated with future reading success in very young children. The app is the first comprehensive screener for children as young as three years old. The screener does not require special training so it can be used in preschools, daycare centers, and other locations such as Head Start.

Because of our work in literacy intervention, Children's Hospital invited Andover to be part of the validation of the Boston Early Literacy App. Validation is the process of establishing statistical evidence that the test measures what it is designed to measure. For example, the app has to be able to predict reading challenges accurately. Validation also involves establishing reliability, which means that a test will yield consistent results. While we were happy to contribute to the knowledge base on early identification, this project also benefitted our teachers by providing them with examples of current research on foundational literacy skills and offering a model screening program pursuant to Bill H.2872. Kindergarten students in four of our five elementary schools were screened with the app and then evaluated with traditional diagnostic assessments to

establish concurrent validity. Teachers participated in a focus group where they reviewed the dashboard for the app and suggested improvements. Follow-up activities will include professional development and beta testing at the preschool level.

Screening assessments can be compared to a sieve with large holes. The assessments are designed to capture all young students who may potentially exhibit difficulty with reading. As a result, screening measures tend to capture a number of false positives. Screening measures also lack the specificity to identify the right intervention plan for an individual. In order to translate screening results into action, teachers need a way to filter out false positives and gain instructional granularity on students who show actual deficits.

Through a unique and collaborative partnership among APS Student Services, Dr. Melissa Orkin of Crafting Minds, and the Hill for Literacy, a Tier III committee worked all year to develop a plan to help teachers take a closer look at students identified by screeners. The process included three steps: 1) examination of the DIBELS results, 2) application of simple follow-up assessments with samples of Andover students, and 3) selecting the right intervention for each student based on that data. The follow-up assessments were selected to identify false positives and determine what types of reading problems children were experiencing. This action research approach allowed committee members to engage in rich discussions about targeting interventions. Next year, the team will apply the model in the context of a case-study-based professional development series. The results of this project will be included in a chapter of our new dyslexia guide, which will be available in the fall.

Annual review assessments are used to measure progress on IEP goals. Over the last two years, we have changed all of our annual review assessments to ensure they provide information that is directly related to the interventions we are using and to ensure they are consistent year to year, school to school, and level to level. This year, we aligned the high school annual assessments with those of the rest of the district.

While screeners and diagnostic assessments tend to measure discrete sub-skills important for reading, summative assessments measure students' actual reading levels. These assessments can also be used to track the trajectory of progress over time. Instructionally, teachers can use the data to match readers to books that are written at the correct difficulty level. This usage is particularly important for older students who are reading more complex text. Student Services has continued to collaborate with regular education on the use of the NWEA MAP (Northwest Evaluation Association—Measures of Academic Progress) across all grades and programs. This normed assessment tool provides information about a student's instructional level and growth data in reading and mathematics. This year, we planned and provided additional training for teachers to expand the use of the instrument to more grade levels. Increasing our capacity to analyze data and make data-informed decisions has greatly supported our collective efforts to expand and strengthen literacy teaching and learning for all students.

Interventions

We have also made progress on our plan to provide targeted reading interventions to students with a wide variety of needs. Over the last two years, we have reported on many new interventions. However, reading is just one aspect of literacy. Children with language-based reading disorders are often impacted in reading, speaking, listening, and writing. Thus, it is important to provide interventions in all four related strands of language development. In addition, reading can break down at any stage of reading development, so different interventions are required to correct problems associated with each stage. Children also exhibit different types of reading disorders as well as different subtypes of dyslexia. Each subtype requires a different approach and may impact a reader differently at various stages of reading development. None of the interventions cure dyslexia—they simply prepare the reader with the skills to move to the next stage of reading acquisition. Dyslexia is the most well-known reading disorder, but there are other reading disabilities not related to dyslexia. In a public school setting, our responsibility is to

provide services for all learners, at all stages of development, in all strands of language functioning. In order to do that, we must have the ability to constantly assess and coordinate multiple approaches.

Our new interventions for reading, listening, speaking, and writing have moved up the developmental ladder over the last two years. We continue to add and refine services at the elementary level, but this year we also placed much of our focus on the needs of older students. For example, our work with Landmark Outreach now includes partner teachers at Andover High School. At the elementary and middle schools, consultant Ann Larsen continued to provide coaching for both special education and regular education teachers who co-teach in our language-based programs. This year, Ann worked with regular and special education teachers to complete our three-year plan by expanding the language-based program to grade eight at Wood Hill and West middle schools. She also worked with teams of regular and special education co-teaching partners at Andover High School. In the fall, these partner teachers added language-based services in ninth-grade English classes and content areas; in the spring, co-teaching teams from grade ten participated in the training. We also continued our coaching relationship with literacy expert Lisa Brooks. Lisa provides ongoing coaching in Orton-Gillingham and Lindamood-Bell methods to special education teachers and reading specialists.

The comprehension of non-fiction text is another critical skill for older students. In the fall, we trained a second cohort of middle and high school special education teachers and reading specialists in Report Form. Report Form is a method for teaching older students with language-based disabilities how to read for information. Students are taught strategies for identifying main ideas, categorizing facts about those main ideas, and identifying text structure. These skills help students to read and understand textbooks.

Also at the middle and high school levels, we introduced a new intervention for older students who can decode but have difficulty with comprehension due to deficits in vocabulary and grammar. “Language! Live” involves direct instruction in reading comprehension and writing, online skills practice, and directed practice with age-appropriate novels.

In order for students to reach their potential, they need to believe in themselves and know that their teachers believe in them also. Students with reading disabilities are particularly vulnerable to feelings of low self-esteem and may develop low expectations for themselves. Eye to Eye is a national organization that promotes self-efficacy by pairing older and younger students, all with learning disabilities, in a mentoring relationship. Last summer, two Andover High students participated in a week-long Eye to Eye mentor training program at Brown University. In the fall, they recruited more mentors, and we opened Andover’s first Eye to Eye chapter in October. The program was led by our student mentors, our assistant director of student services, and department coordinators. In March, Andover was invited to host the regional Eye to Eye conference and participate in a panel discussion on supporting students with language-based learning differences.

Professional Development

The effectiveness of any reading intervention is highly dependent upon the skills of the teacher. Accordingly, we devoted significant time and resources to professional development. At the elementary level, in-house experts offered courses on specific language-based interventions to both special and regular education teachers. Speech-language pathologists Ann Kerwin and Sarah Letsky, for example, taught their third course on Story Grammar Marker. Story Grammar Marker is a method for teaching oral language and narrative comprehension to young children with language-based learning disabilities. Special education teacher Amy Schramek offered a course on Framing Your Thoughts, a method for teaching grammar and writing skills to students at the beginning stages of language development. Due to the efforts of these dedicated Andover language and literacy experts, many regular education teachers expressed an interest in learning how to use these techniques to differentiate their instruction. In many cases, special education

teachers, reading specialists, and regular education teachers are now co-teaching and using the techniques in the regular classroom.

Another development at the elementary level is our Literacy Tutor project. Grounded in a strategic partnership with the Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions, the Literacy Tutor project is a grant-funded, micro-credentialing program for Andover instructional assistants. We designed the program to be a blended course with four modules. The modules include: 1) foundations of language, 2) phonemic awareness and decoding, 3) fluency, and 4) comprehension. Our first cohort included 25 teacher assistants across all five elementary schools. Assistants who completed the program became the first Andover Literacy Tutors. We believe we are the first district in Massachusetts to offer an early literacy micro-credential for paraprofessionals.

We also designed a seminar series for Orton-Gillingham teachers called “Beyond OG.” This five-part, year-long series was an advanced course for teachers of older students who had completed Orton-Gillingham but needed a bridge to higher-level independent reading. The course included techniques for teaching upper-level comprehension and grammar skills. More than 30 teachers and reading specialists completed this course.

A number of our Orton-Gillingham and Wilson teachers also opted to pursue level II certification, which is an advanced credential. Teachers with level II certification can address the needs of students with more severe reading disorders and can build internal capacity by assisting novice special education teachers and reading specialists. Level II certification also focuses on advanced skills for older students.

Program Development

In addition to new interventions and advanced teacher training, we explored new avenues of program development as a means of delivering intensive services. Last year, some of our special education teachers and reading specialists designed an intensive summer reading clinic for elementary and middle school students. The clinic included a strong emphasis on growth mindset and a variety of interventions for learning sight words, decoding, spelling, and comprehension. All students in the program made significant gains. This year, we partnered with the Carroll School to offer Targeted Cognitive Intervention (TCI) in the 2019 summer clinic. TCI is a series of cognitive exercises designed to improve focus, reaction time, and working memory. These cognitive processes are associated with reading fluency. We also worked with Dr. Melissa Orkin to continue to define the motivational and growth mindset components of the program. This summer, we will continue to collect data on the effectiveness of the program.

Our program efforts also extend to classroom materials. For example, we continue to provide training in high-leverage assistive technologies and adapted print materials to support students' access to the general curriculum. Another example is our focus on creating rich and robust classroom libraries across grades K-5 in all elementary schools—an initiative that has been enhanced through grants from ACE and expenditures from individual school budgets.

Currently, we are gathering information on engaging, decodable text collections for classroom libraries so that all students will have access to independent reading materials during the core literacy block. We also researched additional literacy supports such as Immersive Reader, which includes dyslexic fonts and syllabication supports. Joanna Ganci, our secondary ELA program coordinator, worked with a team to develop a new summer reading list that is inclusive and lexiled so that students can select books that are within their independent reading range.

Teachers across the district designed and provided several professional development courses in the area of literacy for PK-12 faculty through the Professional Development Catalog. These course enrollments filled quickly and received positive feedback from participants. Courses included: Evidence-Based Practices for Speech/Language Pathologists, Framing Your Thoughts,

Introduction to Story Grammar Marker, English Language Learners in the Classroom, Supporting Students with Learning Disabilities in Your Classroom, Evidence-Based Reading Practices for Middle School Reading Specialists, and Vocabulary and Literacy.

Finally, we continued to participate in advocacy efforts in relation to literacy. We started the year with a Districts of Distinction award for our work in the areas of literacy and dyslexia. In October, we were invited by Nadine Gaab of Boston Children's Hospital, Yaakov Petscher of the Florida Center for Reading Research, and Margie Gillis of Literacy How to collaborate on a literacy symposium at the International Dyslexia Association conference. We also participated in the New Hampshire IDA lecture series, and LTR tutoring and Associates invited us to provide content-expert consultation on literacy for the education department at Drexel University. Drexel is one of the few universities in the U.S. to be accredited in the Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading by the International Dyslexia Association.

Core Literacy Program for Elementary Students

In addition to interventions that support students with dyslexia and other language-based learning difficulties, the district made significant strides in building a strong core literacy program for *all* elementary students. These efforts have been coupled with robust professional learning. This work is part of a multi-year plan to develop teachers' capacity to deliver high-quality literacy instruction, while increasing students' listening, speaking, reading and writing achievement, and addressing the needs of students who are confronting reading and language-based learning challenges.

At the elementary level, the district invested in the Fountas & Pinnell Reading Program for grades K-5 as the core reading program. Curriculum materials for grades K-2 arrived this school year and were used for student instruction and professional development. Materials for grades 3-5 will arrive in FY20 and be utilized in the same manner.

This curricular adoption was supported by rigorous professional development. We have been fortunate to develop a partnership with Dr. Cynthia Merrill of the University of New Hampshire. This year, Dr. Merrill provided extensive professional development in Reader's Workshop for all elementary teachers on topics such as strategic thinking, interactive read-alouds, independent reading, shared reading, book clubs and mini-lessons. These efforts will continue into next school year, as elementary teachers focus on training in the conferring practices, the guided reading approach, and the Benchmark Assessment System.

Reader's Workshop offers methods designed to emphasize the practices and skills of comprehension for all students. Teachers show students how to draw upon a repertoire of strategies that readers use to derive meaning from text. With the workshop model, teachers tailor instruction to meet the individualized needs of their students. The approach offers students the power of choice and voice, and invites children to develop a love of reading.

A primary goal of the workshop model is to empower students with metacognitive strategies so they can successfully access texts. The predictable structures of the workshop allow teachers to be responsive and adapt their reading instruction to student needs. The teacher studies student data and plans instruction that builds on each child's strengths and needs.

Each day, the teacher launches the workshop with a whole-group, 10-minute mini-lesson. Through explicit modeling the teacher uses a mentor text to demonstrate how to think and make meaning, or the teacher may think through the text together with students demonstrating the practices and habits of reading. The bulk of the workshop time is devoted to the middle part of the block—the 30 to 40 minutes when the teacher is providing multiple opportunities to personalize instruction. Through a variety of methods—whether conferring one-on-one, forming flexible groups for strategy instruction, or providing guided reading sessions—the teacher customizes instruction to meet the unique needs of each learner.

At the end of the workshop, the teacher reconvenes the class for a 10-minute wrap-up or share segment. Students may reflect on their learning and set goals, or share their learning and inspire others with their deep thinking, or the teacher may use the time to share another technique or strategy.

As an important component of the Reader's Workshop, the district acquired additional children's literature to increase the equity, access, quality and volume of elementary classroom libraries. Classroom libraries provide the range of text students need to learn reading skills, comprehension strategies and broad knowledge across genres. Through the generous support of ACE and private donations, APS added approximately \$60,000 worth of children's books to K-5 classrooms. This effort will continue in FY20 to expand fiction and non-fiction titles for all K-5 classrooms to comprehensively support students' independent reading, curricular units of instruction, and integrated learning opportunities.

This year, the district also created ten elementary literacy laboratory classrooms (two in each elementary school). These classrooms served as learning environments for our teachers, the professional development consultant, and our PK-5 literacy program coordinator to model demonstration lessons. Our PK-5 literacy program coordinator met with the literacy laboratory teachers regularly as a professional learning community to develop shared literacy practices across our elementary schools.

Targeted prevention methods and differentiated supports (Tier II) are a critical component of core instruction. For example, elementary teachers continue to implement Just Right PA (kindergarten phonemic awareness program), Foundations (K-3 phonological program), and Lexia (K-5 word work program). Training for Tier II programs was ongoing throughout the year. Kindergarten teachers, special education teachers and reading specialists received additional training in Just Right PA in order to support teachers during Tier I core instruction. Our PK-5 literacy program coordinator also trained the district reading specialists in the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), which is an assessment tool to help teachers identify students' instructional reading levels and areas for specific instructional focus. Their expertise will be strategically supportive of students' Tier I and Tier II instruction next year.

We have also directed significant attention to integrating literacy with social studies and the arts. Through the development of *One Community, One Nation (OCON)*, and its associated training, elementary teachers learned a new pedagogical model and created integrated and engaging civics and literacy lessons for K-5 students. We are working on integrating science and literacy, and have identified literature and non-fiction texts that match each of the FOSS science units. These texts will be purchased as part of the FY20 textbook budget.

Developing leadership capacity has been pivotal to the success of a comprehensive elementary literacy initiative. The assistant superintendent for teaching and learning, PK-5 literacy program coordinator, elementary principals and elementary assistant principals met routinely to develop shared leadership practices that support teachers in the implementation of the core reading program. The PK-5 literacy program coordinator also met regularly with the reading specialists to provide ongoing training and support. The literacy leadership team collaboratively planned the elementary early release days, which were dedicated to creating supportive literacy structures for our new elementary reading program, such as classroom libraries, diverse literature and environmental print.

Literacy Program for Secondary Students

The middle school English Language Arts (ELA) teachers focused on the improvement of reading and writing for students in grades 6-8. To support their professional learning, the district created three middle school writing laboratory classrooms (one in each middle school). These classrooms served as host learning environments for our teachers to engage in peer sharing of lessons. The

grades 6-12 ELA program coordinator also met with the literacy laboratory teachers as a professional learning community to develop shared writing instructional practices across our middle schools. This learning will be continued next year with training in writing provided by Teachers College at Columbia University.

Curriculum Advisory Boards were important teacher teams that unpacked grades K-5 reading units into a scope and sequence and grades 6-10 ELA units with a focus on curricular coherence. This work helped to articulate our literacy curriculum, which will positively impact teachers' literacy planning and instruction next year

Andover High School participated in AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), which is a program that teaches students to succeed using WICOR strategies (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization and Reading). The WICOR strategies serve to support students' organizational skills, but focus in particular on deep reading and effective writing strategies. The AHS AVID team met regularly to plan and discuss student progress. While the focus of AVID has been on the success of the ninth and tenth grade student cohorts, the AHS AVID team also shared student success strategies with faculty to support the learning of all AHS students. Next year, Andover High School plans to have a third incoming-ninth-grade AVID cohort and expand to grade 11. AHS also achieved AVID certification this year based on its progress.

GOAL 4: The superintendent will provide detailed and reliable data analyses and reports to help assess curricular strengths and implement changes in areas that require growth related to student academic performance, as well as to assess Andover's performance relative to other comparable communities. (Standard I: Instructional Leadership; Standard III: Family and Community Engagement; Student Learning Goal) Progress Monitoring Sprint

Evidence/Product: Provide analytical data reports on MCAS, MAP, and other assessments that track the district's academic trends and our comparative performance among similar communities, as well as provide trend data on the district's financial investments in comparison to other similar communities.

Key Accomplishments:

- ✓ *Continued to update the data analyses of student performance and comparative finance as posted on our website.*
- ✓ *Supported administrators and teachers in using data to better address students' individual needs.*
 - ◆ *Provided time for grade-level data teams to meet for the purpose of interpreting and assessment data and modifying instruction.*
 - ◆ *Introduced Lexia (reading) and Dreambox and IXL (math)—programs that provide teachers with just-in-time data.*
- ✓ *Administered the Panorama survey for the second year to better understand students' perceptions of our schools' culture and climate.*

Over this past year, we continued to update the data analyses of student performance and comparative finance as posted on our website. However, our most significant progress was in the area of administrators and teachers using data to better support students' individual needs. We continued training teachers and administrators in the diagnostic use of DIBELS and MAP data, and we provided time for grade-level data teams to meet for the purpose of interpreting and discussing these data and modifying instruction to better address student needs. In addition, we began to use a number of intervention or supplemental program—such as Lexia in reading and Dreambox and IXL in math—that provide teachers with just-in-time data on a daily basis to better support students. We also administered the Panorama survey for the second year, giving us a better idea of how students perceive the climate and culture of our schools and their sense of belonging within them.

The most important impact of the work we've done in this area has been the change in culture around data. Moving from a time when data was viewed as largely irrelevant to understanding student needs, the faculty now appreciates the insights that data can offer for improving the effectiveness of their instruction. (For additional information, see the update of the Progress Monitoring Sprint in the attached document.)

GOAL 5: The superintendent will work with the communications coordinator, administrators, faculty, School Committee, and parents to enhance communication among these district stakeholders and within the community in order to keep the community informed of district initiatives, events, and achievements; enlist feedback on ways to address issues confronting the district; and strengthen appreciation of the valuable contributions the district is making to students and the community at large. (Standard III: Family and Community Engagement; District Improvement Goal)

Evidence/Product: Documentation of and metrics related to additional communication strategies including regular web and social media communications, greater website accessibility and usability, press releases and media coverage of events and achievements, and community forums that enhance regular on-going communications with staff, parents and the community.

Key Accomplishments:

- ✓ Filled the new position of communications coordinator.
- ✓ Produced 36 editions of the district's weekly e-newsletter *Warrior Wednesdays*.
- ✓ Created a district Twitter account.
- ✓ Strengthened and expanded working relationships with local media outlets, which led to increased coverage of district news and events.
- ✓ Responded to numerous public records requests.

In August 2018, we finally succeeded in adding a communications position to enhance communication initiatives within the APS community and with the media. Since August, we have seen an increase in positive coverage of our students, faculty, and administrators by both internal and external media.

On August 28, 2018, we welcomed the debut of the inaugural edition of the district's e-newsletter *Warrior Wednesdays*. By the end of the 2018-19 school year, our communications coordinator will have produced 36 digital editions. The target audiences for *Warrior Wednesdays* include parents, faculty, and community members. The distribution list for the newsletter aligns with the ASPEN database and a list of interested community members. Each week, *Warrior Wednesdays* is sent to approximately 8,400 readers, shared through APS's Twitter account, and posted on www.aps1.net.

Warrior Wednesdays spotlights students, teachers and APS community news. The newsletter offers the superintendent the opportunity to communicate on a regular basis to parents, teachers, and the community. Those messages have featured information pertinent to the gas explosions, current events, and district accomplishments. As part of the district's outreach to the Andover community, the newsletter also publishes events and news from the town manager's office of business, arts and cultural development; Andover public safety offices; and nonprofit organizations within the community. This approach helps to reinforce district and community relationships.

The communications department has also established positive working relationships with local media, including the *Townsmen*, *Eagle Tribune*, *Patch*, *Boston Globe Local*, and Boston-area TV stations. This outreach has not only involved media advisories and press releases, but personal contact with reporters and media representatives. Coverage from the 2018-19 school year has featured all five elementary schools appearing on WCVB's "Good Morning Eye-Opener," plus

media coverage on WCVB, WHDH, *NBC Boston*, and *Patch* of AHS students and public safety officials honored for leadership during the Merrimack Valley gas explosions.

In addition, we secured media coverage for the official opening of the Athletic Field Accessibility Project at High Plain Elementary/Wood Hill Middle School (all local print media), as well as Andover High School Girls Soccer Team preparing Thanksgiving meals for the community (*Boston Herald*, *Boston 25 & NBC Boston*). West Elementary Principal Liz Roos was featured on WBZ-TV, celebrating the 6th annual Scarecrow Festival sponsored by Andover Coalition for Education. In February 2019, AHS junior Hannah Finn was featured on WCVB's "Five for Good" segment for her good works in creating the nonprofit One Wish Project. Our Student Services Department, through its partnership with Boston Children's Hospital, was approached by the *Boston Globe* for comment on programs surrounding early detection and dyslexia. The journalist for this article has expressed interest in a follow-up story regarding APS's program with the Carroll School. South Elementary fifth grader Tully O'Keeffe was also featured on WCVB's "Five for Good" for her Bikes for Girls in Vietnam project.

The communications coordinator also facilitated positive coverage of our students in local media. In February, Bancroft Elementary students took the spotlight during their Patriots' Super Bowl Rally on WBZ-TV, WBZ-AM radio, and NBC Boston. In March, Wood Hill Middle School and APS Food Services were featured on WCVB and local media for No One Eats Alone day. In April, the MIAA awarded AHS Basketball Coach Fazio with the Coach of the Year award.

Serving as the spokesperson for the district, the communications coordinator provided media with a number of statements this year, including remarks about: Doherty Middle School teacher arrest, November AHS school bus accident, Doherty Middle School shelter in place, non-renewal of AHS hockey coach's contract, Fusion Academy application, new principals at West Elementary and West Middle schools, MCAS testing irregularities at West Elementary, and AHS Senior Prank Day.

Avenues of communication now have a prominent presence on our website, www.aps1.net. Our communications coordinator updates "District News" and the Office of Communications pages on a regular basis to provide updated information to our community. We also created a Twitter account for Andover Public Schools (@AndoverPS), and continue to grow our identity on this social media platform. In August 2018, @AndoverPS had 125 followers. In January, the superintendent participated in his first Twitter chat with the Aspen Institute and the School Superintendents Association, reaching a national audience. Through our efforts to connect with the community on social media, in May 2019 we reached 600 Twitter followers—a 380 percent increase since the previous August. The department has branded #WeAreAndover and encourages individual schools to reinforce this branding on their social media.

In November, the communications coordinator was appointed as the Records Access Officer (RAO) for the District. Beginning in January 2019, APS has experienced a marked increase in public records requests. Since then, in her capacity as the RAO, the coordinator has spent 240 hours responding to requests for information. One inquiry was from a media outlet; the remaining requests were from community members.

The 2018-19 school year brought the opportunity to highlight the accomplishments of our students, staff, faculty, and administrators. The communications coordinator featured their achievements through press releases for media coverage, acknowledgement at School Committee meetings, and through *Warrior Wednesdays* features.

To advance her professional development, the communications coordinator joined the newly-formed K12 Public Relations in Massachusetts Professional Working Group, a collaborative team of school district communications departments across Massachusetts. Andover hosted the group's May meeting. In July, the coordinator will attend the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) annual seminar in Washington, DC.

Finally, we have arranged for a visit from DESE Commissioner Jeffrey Riley in September 2019. In addition, the town of Andover will be the first Boston 25 Zip Trip of 2019 in June. The event features a live TV broadcast of our community and its residents.

There is much work to be accomplished in the coming years to grow our communications efforts. However, 2018-19 was a highly productive start and confirmed the value of this new position.

GOAL 6: The superintendent will work with the assistant superintendent for finance and administration, the Superintendent's Administrative Team, the School Committee, and the town manager to identify budget needs as early as possible, establish priorities, implement financial reporting processes that drive confidence in school department transparency, prepare thorough and timely budget documents, communicate with town leaders and the public regarding budget needs, and attempt to reach an early and responsible budget agreement. (Standard II: Management and Operations; District Improvement Goal)

Evidence/Product: Thorough, well-documented budget that enables the district to move forward with consideration for capital needs and town funding capacity.

Key Accomplishments:

- ✓ *Produced a budget that passed without question at Town Meeting and that will enable us to add time to the school day and purchase additional textbooks.*
- ✓ *Continued to advocate for increased state funding for both the foundation budget and the circuit breaker.*
- ✓ *Reduced the annual tuition for full-day kindergarten by \$400 without using additional general expense resources.*

We produced a well-documented budget that meets the district's priorities and the town's funding capacity. In fact, we expanded the documentation to include more information on FTEs over time and on individual school budgets. Each year, we identify particular areas of significant need as major budget priorities. These areas have included reducing elementary class size, addressing the needs of students with language-based learning difficulties, implementing the new high school schedule, and improving our elementary literacy program. As a result we made gains in each of these areas. The FY20 budget targets two major goals—adding time to the school day to enhance academic instruction and completing the addition of textbooks to the school budget so that we can implement a sustainable curriculum renewal cycle. We prepared a budget that will accomplish both those goals. We reached agreement on our budget with the Finance Committee and Select Board and the FY20 budget passed at Town Meeting without a single question.

We also advocated for increased state funding for both the foundation budget and the circuit breaker. These efforts are ongoing and the School Committee and administration have made a strong case with our legislative delegation for the need to increase funding in both areas. In terms of the foundation budget, the Governor's budget proposal provided the district with an increase of \$858,482, well beyond what we had anticipated, and the House and Senate budget increased new Chapter 70 aid to over \$1 million. We conducted an analysis of the Governor's budget addition to identify the areas that account for this increase. The analysis revealed that only a small portion of the addition is due to adjustments in the formula for benefits and maintenance; most of the addition is meant to address the educational needs of students. Once the FY20 budget is finalized and we receive an updated foundation formula, we will update that analysis.

In terms of the circuit breaker, the superintendent worked with the Coalition for Special Education Funding to present to the legislature the urgent need to fully fund the circuit breaker, and collected the signatures of 220 superintendents and special education administrators in support of full funding. The superintendent also presented to over 100 legislators and legislative aides on the need to fully fund the circuit breaker. If these efforts are successful, they may provide us with

additional resources to further improve the services and supports we offer our students and families.

In the area of financial management, we closely monitored and managed our budget, ensuring that we maintained a balanced budget. In addition, we continued to build the circuit breaker reserve so that we have sufficient resources for unanticipated placement costs. We also managed our full-day kindergarten account in a way that enabled the district to reduce the annual tuition for full-day kindergarten by \$200 without expending additional general expense resources. With an additional \$75,000 appropriated to reduce tuition by another \$200, we are now within reach of eliminating full-day tuition in FY21 or FY22.

GOAL 7: The superintendent will work with the assistant superintendent for teaching and learning and key stakeholders on the development of potential options for later start times for secondary students, and will provide objective information concerning the benefits and drawbacks of various options to the School Committee to enable it to evaluate the feasibility of and receptivity to the potential options so that the School Committee can make an effective decision. (Standard II: Management and Operations; District Improvement Goal)

Evidence/Product: A report on the feedback and proposed options for changing start times, along with an explanation of the positive and negative implications of each option and an assessment of its feasibility, effectiveness and acceptability.

Key Accomplishments:

- ✓ *Established the School Start Time Working Group to explore later school day start times at the secondary level.*
- ✓ *Supported the Working Group in its year-long activities, which included:*
 - ◆ *Multiple public forums and a guest presenter*
 - ◆ *Examination of school start time options, costs, and other implications*
 - ◆ *A communication plan to keep the community informed*
- ✓ *Contracted with a school transportation specialist to examine ways to optimize our bus routes.*
- ✓ *In the process of disseminating three surveys to seek feedback from parents, students, and faculty/staff.*

The School Start Time Working Group began work this year to explore later school start times at the secondary level. The charge of the working group is to:

- Develop potential options for later start times for secondary students.
- Provide objective information to the School Committee as to the benefits and drawbacks of various options.
- Provide wide stakeholder feedback to support the School Committee in evaluating the feasibility of and receptivity to potential options.
- Develop a report on the feedback and proposed options for changing school start times.

The School Committee developed guiding principles as a way to support effective decision making. The guiding principles include:

- Impact on student wellbeing (physical, mental health, and academic performance)
- Impact on family and staff schedules (work schedules, before/after-school childcare arrangements, homework)
- Impact on extracurricular activities (athletics, drama, music, clubs) and after-school jobs
- Cost to families and district (transportation costs, before/after-school childcare costs)
- Consultation with AEA
- Coordination with other Merrimack Valley Communities

The School Start Time Working Group is facilitated by Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Sandy Trach and includes principals at each level (Pamela Lathrop/Michelle Costa, Patrick Bucco, and Philip Conrad), as well as representative school district stakeholders (Shannon Scully, Kerry Costello, Mary Lu Walsh, and Nicole Kieser). The working group typically meets twice each month.

To launch the initiative within the community, APS hosted Dr. Judith Owens, Director of Sleep Medicine at Boston Children's Hospital and Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Owens conducted a presentation on the consequences of insufficient sleep, as well as the evidence of an 8:30 a.m. school start time as a way to optimize the health of adolescents.

The School Start Time Working Group focused its work on identifying and examining viable school transportation options for elementary and middle/high school levels. With the input and assistance of the transportation coordinator, several school start time options were drafted and studied:

1. Status quo (continue with the 2019-20 school start times)
2. Elementary schools start before the secondary level (7:30-7:45 a.m. for elementary)
3. Elementary continues to start after secondary, but with a 9:00-9:15 a.m. start to allow middle/high school to begin at 8:30 a.m.

Each option is cost-neutral because it uses the existing number of drivers and buses, and maintains the same bus routes as the current school year.

To examine the question of a later school start time at the secondary level and implications for our school transportation system, the district independently contracted with a school transportation specialist to examine ways to optimize our bus routes. This, along with our own continued study, may lead to identification of cost options to possibly eliminate B runs, shorten bus routes and/or compress interval time between tiers of busing. The superintendent, assistant superintendent, and transportation coordinator also communicated with the private school principals and directors in Andover to share the work and timeline of the School Start Time Working Group, as well as the potential impact on their transportation times.

The School Start Time Working Group met with with community stakeholders such as public safety, the AHS Athletic Director, AYS after-school childcare, and the APS facility rental coordinator. Draft school start time options were shared and implications discussed. This process of meeting with community stakeholders continues to serve as a valuable means of insight into understanding school start time scenarios and potential impacts.

A comprehensive communication plan was developed and shared with School Committee.

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| ● October 2018–October 2019 | School Start Time Working Group meets |
| ● March–April 2019 | PAC/Informational meetings |
| ● May–June 2019 | Public forums |
| ● May–June 2019 | Student, faculty/staff, and parent surveys |
| ● September 2019 | Survey results shared at SC meeting |
| ● September–October 2019 | Public forums |
| ● October 2019 | School start time report presented to SC |

A webpage was developed to provide up-to-date information on the School Start Time initiative. The SchoolStartTimes@andoverma.us e-mail address was developed and posted for feedback. A *Warrior Wednesdays* article was also published on the topic.

Significant information gathering occurred with other towns who have made a school start time change or who are considering one in the near future. The working group accrued and archived many resources on school start times and Massachusetts schools involved in this same initiative. This collection of resources has been helpful in our overall process.

Assistant Superintendent Sandy Trach and Andover School Committee member Shannon Scully

visited numerous school PACs and the AHS Student Government to provide an overview of the initiative and seek feedback. The AEA President has served on the working group and a written update was provided to the AEA executive board.

Two public forums were scheduled to provide a broader view of the School Start Time goals and inquiry process and to seek public feedback: Wednesday, May 22, 2019, at Doherty Middle School and Tuesday, June 11, 2019, at West Middle School. The forums were/will be recorded to be shared at later air dates.

The School Start Time Working Group developed three surveys tailored to students, parents, and faculty and staff to communicate possible start time scenarios, and to seek feedback on school start time options and related issues. These surveys will be released in early June and will remain open through the end of this school year. All data will be aggregated, analyzed, and shared with the public and School Committee in early fall 2019.

In October 2019, the working group intends to provide a report on the goals, school start time scenarios, potential costs, implications and feedback of a later school start time at the secondary level, in order to thoroughly inform the School Committee prior to the FY21 school budget process.

Attachment:

APS Agile Strategic Sprint Reports—June 2019

APS AGILE STRATEGIC SPRINT REPORTS

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING SPRINT

Key Accomplishments:

- ✓ *Provided additional faculty and administrators with training in Responsive Classroom.*
- ✓ *Sent a team of teachers and administrators from Bancroft to the yearlong training program provided by Willam James College.*
- ✓ *Expanded the use of morning meetings to almost all elementary classrooms.*
- ✓ *Implemented the Where Everyone Belongs (WEB) program in all middle schools.*
- ✓ *Designed the One Community, One Nation elementary social studies curriculum to focus on diversity and equity.*
- ✓ *Emphasized diversity and cultural proficiency at the secondary level through professional development facilitated by Facing History and Ourselves.*
- ✓ *Administered the Panorama survey for a second year to chart progress in fostering a positive school climate, and this year added questions to examine students' social awareness, growth mindset, and grit.*

This year the SEL sprint focused on staff development, program implementation and a student survey on school culture and social-emotional skill areas. Building on the past two years of professional development in Responsive Classroom strategies, the district again offered a Responsive Classroom summer institute for 25 elementary teachers. In addition, a number of elementary teachers and administrators took the second-level Responsive Classroom course. One of our elementary principals and two teachers are in the process of becoming Responsive Classroom trainers so that we can offer training and support in-house.

In addition to the professional development in Responsive Classroom, we sent a second team of four teachers and administrators to the yearlong training program provided by Willam James College. This year the team was from Bancroft. Meanwhile, the team that participated last year from High Plain offered a district-sponsored staff development course for 25 participants, including teachers from every level of the district's staff. The course provided classroom educators with foundational knowledge in social-emotional learning, an understanding of the positive impacts of developing a safe and inclusive classroom/school-wide culture, and insights into using trauma-sensitive practices to mitigate the effects of trauma on learning. Next year, teams from West Middle School and Doherty Middle School will participate in the William James program.

As a result of the professional development our teachers have participated in over the past three years, most elementary teachers are utilizing morning meetings and other Responsive Classroom strategies to foster a caring sense of community in their classrooms and to teach social skills. Once we add time to the school day next year, many teachers will also be implementing closing meetings that help bring a positive closure to the day and enhance the sense of community within the classroom. This summer the district will again be offering a Responsive Classroom summer institute for elementary teachers. The district will sponsor a level one institute and a level two advanced institute. The Elementary Advanced Course is designed to increase teachers' knowledge and expand their teaching strategies and practices to strengthen the Responsive Classroom approach they are already using.

This year all the middle schools implemented the Where Everyone Belongs (WEB) program. Middle school administrators and teachers also began to explore possible ways to integrate Responsive Classroom strategies. At the high school, teachers and administrators worked on the structure and curriculum for H1 to better support the advisory program.

At all levels we have launched significant work in the area of cultural proficiency and cultural awareness. At the elementary level, we selected classroom libraries that provide rich reading

resources that encompass stories set in other countries and cultures, writers from other countries, and stories whose main characters are diverse racially, ethnically and nationally. In addition, the *One Community, One Nation* curriculum—which integrates social studies, literacy, and arts—focuses on diversity and equity. Examples include studying four non-European countries from around the world in second grade and studying the evolution of civil liberties and human rights in U.S. history in the fourth and fifth grades.

At the secondary level, all administrators and the entire faculty participated in professional development on cultural proficiency during the full professional day and three early release days. This work was facilitated by Facing History and Ourselves and focused on exploring cultural differences, discussing race and racism, and addressing stereotypes and stereotype threats. The goal of all of the work on diversity and cultural proficiency is to help create safe and culturally responsive environments that honor and value the richness of our diversity.

This summer, a small group of teachers and administrators from all three middle schools will begin work on proposals for a revised schedule that includes dedicated time to support social-emotional learning. West Middle School teachers concluded a yearlong professional learning group that afforded them the opportunity to research and pilot several programs designed to support students' social-emotional needs. Their findings and recommendations were presented to the full West Middle School faculty in May and will be used as a resource for all three middle schools going forward.

Finally, the district administered the Panorama survey for a second year to chart progress in fostering a positive school climate. We repeated last year's surveys on students' perceptions of school safety, sense of belonging, and engagement. We added survey scales on social awareness, growth mindset, and grit. The surveys were administered to students in grades three through twelve. In addition, we began to survey faculty on their perceptions of school climate. We discussed the results on early release days and at faculty meetings. In essence, our students have a strong sense of engagement and sense of belonging. Their sense of safety declined this year but that was also reflected in national trends, probably caused by the highly-publicized incidents of school violence over the past year. In terms of the social-emotional skills scales, our students had a generally strong sense of social awareness but were not as strong in growth mindset or grit. The discussion of the results helped us better understand our students' perceptions and will assist us in strengthening their social skills and enhancing the climate in our schools. We will administer the Panorama Survey again in late November or early December 2019.

MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SPRINT

Key Accomplishments:

- ✓ *Trained four more facilitators for the RENEW program to provide clinical wrap-around services to individual at-risk students at AHS.*
- ✓ *Piloted a middle school program that offers tiered support—therapeutic academic blocks, group instruction in coping strategies, and individual mental health counseling.*
- ✓ *Secured a multi-year Department of Health grant to expand this middle school program to more sites and students.*
- ✓ *Piloted a consultation team approach at the elementary level to respond to acute situations.*
- ✓ *Piloted inclusionary services for elementary and middle school students with significant social skill deficits.*
- ✓ *Developed a new Instructional Assistant staffing model that allows our eight Registered Behavior Technicians to move flexibly to elementary students who need them and to work collaboratively with the Board Certified Behavior Analysts.*
- ✓ *Collaborated with a local clinic on a Department of Public Health grant to launch a clinic-in-the-schools program to provide mental health counseling for students and parents.*

A child's mental health is critical for success in school and life. There is a direct link between mental and behavioral health and school climate, high school graduation rates, achievement scores, and the prevention of risk behaviors such as drug and alcohol use. About seven percent of children ages 3-17 are diagnosed with anxiety, which means more than 400 Andover children may be experiencing clinically significant levels of anxiety. Many more (up to one in six) are diagnosed with other mental and behavioral health challenges, and evidence suggests still others are undiagnosed and untreated.

Since 2014, the number of Andover children with identified mental and behavioral health disorders has more than doubled, mirroring national mental health trends. Moreover, our data indicate fewer than 25 percent of Andover students who receive regular school social work services access clinical mental health and/or medical intervention outside of school. Children with mental and behavioral health disorders make up the largest population of students placed in out-of-district settings—and we know from the literature that children perform better and make more progress in less-restrictive environments. Simply put, the goal of the mental and behavioral health sprint team is to improve and increase mental and behavioral health services in order to prevent the potential catastrophic impact of mental health conditions such as hospitalization and out-of-district placement. Our approach includes a multi-tiered system of support model with three goals: 1) to reach more students, 2) to increase the intensity and variety of services available in the school setting, and 3) to connect more students to clinical mental health treatment not available in school settings.

In a multi-tiered system of support model, tier one supports include universal screening tools such as the Panorama survey and school climate programs such as Responsive Classroom. These universal supports are managed through the work of the social-emotional learning sprint. Supports in tiers two and three include more specific interventions targeting groups of students with similar identified mental and behavioral health needs, intensive interventions for students with clinical mental health diagnoses, and crisis intervention. The mental and behavioral health sprint focuses on these more targeted and intensive programs.

For example, the Transitions program at Andover High School includes tier II supports designed to provide temporary interventions and tier III supports to help students and families manage crisis situations. Until recently, however, there were no services for at-risk students at AHS. Students who are at risk may exhibit behaviors such as drug and alcohol use, high absenteeism, poor grades, and low engagement. Rehabilitation for Empowerment, Natural Supports, Education, and Work (RENEW) is a new program that uses school and community support teams to provide clinical wrap-around services to individual students. Last year, four AHS staff were trained as facilitators. Facilitators are coaches who work with the student's team and help the student through the RENEW planning and personal goal-setting process. Our facilitators include administrators, nurses, special educators, and social workers. This year, we added four more facilitators. RENEW teams received ongoing consultation, coaching and formal training through the Institute on Disabilities at the University of New Hampshire. So far, the RENEW team has worked with 15 students.

At the middle school level, we increased the number of students receiving services, as well as the intensity of those services, through a pilot program based on tiered levels of support. The program team includes trained partner teachers from regular education, case coordination from a psychologist and special educator, and consultation from a social worker and our clinical director. This year, we staffed the program by reorganizing existing specialists.

The program includes three levels of support: therapeutic academic support blocks for students who need a home base, direct instruction in coping strategies for groups of students who require more direct intervention, and targeted mental health counseling for students who require more intensive and individualized intervention. The therapeutic support blocks are part of the schools' existing schedule during the regular Academic Connections blocks. The program also includes

the Second Step social-emotional learning curriculum and more individualized and directed therapeutic intervention modules for specific students.

Over the course of the year, we collected data to determine whether we were achieving measurable reductions in symptom severity as indicated by the number of unscheduled visits to the support center, a reduction in levels of anxiety as measured by self-reporting scales, and a reduction in out-of-district placements, as indicated by comparison data from prior years. Overall, students showed a small to moderate reduction in the frequency of unscheduled visits to the program, indicating better ability to stay in class and self-manage until scheduled support times. Students also showed a moderate to significant reduction in their levels of anxiety on self-reporting scales. The out-of-district data is also promising. Over time, the program in the pilot school has had an average of three out-of-district placements per year for mental health reasons. Although we will need more than one year of data to make definitive statements about the efficacy of the program, there were no out-of-district placements this year and one student was able to return from an out-of-district placement with support from the program.

In order to expand the program, we wrote and secured a Department of Health grant. This competitive grant award of \$100,000 per year for up to ten years will allow us to increase school psychologist and teacher support. The grant will also provide the resources for the district to initiate a collaborative and innovative referral program with community mental health providers. Finally, the grant will allow us to improve data collection to assist in determining racial inequities and health disparities that contribute to mental illness.

At the elementary level, we piloted a consultation team program. The consultation team includes our clinical director, social work coordinator, department head for special programs, and a school psychologist. The school psychologists have a new rotating schedule to staff the program. The program provides additional supports to a school when there is an unexpected or acute situation such as a significant change in behavior or mental health status of an individual student. The function of the program is similar to the function of the Transitions program at the high school, but the supports are consultative rather than direct.

This year the support team responded to eleven referrals that could have resulted in out-of-district placements. In ten of the eleven cases, the consulting team was able to support the direct service team to design and implement interventions that resulted in a lower level of need.

The mental and behavioral health sprint team also worked on increasing services for students with significant social skill deficits. Students with severe social skill deficits placed in substantially separate programs can become more and more isolated over time. Our goal is to reduce substantially separate programs and increase services offered at all schools by adopting a more inclusionary approach. This year, we worked with an elementary team to coordinate a comprehensive menu of program services such as behavior plans, social skills lessons, and organizational supports. The team included a special education teacher from each elementary school, Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and social skills curriculum expert Lucy Dufresne, special programs department coordinator Heather Eigen, and elementary department coordinator Angelique DeCoste. After piloting the program at some of our elementary schools this year, we are ready to expand the new more inclusive program to all elementary schools.

At the middle school level, this population of students had been served in a substantially separate SAIL program at Wood Hill. This year, we began to include students in core content and integrated club and social activities. Next year, the program will be expanded across all three middle schools.

Another way we worked to expand inclusionary opportunities and intensity of services was to increase the number of trained staff working directly with students. Our new Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) training program is designed to place highly trained assistant staff with students who require emotional and behavioral intervention. A Registered Behavior Technician is a

credentialed instructional assistant who practices under the supervision of a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. After a rigorous training course, applied practice, and practical and written exams, we are pleased that eight out of ten RBT candidates from our own IA staff have earned the RBT license. We have developed a new Instructional Assistant staffing model to allow the RBTs to move flexibly to students who need them and to work collaboratively with the BCBA's. This model will increase the intensity and scope of behavioral services across all five of our elementary schools.

We also made substantial progress on our third goal of connecting more students to clinical mental health services. It is important for families to have access to emergency, hospital, family therapy, and 24-hour services not available in school settings. However, many of these services are outside our sphere of influence. One way we have begun to think about bridging the gap between private, community, and school services is through a clinic-in-the-schools program. A clinic partnership program is designed to provide mental health counseling to both students and families who do not access treatment outside the school setting. Last year, we reached out to several potential clinic partners. This year, we collaborated with a local clinic on a Department of Public Health grant to fund and launch the program.

AHS SCHEDULE AND TRANSITION SPRINT

Key Accomplishments:

- ✓ *Arranged for eighth and ninth graders to visit each other's schools to help prepare middle schoolers for a successful transition to AHS.*
- ✓ *Facilitated opportunities for middle and high school science teachers to shadow each other to better align their curricular and instructional expectations.*
- ✓ *Conducted multiple support activities to assist eighth graders with the high school course selection process and to inform them about extracurricular opportunities.*
- ✓ *Continued to refine the 7+H schedule.*
- ✓ *Surveyed AHS teachers and students about the effectiveness of H block and the yearlong schedule.*

Although refinement work on the 7+H schedule continues, this sprint has shifted its focus to better address the transition between middle and high school to improve students' chances of success. The team, which includes middle and high school administrators and program coordinators, planned a number of initiatives to promote a better understanding of teaching expectations among teachers at each level, as well as programs for students and parents so they have a better understanding of what opportunities the high school offers and can effect a better transition to the high school.

The extent and depth of these programs grew significantly this year. In October, the eighth graders from all three middle schools visited the high school to give them a sense of what it will be like to be a student at AHS. As a follow-up, during H block ninth grade students visited each of the middle schools and hosted focus groups for middle school administrators and teachers to discuss their understanding of the high school experience. Science teachers at the middle and high school levels shadowed each other to see firsthand what their colleagues do at the other level and to better align their curricular and instructional expectations.

This winter, AHS administrators and program coordinators visited each of the middle schools and provided presentations about course opportunities at the high school and the course selection process. In addition, the high school held a curriculum night for eighth grade students and their parents to introduce them to club and extracurricular opportunities, as well as course opportunities and the course selection process. High school guidance counselors followed up this event with visits to each of the middle schools to help with the course selection and transition process. The content area program coordinators, in conjunction with our video production classes and Andover TV, created videos that describe course content and academic opportunities within each subject area. The videos were posted online to help students better understand the

offerings in each curricular area. Finally, high school guidance counselors are working with middle school administrators and teachers to identify students who would find the AVID program helpful in supporting their success at the high school and beyond.

The sprint is still engaged in refinement of the 7+H schedule. Administrators are working with teachers to create effective, collaborative planning periods and professional learning groups (PLGs) for next year. There are two collaborative planning periods for each faculty member in an eight-day cycle. Teachers will have opportunities to develop projects with their peers and bring those projects to completion during their PLG time.

In late January, a survey was administered to students and teachers about the effectiveness of H block and the yearlong schedule. The results of those surveys are being prepared for dissemination to the School Committee and the entire school community in June 2019. In addition, the high school administered the Panorama survey to all high school students. The Panorama data has been shared with the faculty, who spent an entire professional day working with it and other data to consider steps towards making AHS an identity-safe school.

PROGRESS MONITORING SPRINT

Key Accomplishments:

- ✓ *Continued training to enhance our analysis of benchmark assessments, which enables us to track overall progress in ELA and math.*
- ✓ *Trained 12 teachers and administrators from all the elementary and middle schools on how to best utilize MAP data to inform instruction who then trained teachers at their schools.*
- ✓ *Pursued an in-depth analysis of our MCAS summative data from last spring, cross-referencing that data with our other formative and benchmark data.*
- ✓ *Initiated a search for a technology platform with a dashboard that can synthesize the data we are collecting; piloted one dashboard and determined it did not meet our needs.*
- ✓ *Began working to develop common assessments in each discipline at the middle and high school levels.*

The goal of the progress monitoring sprint is to establish a data-reflective culture in all schools. In such a culture, all educators use data to drive instruction and answer questions pertaining to student growth in the moment and over time. To achieve this result, progress monitoring should be formative and ongoing, documented and recorded regularly in a data system, used to make decisions around success of interventions for individual students, and used to make decisions at a systems level around school-wide interventions.

Over the past three years, we have increased the number of assessments and instructional supports that provide high-quality data to teachers, as well as professional development in how to best understand and utilize these data. We have also restructured faculty meetings and other venues to give teachers collaborative time to review and study the data so they can make adjustments in their instruction and provide targeted supports to particular students or groups of students. Currently, teachers are collecting and analyzing data with a variety of assessment tools that include universal screening, just-in-time performance assessment, benchmark and summative assessments—all designed to determine appropriate instructional levels, groupings and interventions for every student.

All students in grades K-5 participate in the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) universal screening tool three times each year. Students who demonstrate a need for intervention are monitored and assessed every six weeks. Students are assessed in phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency with connected text, reading comprehension, and vocabulary to determine appropriate instructional focus. Principals, assistant principals, and reading specialists continue to participate in collaborative sessions for analyzing

the DIBELS data and in training for how to conduct data meetings to determine appropriate instructional reading focus areas for every child.

At the elementary and middle school levels, teachers are using adaptive computer-aided instruction in reading (Lexia) and in math (Dreambox at the elementary level and IXL at the middle school level) that allows children to learn and practice skills. These programs not only provide students with instruction and practice through adaptive instructional technology, but also collect data on students' mastery of skills. They provide just-in-time performance data for teachers that then can be used to ensure an appropriate instructional focus and effective groupings.

We continued to enhance our analysis of benchmark assessments, which enables us to track overall progress in ELA and math. Students in grades three through six, and older students as needed, have participated in three administrations this year of Measure of Academic Performance (MAP) in ELA and math. MAP is a nationally normed standardized test that determines a student's RIT (Rasch Unit) score, which represents the range of where a child should be based on state standards for appropriate instructional focus. MAP also provides Lexile range (reading range) for individual students and the appropriate text level. To expand the utility of MAP data for instructional adjustments, we have trained twelve teachers and administrators from all the elementary and middle schools on how to best utilize MAP data to inform instruction. These teachers and administrators have become the designated trainers for their schools.

Finally, we have pursued an in-depth analysis of our MCAS summative data from last spring and have been cross-referencing that data with our other formative and benchmark data. As a result, administrators and teachers have seen that we can create significant improvement by using the data to adjust and target instruction. They have grown more comfortable and confident in understanding and using these data.

Given all the data we are now collecting, we recognize there is a need to purchase a technology platform with a dashboard that synthesizes the data so that teachers can more easily see how students are doing in the moment and over time. Having a dashboard that presents data from multiple assessments in an easily understandable and searchable matrix will assist teachers in delivering the appropriate instruction and intervention based on individual student need. As a result, the progress monitoring sprint worked with the director of digital learning and the application team to research different data dashboards. The OTUS platform was selected and South Elementary School engaged in a pilot this year. We determined that while OTUS was able to house various data in one location, it was cumbersome to use, required significant customization, was not able to generate the kind of reports we were looking for to drive instruction, and would not be able to include school-based common assessments. We concluded that OTUS did not meet our needs.

The sprint also began working with the assistant superintendent for teaching and learning as well as the curriculum program coordinators to develop common assessments in each discipline at the middle and high school levels in order to strengthen the vertical and horizontal alignment and consistency between schools and levels. Common assessments help teachers collaborate on instruction and ensure students have similar curricular expectations and experiences. Currently, the curricular programs we use provide some of these common assessments. There are common pre-post assessments in the math program, a common writing rubric for ELA, and common assessments offered in the FOSS elementary science program. We plan to build on this foundation in the years ahead.

ACCESSIBILITY SPRINT

Key Accomplishments:

- ✓ *Provided professional development to spread the use of TextHelp and placed training modules on our website.*

- ✓ *Provided a graduate credit course for 24 teachers on universal design for learning.*
- ✓ *Offered an online course on how to create a UDL classroom using Google Applications.*
- ✓ *Gained approval for the purchase of a learning management system.*

The accessibility sprint focused on increasing understanding of accessibility and universal design for learning and on evaluating platforms that will help to ensure that all curriculum is accessible.

Last year the district purchased TextHelp to improve accessibility of written communication. Our focus this year was on providing professional development for teachers and students and letting more people know about this tool's availability. To accomplish this goal, the Digital Learning Department offered a TechByte Technology series on TextHelp. Digital learning coaches provided students with tutorials, one-on-one demonstrations, and modeling. Information was sent to parents through the PACs and PTOs. TextHelp learning modules are now available on the district's website for teachers, students and parents.

In the area of universal design for learning (UDL), Sara Stetson, Tracy Crowley and Joanne Najarian completed teaching a UDL course for 24 teachers in the district. For the final project, teachers were asked to create a design for a UDL-ized classroom that welcomes and embraces ALL learners. The best design was awarded \$10,000 from a special education grant to transform the teacher's classroom. Many of the teachers took advantage of the graduate credit for this course. Sara, Tracy and Joanne submitted their course for the CAST Symposium and they have been selected to present in August 2019.

In addition, Joanne Najarian offered an online course entitled "Google Apps UDL/DI." This course focused on creating a UDL classroom using Google Applications. Twenty-two teachers participated in the course.

All administrators in the district continued to engage in classroom observations focused on the utilization of UDL principles and strategies. Using the clickable UDL rubric, administrators were able to document strategies that teachers have incorporated into their classroom instruction.

Finally, the purchase of a learning management system (LMS) was approved for FY20. The Digital Learning and Town/School Application team will be working this summer to implement and onboard the new system. In the fall we will begin piloting the new system with teachers in the district. The Accessibility Sprint Team has begun collecting UDL resources to share through the intranet portion of the LMS.

INNOVATION SPRINT

Key Accomplishments:

- ✓ *Expanded the use of design thinking to provide students with a hands-on approach to solving problems posed in the curriculum.*
- ✓ *Prepared to help lead and host the National Capstone Consortium Summer Summit.*
- ✓ *Prepared to launch the new digital student resume, which enables students to demonstrate and exhibit ownership of their learning, with capstone students in grades five and eight.*
- ✓ *Significantly expanded the number of students participating in the Capstone course and in capstone projects at grades five and eight.*
- ✓ *Created the IDEASstudio with fabrication equipment donated through ACE so that students could enhance their pursuit of engineering and design projects.*
- ✓ *Continued our efforts to help students think globally by exposing more students to the Global Pathways Program, the global portal, the Global Summit, and the world-ready lab.*

The innovation sprint focused on collaborative curriculum development and building professional capacity in order to create dynamic, authentic and personalized learning experiences for students. The district has defined authentic learning as strategies that "engage students in the

collaborative creation of products or solutions that require extended focus over time, match the complex real-world tasks and investigations of professionals in practice, and integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines.” To achieve this, the innovation sprint and the director of strategic innovation have been involved in working with faculty on a number of innovative practices and programs such as design thinking, the capstone program, global pathways, and the new student resume. These projects individually and collectively have expanded not only *what* we teach, but also *how* we teach.

Design Thinking

Design thinking is an instructional strategy that engages students in creative problem solving. Over 100 Andover teachers have been trained in design thinking methods through various professional development efforts. These educators have, in turn, shared their learning with other teachers system-wide. An example of this sharing was the three-day “Introduction to Design Thinking” workshop held last summer. The teacher participants continued to offer workshops for their colleagues throughout 2018-19 to expand professional learning.

Design thinking is the instructional model used in our maker spaces and across K-12 classrooms to provide students with a hands-on approach to problem solving as they construct and test solutions to various problems posed in the curriculum. One example of design thinking applied to reading is a strategy known as “novel engineering,” whereby students use the design thinking cycle to identify a problem in a story, build empathy, and then collaborate to develop unique strategies or solutions. Another example is the construction and testing of colonial-era homes to determine what materials would best enable the settlers to survive the New England winter. Integrating the science standard of temperature loss, the math standard of graphing, and the social studies standard of colonial history, students were asked to put themselves in the place of Plymouth colonists and were challenged to figure out, “How are you going to survive the first winter?” Students built three-dimensional houses and graphed the projected temperature loss over time. By focusing on an authentic task to explore real-world challenges, teachers found a motivating way to teach the curricular standards. Novel engineering is aligned with universal design for learning (UDL) strategies that combine literacy, social-emotional learning, and the “maker mindset.” Teachers continue to engage in professional development to learn this approach and actively implement it with students.

Additionally, the AHS IDEASudio (a state-of-the-art fabrication laboratory for Innovation, Engineering, Design, Entrepreneurship, Arts and Sciences) was created to support this dynamic approach to design and prototyping. Students in the IDEASudio collaborate across content areas in creating 3D-printed prototypes for musical instruments, laser-cut parts for the robotics competition, and sewn circuits for wearable technology projects. To support growth of the IDEASudio, H-Block and after-school workshops were offered to train and prepare students and faculty for digital fabrication. We are proud of the fact that every machine in the IDEASudio is booked and producing student-created products every day.

Looking ahead, an Andover Faculty Fellows program is in the process of being designed to support teachers already trained in design thinking. The fellows will model and support other APS educators to implement these same principles in the classroom and community.

Capstone Projects

Capstone projects allow students to pursue a challenging, driving question and engage in rigorous research and project-based learning, while also receiving ongoing feedback from multiple stakeholders. The district’s capstone projects have grown significantly since their inception. In 2016, the pilot began with five students at the high school. Today, the program has grown to over 150 students across seven schools, and includes grade five and grade eight. Originally a non-credit experiment, the Senior Capstone at AHS now receives credit as a full-year

English course, with substantial research, writing, and presentation tasks involved in each capstone project.

In April 2019, for the second year, a K-12 capstone mentoring session was held among elementary, middle and high school capstone students. High school students served as mentors and advisors to the fifth and eighth graders working on their capstone projects. In May 2019, student capstone “TED-type Talks” were held in the Collins Center. These efforts culminated in late May, when the work of our students in capstone, global pathways, robotics, engineering and bio-technology was celebrated by more than 300 parents and community members at our IDEA Showcase.

The new student resume, a digital resume that enables students to demonstrate and exhibit ownership of their learning, will be initiated with capstone students in grades five and eight. Students will build their own resumes to answer such questions as, “What was the most meaningful learning experience you’ve had this year?” and “How would you demonstrate what you have learned through that experience?” The resume will also provide students with an opportunity to present their growth in leadership, service and other areas that are important reflections of who they are. This effort will allow students to reflect, create, curate and share their learning within their peer community and beyond. This type of digital resume also becomes a platform for students to further explore and share their interests, passions and pursuits.

We are also proud that Andover Public Schools will, once again, help lead and host the National Capstone Consortium Summer Summit, where 200 schools across the nation will gather to share and learn from one another’s capstone projects.

Global Pathways Program

The Global Pathway is an integrated, multi-year track in which students take courses and engage in experiences focused on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and leads to a Global Scholar Endorsement on a student’s transcript. The Global Pathways Program began in 2015 with 15 students and one faculty member. Today, it has expanded to over 200 students and 10 faculty members. This expansion is attributed to the expertise of the faculty facilitating the program and to the desire of our families to prepare their children for a complex and global future. Another global initiative is the development of the world-ready lab (grades 6-12), which utilizes the global portal to integrate world language learning and native speakers to promote social entrepreneurship and pursue design challenges that explore the world’s most significant issues through the United Nations Goals for Sustainable Global Development.

As part of our ongoing commitment to global education, Andover Public Schools continues to use the global portal as a PreK-12 teaching tool, as well as a community education and outreach vehicle. To support this work, the district designed and held a K-12 workshop on integrating global citizenship into teaching and learning, and spearheaded several AHS global citizenship curriculum development workshops. Andover High School also held its 4th Annual Global Summit, where over 150 AHS students engaged in a day of global design challenges with global business organizations and the United Nations Goals for Sustainable Global Development.

The Innovation sprint is committed to work across subject areas and grade levels to ensure that Andover Public Schools continues to create enriching and authentic learning experiences so that every student is prepared for a successful future.

[The literacy sprint update is reported under goal 3 above.]