

End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent



Superintendent: Dr. Sheldon Berman

Evaluator: Shannon Scully

Shannon Scully

25 July 2020

Name

Signature

Date

Step 1: Assess Progress Toward Goals (*Reference performance goals; check one for each set of goal[s].*)

Professional Practice Goal(s) (FY20 goal 1)	<input type="checkbox"/> Did Not Meet	<input type="checkbox"/> Some Progress	<input type="checkbox"/> Significant Progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeded
Student Learning Goal(s) (FY20 goal 3 and goal 4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Did Not Meet	<input type="checkbox"/> Some Progress	<input type="checkbox"/> Significant Progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeded
District Improvement Goal(s) (FY20 goal 2, goal 5, goal 6 and goal 7)	<input type="checkbox"/> Did Not Meet	<input type="checkbox"/> Some Progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant Progress	<input type="checkbox"/> Met	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeded

Step 2: Assess Performance on Standards (*Reference Performance Ratings per Standard; check one box for each Standard.*)

Unsatisfactory = Performance on a standard or overall has not significantly improved following a rating of *Needs Improvement*, or performance is consistently below the requirements of a standard or overall and is considered inadequate, or both.

Needs Improvement/Developing = Performance on a standard or overall is below the requirements of a standard or overall but is not considered to be Unsatisfactory at the time. Improvement is necessary and expected.

Proficient = *Proficient practice is understood to be fully satisfactory. This is the rigorous expected level of performance.*

Exemplary = A rating of *Exemplary* indicates that practice significantly exceeds *Proficient* and could serve as a model of practice regionally or statewide.

	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
Standard I: Instructional Leadership (included in FY20 goal 3 and goal 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standard II: Management and Operations (included in FY20 goal 2, goal 6 and goal 7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standard III: Family and Community Engagement (included in FY20 goal 4 and goal 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standard IV: Professional Culture (included in FY20 goal 1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Step 3: Rate Overall Summative Performance (*Based on Step 1 and Step 2 ratings; check one.*)

Unsatisfactory

Needs Improvement

Proficient

Exemplary

Step 4: Add Evaluator Comments

Comments and analysis are recommended for any rating but are required for an overall summative rating of *Exemplary*, *Needs Improvement* or *Unsatisfactory*.

Comments:

At the outset, it must be acknowledged that the 2019/20 school year contained extraordinary one-in-a-century challenges, and that under Dr. Berman's leadership the district did a remarkable job responding in real-time to the distress brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the surprising end of in-person learning in March 2020. The logistics, alone, of moving to an all-online learning environment were difficult, but enabling teachers to continue to reach students and provide necessary supports – both social-emotional and academic – was done well. District outreach to each student on an IEP during this time was particularly important and under enormously trying circumstances. There is, of course, always room for improvement, but the efforts by teachers, staff, administrators, building leadership, district families, and the Superintendent need to be commended. Important lessons learned, including feedback gained through community surveys, will be carried into the 2020/21 school year.

It is understandable that these changes brought a significant shift in district priorities and, therefore, activity towards accomplishing goals set for the Superintendent in the fall of 2019. Nonetheless, overall, it was a productive year for the district.

Dr. Berman's leadership continues to consider students first, and emphasizes a well-rounded education. He remains a visionary leader, though this year saw several events that made it acutely evident his strategic focus can sometimes concede meaningful connection to and appreciation of day-to-day operations. Where this is the case, Dr. Berman is encouraged to be more open and available to feedback – even when it requires re-alignment of a strongly-held vision – and to rely more heavily on the experience of his leadership team and other educators in practical matters of curriculum implementation and understanding of school culture. Misreading the room can be a particular blind-spot, and there are situations where conjecture creates unnecessary ambiguity and confusion; When there is opportunity to solidify information, it make sense to defer hunches so that facts can be widely delivered with confidence, even if that takes longer.

As one example, it is disappointing that deeply problematic aspects of the South School culture festered without resolution, eventually reaching a damaging boiling point this year. As another, Dr. Berman's keen focus on the implementation details around the new OCON elementary social studies program (an effort which was not explicitly included in his annual goals) was time-consuming and somewhat unusual. Dr. Berman provided direct oversight and every update to the School Committee on this work,

though delegating that authority to the Assistant Superintendent and Program Directors normally charged with curricular programs seems more appropriate. Further, the Superintendent began sharing his vision of 2020/21 return-to-school models and implications even before the conclusion of the 2019/20 school year and before due-diligence began in earnest, and doing so in a way that could have been mistaken as fact or unwavering direction.

Additionally, Dr. Berman is encouraged to build a district culture that values high performance and manages to this standard. The district would benefit from an HR partnership that places staff in roles where they can best be successful, supports meaningful and accurate staff evaluations, and drives accountability.

More feedback specific to Dr. Berman's FY20 work toward formal goals is provided below in the context of DESE-defined "performance standard" categories.

Superintendent's Performance Goals

Superintendents must identify at least one student learning goal, one professional practice goal, and two to four district improvement goals. Goals should be SMART and aligned to at least one focus Indicator from the Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership.

Goals	Focus Indicator(s)	Description	Did Not Meet	Some Progress	Significant Progress	Met	Exceeded
1. Sprint Teams (Professional Practice Goal)	Standard IV: Professional Culture	<p>The superintendent will facilitate progress of the six cross-functional sprint teams and provide regular reports on their progress in order to move forward on the agile strategic plan: Literacy, Transitions, Mental and Behavioral Health, Social-Emotional Learning, Accessibility, and Progress Monitoring.</p> <p><i>Evidence/Product: Each sprint moves forward on action-specific steps identified to achieve its targets. Regular updates of the matrix will be provided to the School Committee in conjunction with verbal updates at regularly scheduled Committee meetings throughout the school year.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. School Facility Projects (District Improvement Goal)	Standard II: Management and Operations	<p>The superintendent will work with the assistant superintendent for finance and administration and the director of facilities to make progress on 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.</p> <p><i>Evidence/Product: Continued progress through the MSBA feasibility phase for the renovation/replacement of West Elementary, a plan for the renovation/addition of 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.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>3. Literacy Curriculum (Student Learning Goal)</p>	<p>Standard I: Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>The superintendent will work with the assistant superintendent of student services and the assistant superintendent for teaching and learning to complete the implementation of a strong core literacy curriculum and interventions that address students' reading issues, including issues related to dyslexia, through: a) purchasing the remaining curricular materials and providing professional development for the second year of a three-year phase-in of a new elementary literacy program; b) enhancing the use of such diagnostic tools as DIBELS, MAP, Lexia, the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), and early screening measures to identify the supports needed for students to be successful as well as areas for program improvement; c) continuing to expand reading interventions and programs at the middle and high school levels; and d) integrating social studies and arts into the elementary literacy program.</p> <p><i>Evidence/Product: Document the use of assessments for early identification, universal screening and progress monitoring, supported by data where appropriate; 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 demonstrated improvement in students' reading performance, particularly for students with language-based reading issues.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4. Data Analysis (Student Learning Goal)</p>	<p>Standard I: Instructional Leadership; Standard III: Family and Community Engagement</p>	<p>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 (including with respect to literacy initiatives described in Goal #3), as well as to assess Andover's performance relative to other comparable communities.</p> <p><i>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 providing trend data on the district's financial investments in comparison to other similar communities.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>5. Communications (District Improvement Goal)</p>	<p>Standard III: Family and Community Engagement</p>	<p>The superintendent will work with the communication director, administrators, faculty, the 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, including from School Committee members, administrators and the public; ensure School Committee receives information and data in a timely manner, consistent with applicable School Committee policy, as needed to evaluate decisions; and, strengthen appreciation of the valuable contributions the district is making to students and the community at large.</p> <p><i>Evidence/Product: Creation and implementation of a district communications plan that addresses various stakeholder groups (including those in the community without APS students) and that builds a bridge to the broader Andover community, including a superintendent listening tour; creation and implementation of a plan with identified tasks and target dates for the update of the APS website in order to enhance usability while ensuring universal accessibility; and timely, strong and consistent communications both internally and externally from the superintendent's office.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>6. Budgeting (District Improvement Goal)</p>	<p>Standard II: Management and Operations</p>	<p>The superintendent will work with the assistant superintendent for finance and administration, the Superintendent's Administrative Team, the School Committee, the town manager and relevant town boards 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, examine opportunities for cost savings, and attempt to reach an early and responsible budget agreement with a particular emphasis on eliminating the fee for full-day kindergarten; and will ensure appropriate Central Office resources are deployed timely and effectively to support the superintendent's progress towards these goals.</p> <p><i>Evidence/Product: Thorough, well-documented budget that enables the district to move forward with consideration for capital needs, support for district initiatives, town funding capacity, and the elimination of tuition for full-day kindergarten; timely and complete financial analyses and other Central Office expertise necessary to support collective bargaining negotiations; deployment of appropriate Central Office resources; financial summaries to accompany financials presented at School Committee meetings; and hiring of an individual to replace the assistant superintendent for finance and administration by June 30, 2020.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. School Start Times (District Improvement Goal)	Standard II: Management and Operations	<p>The superintendent will work with the assistant superintendent for teaching and learning and key stakeholders to refine potential options for later start times for secondary students and 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.</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Standards and Indicators for Effective Administrative Leadership <i>Superintendents should identify 1-2 focus Indicators per Standard aligned to their goals.</i>			
I. Instructional Leadership	II. Management & Operations	III. Family & Community Engagement	IV. Professional Culture
I-A. Curriculum I-B. Instruction I-C. Assessment I-D. Evaluation I-E. Data-Informed Decisionmaking I-F. Student Learning	II-A. Environment II-B. HR Management and Development II-C. Scheduling & Management Information Systems II-D. Law, Ethics and Policies II-E. Fiscal Systems	III-A. Engagement III-B. Sharing Responsibility III-C. Communication III-D. Family Concerns	IV-A. Commitment to High Standards IV-B. Cultural Proficiency IV-C. Communication IV-D. Continuous Learning IV-E. Shared Vision IV-F. Managing Conflict

Superintendent's Performance Rating for Standard I: Instructional Leadership



The Superintendent's FY20 goals toward Standard I: Instructional Leadership were contained in:
 Goal 3, **Literacy Curriculum**; and Goal 4, **Data Analysis**.

	U	NI	P	E
OVERALL Rating for Standard I: Instructional Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes powerful teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments and analysis (recommended for any overall rating; required for overall rating of Exemplary, Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory):

Efforts to improve district literacy curriculum continue to get a lot of worthwhile investment and focus, including deployment of new programs; administration of new and ongoing student assessments; delivery of important professional development; and strengthening of external strategic partnerships, including statewide recognition of Andover programs. This year, Andover saw significantly improved standardized test scores, and although this is just one, quantitative indicator of the success, it demonstrates important progress.

Data gained from student assessments is intended to support teachers in better addressing individual student needs. With so many competing priorities, the district needs to make it as straightforward as possible to translate this data into useful practice in order to make the assessments worthwhile. The district added headcount to support data analysis this year, which has strengthened this work, and allowed continued progress toward a “data reflective culture.”

Additionally, the effort to issue and analyze multiple community surveys (teachers, students, parents), particularly to gauge district performance during school closure, has fed important information to the Return to School Task Force.

Superintendent's Performance Rating for Standard II: Management & Operations



The Superintendent's FY20 goals toward Standard II: Management & Operations were contained in: Goal 2, **School Facility Project**; Goal 6, **Budgeting**; and Goal 7, **School Start Times**.

	U	NI	P	E
OVERALL Rating for Standard II: Management & Operations The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments and analysis (recommended for any overall rating; required for overall rating of *Exemplary*, *Needs Improvement* or *Unsatisfactory*):

Dr. Berman continues to drive important school facility work, including major projects for Andover High School and West Elementary. A lot of careful consideration went into the decision to (again) revise and resubmit a Statement of Interest to MSBA for Andover High. The formal educational program put together for WestEI was directly led by Dr. Berman with input of many stakeholders, and resulted in an important, comprehensive document. The challenge becomes moving from a full wish-list to a building that reflects the functional and spending priorities of the community. Additional outreach and input – which has been notably challenging during the pandemic – is encouraged to gauge and build support for this large project. Additionally, these efforts, as well as discussion about more modest capital improvements plan items, has demonstrated a high level of cooperation with the town and facilities department.

It is important to note there is a stark contrast in how enrollment numbers have been considered in right-sizing these building projects. MSBA enrollment and building capacity numbers underwent intense scrutiny and analysis for Andover High but were accepted wholesale for West Elementary and a new pre-K. While fundamentally it's easy to understand that more space can always be useful, there should be thoughtful consideration of building cost as the project progresses through design phases, and it remains to be seen if the Andover community will see the value in investing in such a large school on the West Elementary site.

The pandemic brought incredible challenges to finalizing a proposed FY21 school budget. At the outset, it was surprising that Superintendent's initial FY21 budget proposal did not reflect one of the priority initiatives set by the SC and discussed at length by the community – additional buses to remove B runs – but that investment did get included during the process, and a budget proposal received support of the Select Board, Finance Committee and Town Manager in February, prior to the pandemic impacting operations. Since that time, the Superintendent and his team have spent countless hour revising the FY21 budget to respond to newly anticipated cuts in revenue and aid and required increases in non-traditional categories to support of school safety, and evolving timelines as the Town Moderator delayed Town Meeting (twice).

The planning work for tuition-free full-day kindergarten was also a significant effort, requiring analytical support from DESE, and partnership with the Select Board, Finance Committee and Town Manager. This has been a multi-year initiative which required a

great deal of analysis and planning. Meeting this goal for implementation in 2020/21 – including plan revisions to accommodate uncertainties brought on by the pandemic – has been a highlight of the budget work, meaningful to students and families, and shown supportive, creative thinking on the part of the Superintendent.

The FY20 budget spent much of the year in the red. While there are certainly unforeseen circumstances that arise in complicated and dynamic budgets, the district frequently sees unplanned expenses of significant impact. In past years, the district saw overspending in summer school programming and transportation, and this year additional high expenses emerged unexpectedly. While only some of these were within Andover’s control, leadership needs to get better at scrutinizing expenses and finding creative ways to respond, including to unforeseen conditions. Student transportation, in particular, remains an area that would benefit from innovative thinking.

The district has done a nice job to secure available, additional funding from every available source. Work to apply for all available COVID relief, including all state and federal sources, effort for full funding of the state special education circuit breaker, and securing special education extraordinary relief fund are all smart examples of where the budget was successfully supplemented in critical areas.

This is the second year school start times (SST) has been a priority goal set for the Superintendent. Additional progress has been made on this initiative, but largely due to the attention of Assistant Superintendent Trach, who has run the SST working group and parent advisory group, and authored a report providing objective information concerning the benefits and drawbacks of various options released in late June.

The Superintendent’s leadership on SST can and should be stronger. This is not an easy project, but often doing the right thing is not easy. The “political” burden does not outweigh the benefit to students, including improvements in mental health and academic performance, two areas that generally capture the district’s focus in curriculum, but are concerningly undervalued in this work. The Superintendent is encouraged to reexamine ways to provide supportive leadership and encourage creative problem solving as we enter the third year of the SST project and move toward solution implementation.

Finally, as the Superintendent noted in his end-of-year report, it was a challenging year in the area of personnel. I share the Superintendent’s disappointment that most labor-related concerns have bypassed professional conversation and traditional collegial resolution mechanics, and instead been escalated in the form of grievances, complaints to the Department of Labor Relations, and – in one instance – the Essex County Superior Court. Everyone certainly deserves to be heard when there are concerns, but it is disappointing there is not a greater willingness for collaboration or appetite for solving problems within the district before escalating to legal remedies. It is worth noting that in each of these circumstances (approximately 21 during FY20 versus 1 in the previous 3 years of my School Committee tenure) which have been resolved to date, the actions of the district have been upheld. Nonetheless, each claim has required response and legal guidance, costing valuable time and budget.

Despite the cost – financially and culturally – the Superintendent was right to authorize and support investigation into the hostile work complaint at South Elementary raised by some members of the AEA against other members of the AEA. Every member of the Andover Public Schools should feel safe in their workplace and the district has a responsibility to identify and correct behavior that is against district policy and professional behavior.

Based on the information that has been made public through addressing the hostile workplace complaint and additional matters at South, it is clear that problems have been brewing at South for some time. With limited facts available to the School Committee and multiple, disparate characterizations expressed by teachers, staff and parents, it is impossible to reach one clear truth on these matters, and difficult to gain a clear understanding of where the chain of leadership – principal, human resources, superintendent – broke in finding resolution before matters hit a boiling point this year. To his credit, the time Dr. Berman spent to talk with more than 50 staff and educators at South late in the school year was an incredibly valuable step toward “healing” the community, developing and implementing an action plan, and moving forward from turmoil.

To the extent that leadership may be so disconnected from day-to-day building operations that dissatisfaction among colleagues could grow to such a level, this leaves ongoing concern. The Superintendent should engage in self-reflection to identify what was missed at South, how situations of discontent can be brought to more productive resolution in the future, and whether the district is doing enough in the way of staff performance management and mentorship.

Superintendent's Performance Rating for Standard III: Family and Community Engagement



The Superintendent's FY20 goals toward Standard III: Family and Community were contained in: Goal 4, **Data Analysis**; and Goal 5, **Communications**.

	U	NI	P	E
OVERALL Rating for Standard III: Family & Community Engagement The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the district and its schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments and analysis (recommended for any overall rating; required for overall rating of *Exemplary, Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory*):

To be sure, the job expectations for the data analyst role – added for FY20 – were extensive. Focus this year was on support of student assessment data as described in Standard I, and then made a pivot to issuing surveys during the closure. This has left support for financial analysis, notably collective bargaining proposal costing, to resources available before investment in this new position. This may not have been the best choice in priorities.

Communication of district data was also challenging, perhaps due to resource constraints or shift in priorities after school closure. For example, communication of Andover performance and other metrics (per-pupil expenditures, graduation rate, SAT scores, enrollment in institutions of higher ed, selectivity of colleges attended, special education enrollment and staffing, teacher and staff salaries, etc.) comparative to Massachusetts communities was not completed.

In many other ways, communication has been informative and provided timely updates. I have particularly appreciation of the strong messages against systemic racism, explanation of the work underway to evolve anti-racism curriculum, and willingness to accept and improve district operational shortcomings related to race.

Communication this year has focused on providing positive press and successfully disseminated important updates when there are issues that quickly escalate in concern throughout the community. It is nice to see a light being put on the wonderful activities of staff and students at APS, which have primarily been sent through email newsletters and twitter, and covered by the media through extensive outreach. Updates regarding the school closure were extensive, though sometimes mis-aligned between building- and district-level messages (for example, lack of consistent of AHS term 3 grading policy).

The district is encouraged to extend communication to easy-to-use mechanisms widely used by the broader community (including those without APS students), updating information on the APS website (including removal of outdated content), and providing communication updates short enough for reader absorption.

Superintendent's Performance Rating for Standard IV: Professional Culture



The Superintendent's FY20 goals toward Standard IV: Professional Culture were contained in:
Goal 1, Sprint Teams.

	U	NI	P	E
OVERALL Rating for Standard IV: Professional Culture The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by nurturing and sustaining a districtwide culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments and analysis (recommended for any overall rating; required for overall rating of *Exemplary*, *Needs Improvement* or *Unsatisfactory*):

This is the third year Dr. Berman has used the structure of “sprint teams” to make district progress in specific focus areas. Traditionally, the School Committee and public get updates on the work of these teams at multiple meetings over the spring, but that was unable to happen this year once district priority was placed on remote learning beginning in March.

Overall, these teams have been a good demonstration of cross-functional collaboration of leadership, in addition to expanding competence in various areas important to the district. The work continues to benefit students, and it was particularly gratifying to see the ongoing work of the Social-Emotional Learning and Mental and Behavioral Health teams be relied upon so heavily during the school closure.

If the intention is truly to treat these efforts a true “sprints” of agile planning, rather than year-long efforts, Dr. Berman is encouraged to question whether or not teams assembled or areas of chosen for study should be reconstituted more regularly or with focus on more clearly defined short-term objectives.