



ANDOVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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TO: Andover School Committee Members
FROM: Sheldon H. Berman, Ed.D., Superintendent
SUBJECT: End-of-year progress report on superintendent goals for 2017-18
DATE: June 4, 2018

SUPERINTENDENT GOALS FOR 2017-18

The 2017-18 school year has been a year of significant growth and improvement in many areas, laying a strong foundation for continued progress over the coming years. As you will see in this report, all of our sprints achieved significant milestones. The morale in the district, in spite of the extended school calendar, is positive and high. Most important, our students are experiencing the benefits of our many efforts in improving instruction, providing authentic learning experiences, and creating a more responsive and productive school culture. Students are performing at exceptional levels in the academic arena, as evidenced by such demonstrations as the Quiz Show competition, the NASA Challenge, eCybermission, the powerful Senior Showcase displays, and so many other student achievements. In addition, Andover has emerged as a state and national leader in personalized instruction (as part of the MAPLE consortium), social-emotional learning (recognized by the National Commission for Social, Emotional, and Academic Development), and the education of students with language-based learning disabilities (forthcoming 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.

Many people contributed to this success. In fact, what stands out in our work this year is the collaborative and collective nature of our progress. Leadership has emerged from teachers, instructional assistants, administrators and even students, as individuals across the district feel supported to take risks and pursue what they believe are meaningful initiatives. The culture of a district is as important as its curriculum for it is what inspires, motivates and encourages people to become the best versions of themselves. Andover is privileged to have a talented staff, one that works together well and is willing to tackle new challenges. Our role in administration has been to help focus on initiatives collectively developed by staff and to support them in their efforts to advance those initiatives. I'm very proud of our accomplishments this year and very proud to be part of the team that has helped move the district forward in significant ways, as this report will delineate.

Following is the end-of-year 2017-18 progress report on the superintendent's goals.

1. *The superintendent will facilitate progress of the seven sprints of the agile strategic plan: Literacy, AHS Schedule, Mental and Behavioral Health, Social-Emotional Learning,*

Accessible Digital Media, Progress Monitoring, and Innovation. (Standard IV: Professional Culture; Professional Practice Goal)

Evidence/Product: Each sprint moves forward on action steps to achieve their targets.

Throughout the year we continued to have sprint team meetings, all-administrator meetings, and superintendent administrative team meetings focused on the work of the sprints. All of the sprints have made significant progress. The literacy sprint has established a comprehensive approach to progress monitoring, provided meaningful professional development to staff, refined and expanded interventions for students with language-based learning difficulties, and selected a new core literacy program that will further advance the reading performance of our students. The social-emotional learning sprint has made substantial progress in implementing Responsive Classroom strategies that create a culture of care and community in our elementary classrooms, and in establishing a professional development program for next year that will enhance our understanding and appreciation of our students' diversity. The mental and behavioral health sprint has leveraged the hiring of a clinical director and a grant to train RBTs to establish a coordinated response team that can better support students who are experiencing mental and behavioral health issues. The progress monitoring sprint has been effective in fostering a stronger data-reflective culture, and teachers and administrators are much more comfortable and confident in their use of data to adjust instruction to meet student needs. The accessibility sprint has provided software tools and professional development that improved student access to the rigorous curriculum that Andover provides. The AHS schedule sprint fostered a smooth and almost problem-free transition to the new schedule and enhanced collaboration between the middle schools and the high school. And the innovation sprint has been highly successful in increasing the number of students involved in the Global Pathway, Senior Capstone, and iLab, while at the same time expanding the use of design thinking strategies and authentic learning experiences across all grades and schools.

As impressive as these discrete efforts have been, the greatest systemic accomplishment has been that they were pursued collaboratively and avidly by the sprint teams and the staff at large. In its first year, the agile strategic plan, which has been an innovation in itself, is working well.

At the end of this report on the goals is a status report detailing the progress that has been made on each sprint, with the exception of the Literacy sprint, which is primarily discussed below under Goal 3.

2. *The superintendent will work with the assistant superintendent for finance and administration, the School Committee, the AHS Facility Study Committee, MSBA, and the community to move forward on the district's capital plan, with particular attention to the MSBA process for renovation/replacement of West Elementary and a renovation/addition to Andover High School. (Standard II: Management and Operations; District Improvement Goal)*

Evidence/Product: Continued progress toward the renovation/replacement of West Elementary and the renovation/addition for Andover High School.

We made substantial progress in moving our capital plan forward. The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) invited the district to participate in the eligibility period for West Elementary based on our first application to the program. We have already completed several of the initial steps required during the eligibility period and are moving forward on the others. The Initial Compliance Certificate has been submitted, a building committee has been appointed, and Town Meeting approved an article funding the feasibility study from free cash. We are in the process of completing the educational profile and the maintenance documents.

We also made significant progress on examining options for a high school renovation. We developed a bid request for architectural services, evaluated five architectural companies who applied, selected HMFH, and pursued an aggressive timeline for developing options for the School Committee to consider. The architect and feasibility study committee refined a presentation to inform important decision makers and the community as a whole. That presentation was made to the School Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Board of Selectmen. In addition, three community meetings were held to inform the public. With the cost of the project higher than anticipated, we developed and submitted a Statement of Interest to the MSBA for the high school.

In addition to these two highly visible projects, we identified specific Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects that would improve the conditions at our other schools. In particular, we included in the CIP an evaluation of Doherty that will provide the School Committee with an assessment of systems that need upgrading over the next ten years and potential renovations that would improve the learning environment of that school.

We also focused attention on security issues at our schools. We are in the process of improving communications and putting in place new security measures, such as an entrance vestibule at the high school and improved surveillance cameras at all schools. We also collaborated with the police department to conduct security trainings and drills at each of our schools.

3. *The superintendent will work with the director of student services and the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction to address students' reading issues, including issues related to dyslexia, and to strengthen the literacy program through use of additional data tools to identify students needing support and areas of program improvement; continued professional development to deepen the skills and knowledge of teachers and instructional assistants; implementation of TextHelp for students and teachers; piloting of a new literacy program for elementary grades; and enhancement of reading interventions and programs. (Standard I: Instructional Leadership; Student Learning Goal)*

Evidence/Product: Document the assessments in use for early identification and progress monitoring and the professional development offered to both regular education and special education staff with the long-range target of making effective progress in addressing students' language-based issues, with particular attention to students with dyslexia.

The 2017-18 school year has been our most significant to date in moving our literacy initiative forward. We have made meaningful progress in our early screening and progress monitoring, application of data analysis to select appropriate interventions for students, professional development in both utilization of data and literacy interventions, technology supports for students with language-based learning issues, and selection of a core literacy program. In essence, we have now laid a substantial foundation for future improvement in students' reading skills and in addressing the needs of challenged readers.

We have been successful in implementing an effective assessment system to identify students needing support. The district's assessment model has two components: DIBELS, which is a universal screening instrument designed to measure early literacy indicators that predict later reading success, and the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), which gauges a student's ability to read for meaning. Simply put, one measures learning to read while the other measures reading to learn.

The Northwest Evaluation Association's MAP is a computer-adaptive assessment that provides teachers with a thorough picture of students' learning—how much their skills have grown, which skills have been mastered, what they are ready to learn, and specific

skill gaps that need to be addressed in both reading and mathematics. The district added the MAP assessment tool this year for all students in grades 3 - 6, and some students in grades 7 – 10, to give teachers another data point for learning about their students' skills, particularly in reading comprehension. The MAP tool also provides a native Lexile score, which enables teachers and parents to match students instructionally to appropriate reading materials. We will administer the second MAP assessment in June 2018.

We have also been intentional in establishing a professional development plan for literacy so that principals have autonomy and control over their data, their schools, and how to deliver this information to the staff. We've implemented an overall professional development plan for administrators, which is followed by customized, school-based professional development delivered by administrators and outside consultants for teachers in grades 1-5, plus professional development that specifically targets kindergarten teachers.

All administrators and key teacher leaders—including principals, assistant principals, ETFs, program heads, and reading specialists—engaged in professional development with Hill for Literacy using a train-the-trainer model. Staff learned how to analyze data to inform instruction and how to guide data team meetings. To date, the principals have participated in two sessions that covered how to create small intervention groups based on student needs, and how to use progress monitoring data to modify the small groups and respond to individual student needs. In addition, the entire elementary administrative team participated in three district-wide data team meetings aimed at identifying individual school and district professional development needs. The information helped principals gain a broader perspective of the district data, understand how that data affects their individual schools, and provide more effective leadership for literacy at their school.

The district also used Hill for Literacy and Crafting Minds Center for Reading and Educational Achievement to provide all teachers of grades 1-5 with three training sessions in decoding and fluency. Dr. Melissa Orkin of Crafting Minds (previously with Tufts University Center for Reading Research) worked with both regular and general education teachers on tier II interventions for word study and syllabication. She also helped us to refine our response to screening data with follow-up assessments that more specifically target the types of interventions students need. These sessions were school- and grade-level-based so that all teachers received customized professional development tailored to their specific needs.

Results from the spring 2017 DIBELS revealed that our 2016-17 kindergarten students generally had made little gain in phonemic awareness. Through analysis, we realized that students need more support in learning sounds prior to connecting sounds to letters. In response to the DIBELS data, kindergarten teachers engaged in three training sessions on phonemic awareness in the fall of 2017. In addition, kindergarten teachers received Just Right Phonemic Awareness Kits and four hours of professional development to assist them with instructional practice. We plan to continue this focus next fall with a three-hour explicit unit training. We also determined that teachers new to the district had received no formal training in using the FOUNDATIONS program. Accordingly, in the fall of 2017, we provided all elementary teachers new to the district with grade-level-specific training in FOUNDATIONS.

In addition to the support we have provided in specific progress monitoring, professional development, and intervention, we are moving forward on selecting a literacy program that best supports the development of reading skills at the elementary level. Dr. Cynthia Merrill has served as our lead consultant for this initiative. The teachers involved in the elementary-level pilot program engaged in a variety of professional development including a two-day workshop at the Literacy for All Conference in Rhode Island, a three-day institute at Columbia Teachers College in New York, a full-day interactive seminar

provided by Heinemann consultants for Fountas & Pinnell's Classroom, and a full-day guided observation of reading workshop lessons at an elementary school in Framingham. The pilot program concluded with a recommendation to implement a reader's workshop model using the Fountas & Pinnell Classroom program, beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. Both the Literacy Advisory Board and the literacy sprint team recommended that teachers be provided with in-depth professional development on the reader's workshop model during the 2018-19 school year, prior to any implementation of the program. The Literacy Advisory Board also recommended that the district use the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System in 2018-19 to provide additional reading comprehension data to better inform instruction during the workshop model.

The grades 6–12 English Language Arts (ELA) Advisory, informed by the work of the sprint, took it upon themselves to revise the middle school summer reading program to include more student choice of texts as well as more Lexile ranges to ensure accessibility. The middle school ELA teachers will continue to engage with Lucy Calkins Units of Study Writing Program. Seven teachers will attend Columbia Teachers College during the summer 2018 to obtain further professional development.

In the area of specialized literacy instruction for students with reading and language-based literacy challenges, we continued to build a multi-pronged approach to intervention. Regular education, special education, and specialist staff were involved in extensive literacy training. For example, we ran a second one-year cohort of Wilson Language training and we certified four more teachers in Orton-Gillingham. In the area of comprehension, we conducted two more cohorts of Story Grammar Marker, a multi-sensory comprehension program for narrative text. Two of our speech-language pathologists are now qualified trainers in this approach and trained at least 38 staff members this year. This spring, we added Project Read Report Form, a multisensory middle and high school program that supports comprehension of expository text. In the area of written expression, we introduced Framing Your Thoughts, a multisensory language-based intervention for language syntax development and written expression. In our initial cohort, 49 teachers participated, and one teacher underwent advanced training to become our district trainer for Framing Your Thoughts. This in-house training model is similar to the one we use with Story Grammar Marker. Implementation of Framing Your Thoughts and Project Read Report Form will enable us to complete our vertical curriculum alignment in the area of writing and reading comprehension.

In addition to the tier II and tier III interventions described above, we implemented Lexia—an adaptive computer-based practice program—across all elementary schools. In collaboration with our IT department, we provided TextHelp to all Andover students. This multi-dimensional tool supports reading, organization, written expression, and access to the content areas for students with language-based learning disabilities. Assistive technology is critical to providing students with high-level content and access to a rigorous curriculum while at the same time accommodating their challenges. This year, we conducted two large training events: one in the summer for regular and special education teachers, and one in the winter for the teachers in our programs for students with language-based learning disabilities. We also implemented the Read Naturally program in the middle schools and at the high school to support students with language-based learning challenges.

In addition to the strong PreK-12 foundation we are building in literacy, we have established a partnership with the Carroll School to pilot their Targeted Cognitive Intervention (TCI) program. The TCI program was developed to remediate reading fluency deficits in children with dyslexia. Specifically, the computer-based assessment algorithm can identify a student's cognitive profile and specify cognitive exercises that target the student's needs. Our TCI teachers completed their training with Jen Brock from the Carroll School. We also traveled to Vermont to confer with specialists at the

Greenwood School and observe their pilot implementation of the TCI program. We implemented our first TCI cohorts at West Middle, Wood Hill, Doherty, and High Plain Elementary this spring. Andover is the first public school to participate in this groundbreaking intervention program.

Continuing our agenda of aggressive professional development in language and literacy instruction at all levels, we worked with our Instructional Assistants (IAs) to develop their skills in supporting intensive interventions. For example, several IAs completed Lindamood-Bell (LiPS) training last summer. This year, we were awarded a competitive grant that allowed us to partner with Massachusetts General Hospital to develop an in-house training program in literacy for teacher assistants. Assistants who successfully complete this MGH-approved micro-credential will be able to support specialists as literacy tutors.

We have also continued to work with our other expert partners. For example, Ann Larsen from Landmark Outreach provided a one-week summer course to regular education teachers who are partnering with teachers in the language-based LD program. During the school year, she continued to consult with our language-based LD program at the elementary and middle schools and provided direct consultation to our referral and admissions team for the program. Finally, Ann spent ten days with the high school staff. This work included formal training for regular and special education teachers in the Language-Based Classroom, a redesign of content-area literacy programming, and consultation on co-teaching. This phase of the work will conclude over the summer. In addition, for the second year, several curriculum directors, teachers, and administrators attended the Dyslexia Foundation conference at Harvard Medical School.

In addition to redesigning the curriculum for the AHS language-based program, we developed a new ELA course curriculum map for the middle school language-based program. The map outlines the progression of literacy standards across grades 6-8, along with a crosswalk of mentor texts that have been selected for readability (Lexile) level.

Lisa Brooks, our LD/Literacy coach, held regular consultation meetings with teachers who have been trained in various interventions, including Wilson, Orton-Gillingham, and Lindamood-Bell. These teachers have the benefit of being able to ask questions and work through challenges as they implement intensive interventions. Lisa also collaborated on phonemic awareness training for kindergarten teachers.

Outreach efforts continue to be important to our work. For example, we were invited to share our literacy plan at ASCD, and we launched a digital magazine to inform the public about our projects. This spring, we were invited to participate in the Gaab Lab's Boston Children's Hospital Innovation Accelerator project for the early screening of dyslexia. This initiative includes literacy leaders from across the country. We have also been invited to participate in a panel presentation with some well-known dyslexia specialists in the fall.

Our middle and high school teachers are working on a student advocacy program called Eye-to-Eye. Through Eye-to-Eye, older students with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities will have the opportunity to mentor younger students. This program will support students with learning disabilities as they learn to navigate their personal learning styles. This summer, we will send two high school students with identified learning disabilities to Brown University for leadership training. We will recruit more AHS leaders in the fall of 2018.

4. *The superintendent will provide data analyses and reports to help assess curricular strengths and areas requiring 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)

Evidence/Product: Provide analytical data reports that track the district's academic and fiscal performance.

The district implemented a more comprehensive set of progress monitoring and assessment instruments to provide data on student progress and curricular and instructional initiatives. Building on the implementation of DIBELS last year, the district administered the MAP assessment in both reading and math and the Panorama Education survey on students' sense of connectedness, engagement and safety. In addition, we are using adaptive instructional support software programs, such as Lexia in reading and Dreambox and Prodigy in math, that provide just-in-time data on how students are performing on particular concepts and skills. We also provided more targeted assessments for students who are confronting particular difficulties so that we can better meet student needs. Most significant, we established data teams throughout the district to review the information and to recommend interventions for students and adjustments to the instructional program, and we provided the teams with extensive professional development in applying the data to instruction. We have taken giant steps toward a more data-reflective culture that will make a difference in student performance.

The collection and analysis of data and the preparation of data-based reports increased significantly this year as a result of the district's decision to increase our grant writer's position by .25 FTE to address these areas. This allocation represents the first time the district has personnel dedicated to data; previously, we relied on interns for this work.

Following are the topics whose data have already been analyzed or will soon undergo analysis. The data reports are listed in three groups: those that have been shared publicly, those that are being studied internally by the administration, and those that we anticipate will be completed by the end of the fiscal year.

District Data & Statistics (on web page and/or presented at School Committee meeting)

1. Student/Teacher Ratio
2. Per-Pupil Expenditures (including Special Education)
3. Four-Year Graduation Rate
4. SAT Scores
5. Enrollment in Institutions of Higher Education
6. Selectivity of College Attended
7. Special Education Enrollment and Staffing
8. MCAS
9. Finance Data for Annual Budget
10. Educator Evaluation (state data)

Internal (shared with administration)

11. MAP
12. School Climate (state data and Panorama Education data)
13. RADAR (state data)
14. Student Learning Experiences (state data)
15. Community Service and Service Learning Survey (internal data)

In process

16. Civil Rights Data

5. *The superintendent will work within the limitations of staffing with administrators, faculty, and parents to enhance communication among these district stakeholders and within the community in order to 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: Implement communication strategies and propose staffing and funding requirements needed to implement a more effective communications system.

The superintendent continued to maintain regular communication with parents and staff on events in the district and progress the district is making. In addition, the Student Services Department launched a quarterly online magazine to report on special education, nursing and social work services. Four issues have been published. A document for staff entitled, “The Andover Way: A Culture of Learning, Teaching and Leading,” was finalized and reviewed by all staff. It synthesizes our philosophy, mission and strategic plan in order to bring meaningful consistency across the district and orient new staff to our approach and culture. A brochure on the district is in the process of being edited and will be available next fall.

Of greatest significance for our future work, the School Committee approved a communications position in the FY2019 budget that will enable the district to take the next steps in advancing our communications efforts. The position has been posted and advertised and a screening committee established; interviews will commence shortly.

The superintendent has authored several articles that were published in national publications. An article on the district’s efforts to address the needs of students with dyslexia was published in *School Administrator*, the magazine of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) that is distributed to all superintendents and assistant superintendents as well as to other policy makers and administrators. The district’s work on dyslexia will also be featured in the July issue of *District Administration*. The superintendent has written several articles on social-emotional learning, with one published in *The Hechinger Report* and another in *Education Week*. A third article is scheduled to appear in *School Administrator* in September. The superintendent was the lead author of a report on effective practice in social-emotional learning for the Aspen Institute’s National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development. Finally, the superintendent continues to serve as one of four columnists for *School Administrator*’s Ethical Educator column, submitting eleven responses to administrative ethical dilemmas each year. Partly as a result of the recognition generated by these publications, Andover’s initiatives have received national attention and the district is held in high regard for its work in several key areas of K-12 education.

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, communicate with town leaders and the public regarding budget needs, prepare thorough and timely budget documents, 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.

The preparation of the FY19 budget was challenging, in part because of ongoing negotiations with our bargaining units and the state’s underfunding of the Circuit Breaker. However, in contrast to the preceding several years, the Town Manager and the superintendent agreed early in the process to set a target of a 4% increase in the school budget, with 0.5% or \$380,000 of that amount representing the transition of approximately two-thirds of the cost of textbooks from the CIP into the regular school budget. (The remaining approximately \$220,000 will be transitioned in FY20.) The budget had the support of the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen and was

approved by a wide margin at Town Meeting vote. Although the operating budget for FY19 will be tight, our fiscal efforts focused on long-term goals: securing funds for West Elementary School's feasibility study and a potential article supporting a high school renovation.

In addition to our budget development efforts, we offered strong advocacy for increasing the state's reimbursement for special education expenditures through the Circuit Breaker. Unexpectedly budgeted by the state legislature at only 65% instead of 75%, this change represented a significant loss of funding. We prepared an analysis showing that the Circuit Breaker reimbursement since one year after inception had averaged 74%, and we drafted letters for districts to use to advocate for increasing the reimbursement percentage. Through our advocacy and the advocacy of other district leaders, the legislature increased the reimbursement for FY18 to approximately 71.6%. This rate was still lower than we had budgeted, but a significant improvement over 65%. In addition, we have continued to advocate for a higher level of reimbursement for FY19.

Negotiations with most of our associations have been completed. These settlements provide for an increase in the length of the school day, modest COLAs, and a change in health insurance for new employees that will provide significant savings to the Town in years to come. Much of this work has been led by the School Committee. The agreements bode well for improving students' academic performance and for the long-term financial stability of Andover.

TECHNOLOGY

Although none of these six goals specifically targeted technology, we made significant strides in that area during the year. I would be remiss if I failed to highlight some of the following major accomplishments.

We significantly upgraded staff and student technology equipment this past year. We deployed over 700 new hybrid laptop/tablet machines to teachers, who were especially excited about access to touch screens and pens. The older Apple Macbook Pro machines were distributed to middle and high school instructional assistants, along with cart-based devices for the elementary school IAs. We distributed more than 1000 Chromebooks to students in grades 2 and 3, along with sufficient iPads for grades K-1 to meet the desired 2:1 ratio. We also deployed several hundred machines to students in grades 6-12 who could not afford to be part of the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program. All aspects of the iAndover 1:1 program are now complete. We also upgraded all shared lab-type computers; no machine in the district is now more than five years old. In addition, we replaced the aging elementary Smartboards with new Epson interactive projectors and provided improved connectivity to all projectors from new Windows machines. Plans are underway to upgrade high school projectors over the summer.

In terms of communications technology, we deployed new state of the art VoIP (Voice over IP) digital handsets to every classroom in the district. We have selected and are currently installing a new town and school-wide notification system that will provide improved communication in both routine and emergency situations. The new system allows us to communicate over VoIP phones, smartphones, intercoms, police radio and more. As part of this project, aging physical analog intercom systems will be upgraded to modern digital paging systems. Also we implemented Enhanced E911 calling to help pinpoint calls more precisely within a building. To further enhance communication and connectivity, we upgraded wireless networks in all school buildings, effectively doubling coverage and capacity.

The IT Department upgraded the audio and video architecture in the School Committee Room to provide improved collaboration and broadcast capabilities. Over the summer we will add video conferencing capabilities. We will use these new capabilities to experiment with new classroom use of technology and to provide an enhanced technology training experience.

The APS application team implemented Registration Gateway On-line Back to School Forms for a pilot group of five schools, as well as a new on-line student registration system. These changes allow parents to update back-to-school forms online and to enroll their students online. This information is then automatically integrated with our Student Information System (ASPEN). By implementing this system, we eliminate data entry for school administration and reduce the incidence of erroneous data being entered into Aspen. We updated the school nurse system (SNAP) with the necessary data as well. In addition, we implemented a new applicant tracking system called NEOGOV. The new system has streamlined the online application and hiring process, while eliminating the need for a five-part, carbon copy form previously used for approval of new hires. Finally, we completed the installation and configuration of Office 365 and are rolling out this program to all staff and students. In the area of assessment, the IT Department supported all standardized MCAS and ELL testing. APS is the first district in the state to pilot the interface of BYOD with standardized tests.

PROGRESS REPORTS ON SPRINTS: JUNE 2018

The following progress reports were submitted by the sprint teams working on the respective areas.

ANDOVER HIGH SCHOOL 7+H SCHEDULE

Following many years of study and planning, plus the field testing of key elements, implementation of the AHS 7+H schedule began in September 2017. To date, the new schedule has been a success. Teachers and students have transitioned to yearlong classes and are about to complete their first year of the schedule.

The yearlong aspect of the schedule differs from years past, where students would have transitioned to new courses and new teachers mid-way through the year. With yearlong courses, teacher-student relationships were deepened, enabling teachers to know their students better as learners and to monitor their progress throughout the entire school year.

Students, teachers, and the school community took advantage of the new personalization period called H Block. The personalization period has two major components. H1 is an opportunity for each student to have a faculty member, in addition to the guidance counselor, who knows the student well and can assist the student throughout the four-year high school experience. The H1 advisor gets to know a group of 15 to 17 learners and helps them make positive academic, social, and emotional choices at the high school. The AHS staff also designed a curriculum for the H1 component to enhance students' experience at each grade.

The H2 through H5 blocks allow students and teachers to personalize their school day. Students choose which teachers they need to visit in order to delve deeply into course content, make up work, receive support, or explore areas of mutual interest. Additionally, during H2 through H5 the high school hosted a variety of meetings and speakers on topics of interest to the community. Meetings included class meetings, pre-prom events, delivery of a developmental guidance curriculum, community speakers, and the Credit for Life Fair sponsored by the Service Club of Andover. The speakers have included Ashley Bendiksen, who spoke about relationship violence; Casey McQuillen, an Andover native and American Idol contestant, who performed and spoke about being true to oneself; and An Na, an author who spoke to students about her book *A Step from Heaven*.

The new schedule also brought two new programs to AHS. We initiated an Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) cohort at grade 9, which we will expand to grade 10 in the 2018-19 school year. This elective course introduces students to the WICOR strategies of learning (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading) to strengthen their study and work skills. We also expanded the availability for virtual online courses by joining the Virtual High

School Consortium (VHS). VHS has given AHS students access to a wider array of online courses taught by certified educators. Students were coached and monitored by a coordinator at the high school.

The new schedule also provided teachers time within the school day to work in professional learning groups (PLGs). These PLGs pursued a variety of school and district initiatives, including collaborating on common assessments and developing interdisciplinary curricula.

To enable rising ninth graders to take advantage of the opportunities of the 7 + H schedule, AHS and all three middle schools worked together to prepare students for the transition. Throughout the school year, Principal Phil Conrad met with eighth-grade teachers to answer their questions about the 7+H schedule. These meetings served as a prelude to a visit to the high school by all eighth-grade students, at which time the eighth graders received an overview of the 7+H schedule and the other offerings of AHS. High school students led this visit and talked about ways in which the H block was supporting both their learning and their emotional well-being. The eighth graders returned to their middle schools excited about all the possibilities AHS has to offer.

Reports from parents, students, and teachers indicate overall satisfaction with the H2-H5 personalization blocks for remediation, the make up of assessments, and the offering of programs and meetings that previously would have disrupted academic classes. They also report improved relationships between students and teachers and enhanced learning through year-long courses. Finally, visits of AHS administrators and students to all middle schools, visits by eighth graders to AHS, administrator visits with all eighth-grade teams, and presentations to parents about the benefits of the 7+H Schedule have smoothed the transition from middle school to high school.

Next steps for the AHS Schedule sprint include:

- Enhancing support for students by extending such programs as AVID and VHS and by increasing the number of students who are engaged in peer mentoring and tutoring.
- Building on the current schedule to incorporate the additional 15 minutes that will be added to the school day in the 2019-20 school year.
- Continuing to refine the H1 advisory curriculum.
- Preparing each student to develop an individual legacy document or “New Student Resume” that highlights the authentic learning experiences that have had particular value, such as the current senior capstone experience.
- Developing a structure and expectations for the Professional Learning Group time by embedding the “Agile Strategic Planning Sprint Model” into the work of these groups.
- Transitioning the sprint to focus on enabling students to make smoother transitions between each level: Pre-K to kindergarten, fifth grade to sixth, eighth grade to ninth, and twelfth grade to post-secondary.

MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

The mental and behavioral health sprint has been working on five broad areas of change.

- Data. We investigated and piloted software to track Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and discrete trial services. We also investigated client software that will allow us to track district mental health trends for planning purposes. At this time, budgetary constraints limit our ability to move beyond the trial stage of these endeavors. In order to determine needs based on currently available data, we also reviewed information from such screening tools as SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) and SNAP (School Nurse Assistant Program). In addition, the district is now represented in the Massachusetts School Mental Health Consortium, which is a network of districts joined in promoting and mapping resources for providing mental health supports. In doing so, we are in the initial stages of utilizing the School Health and Performance Evaluation System (SHAPE), a self-assessment tool that is part of the consortium membership. The tool allows us to take a broad view of our overall mental and behavioral health service delivery for planning and budgeting purposes.

- Frameworks. After completing a pilot program, we applied for and received a highly competitive reallocation grant. This grant has allowed us to implement the first Andover Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) training program. Constellations Behavioral Services is conducting the intensive RBT training program and they will continue to consult with our BCBA's as we implement this new model next year. This step will significantly enhance our ability to address behavioral needs in each elementary school.
- Programming. We completed a review of the in-district high school Transitions program, which provides short-term intervention and gradual re-integration (transition) services required by students returning to school from psychiatric hospitalization and/or by students experiencing short-term crises. The review was prompted by our observation of "program drift." With the help of our new Transitions psychologist, the program is now on track and implementation is consistent with its original intent. The district has returned to using the model developed by the Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT) network out of the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health. Our participation in the BRYT network includes access to multiple resources, including recommendations for entrance and exit criteria, individual short-term treatment planning, and individual student data collection based on the student's transition goals. Hiring a school psychologist to oversee this program also facilitated management of students who need formal evaluation during their time in the program.

This work highlighted the need for a more permanent therapeutic academic support program. The team is now designing such a program, with implementation slated for the fall of 2018. The program will use existing staff and will be piloted at Doherty Middle School.

At the elementary level, we developed an in-house mobile support team that will go into effect next year. This multidisciplinary team will travel from school to school to assist in setting up programs for students with complex behavioral needs. This consulting model is a first step in building capacity across elementary schools. The model is more inclusionary than a district emotional and behavioral disability program, and is a more effective way to support students with mental and behavioral health needs. When the team requires, our clinical director can provide additional support. Our Program Head for Special Programs will lead the team. The addition of a multidisciplinary support team and supervision from a trained clinical director allows us to eliminate the \$40,000 psychiatry contract. This plan also allows us to use the skills of a successful school team in order to train any school teams that experience difficulty in supporting students who exhibit challenging behaviors. In addition, after training several of our own staff as Safety Care trainers, we are able to expand the numbers of staff who are trained in de-escalation strategies to build capacity in buildings to respond to crises prior to calling in the in-house mobile support team.

We reached out to Lahey Clinic to discuss locating a school-clinic partnership within the district. Most of our social workers are being called upon to deal with mental health and family systems issues that are beyond the scope of school-based supports. Close collaboration with a clinic, along with better proximity of services, could provide additional resources and access to care. A clinic program could also provide Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor services; such services are currently unavailable in Andover schools because we do not employ any Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors and our budget constrains us from adding staff.

Finally, we formed a partnership with the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disabilities in order to implement a new wrap-around program at AHS. RENEW is a structured, school-to-career and transition planning and individualized wrap-around program for students who are at risk. Developed in the 1990's by the Institute on Disabilities at the University of New Hampshire, RENEW employs a person-centered planning approach. Each student works with a RENEW facilitator to assemble a support (wrap-around) team. Core values include community inclusion, unconditional care, strengths-based planning, and flexible resource

development, all leading to self-determination. RENEW is an evidence-based model that has substantially improved the rates of high school completion, employment, and participation in post-secondary education among young people. RENEW has been part of an Institute of Education Sciences randomized control study for several years, and is the only model of its kind. We will be implementing the RENEW model next year.

- Outreach. The Home Visit program was launched this year and is in its implementation stage. The team was able to secure funds for training in 2017-18, but not for the stipends that would be required for participating teachers. We are now exploring a creative alternative to fund and staff the program.

The sprint team also investigated student advocacy programs, including Yes! and Eye to Eye. After several consultations with the Eye to Eye team, we signed a contract this spring. Over the summer, our first two student leaders from AHS will be trained at Brown University. We plan to implement the program with our middle school partner in the fall.

- Staffing. We hired a clinical director who consults regularly on cases and conducts most of the neuropsychological evaluations that used to be contracted. We secured a Resource Reallocation to District Priorities grant and hired Constellations Behavioral Services to train ten Instructional Assistants to serve instead as RBTs. This change will also allow us to centrally deploy our BCBAs.

Our next steps in enhancing mental and behavioral health services include:

- Locating the Board Certified Behavior Analysts centrally and deploying the Registered Behavior Technicians to the five elementary schools to provide behavioral supports to schools.
- Purchasing ABA and behavioral tracking software to support data collection and analysis.
- Implementing the mobile consultation program and collecting data on efficacy.
- Piloting additional therapeutic academic support at Doherty Middle School.
- Working with the Lahey Clinic to facilitate access to mental health clinicians.
- Launching the RENEW program to support at-risk students.
- Establishing and expanding an Eye to Eye mentoring team to support students with dyslexia and other language-based learning difficulties.
- Determining funding sources for mental health management software and the Home Visit program.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

During the 2016-17 school year, the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) sprint team began its work by assessing the state of SEL in our district and exploring resources regarding social-emotional learning. This year (2017-18) the SEL sprint team undertook four major action initiatives.

The first initiative involved collecting baseline data to be used to direct future SEL efforts. Prior to the 2017-18 academic year, Andover Public Schools had no consistent source of data to quantify students' social-emotional experiences occurring within our schools. While individual schools administered various student surveys over the years, we had no cohesive body of data. To address this gap, the SEL sprint team recommended that elementary and middle schools administer several scales of the Panorama Education survey. Panorama Education is an organization that specializes in helping schools gather data, both to improve school climate and culture and to support students' social-emotional learning. In November, we administered the same survey to grades 3-8 across the district to gain insight into three areas of student life: sense of belonging, engagement, and safety. The high school was not included because they had just conducted a climate survey and they were settling into the new H block schedule. We intentionally limited the scope and depth of the survey in order to be sensitive to potential apprehensions about student questionnaires and privacy. To build awareness and support prior

to the survey administration, the SEL sprint team met with the PAC board, teachers, and the School Committee.

In November 2017, all students in grades 3-8 took a short survey focused on the three target areas. Of the 2682 students, 2603 (97%) responded. During December, the Sprint team worked with Panorama to link data to the same student demographic groups used by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in reporting MCAS results: ELL, former ELL, economic status, gender, grade level, high needs status, race, special education status, and Title I status. The survey was anonymous and, to preserve privacy, we did not compile responses from demographic areas containing fewer than ten students. We shared survey results with teachers in January 2018, and used the results as the focus of professional development work on our February early release day. At that time, staff generated action items, many of which centered on enhancing activities to increase student engagement. Staff input at each school led to the identification of next steps, including expanding the use of Responsive Classroom at the elementary level and a plan to integrate Responsive Classroom strategies into our middle schools next year. A small group of middle school teachers will be participating in Responsive Classroom training this summer. Survey results also led to the development of a comprehensive professional development calendar for the 2018-19 academic year, focusing the early release days on social-emotional learning.

In the second initiative, four APS teachers and administrators participated in a nine-month training program and earned the William James Graduate Certificate in School Climate and Social Emotional Learning. The team included Pamela Lathrop (High Plain Elementary Principal), Joe Yarid (Program Coordinator for Social Work), Emily Allen (High Plain grade 5 teacher), and Ciara O'Keefe (High Plain grade 3 teacher). This program prepared our team to conduct needs assessments, integrate social-emotional learning into the school culture, and identify skills required to support students' mental health needs. The district team created an action plan on how to create a more positive school climate and aligned the school goals with the district's strategic plan. The William James team also created a mental health resource map of programs and systems currently in place in Andover and found many that are working well. These programs and resources enable students to obtain the help they need at the universal (tier I), targeted (tier II), and intensive (tier III) levels of need. The William James team also examined several SEL curricula, focusing on three criteria. The SEL curriculum had to:

- Be a well-designed, classroom-based program that systematically promotes students' social and emotional competence, provides opportunities for practice, and offers multi-year programming.
- Deliver high-quality training and other implementation supports, including initial training and ongoing support to ensure sound implementation.
- Be evidence-based with at least one carefully conducted evaluation documenting positive impacts on student behavior and/or academic performance.

The Williams James team will be making a presentation to the superintendent and SAT and will share the results of the curriculum evaluations at that time. This in-depth study of SEL provided a strong base of knowledge and administrator and teacher leadership within the district. William James College has accepted a second team to participate in the program next year.

The third initiative focuses on advancing teacher professional development and program implementation of social-emotional learning. For many years, the Andover Public Schools has been using Open Circle as its elementary-level SEL curriculum. However, this 30-minutes-a-week program has not been consistently utilized or found to be effective without a program that focuses on classroom climate and builds a sense of community in the classroom. To address the latter need, elementary teachers expressed strong interest in the Responsive Classroom program of the Northeast Foundation for Children. Based on a six-day training program last summer and another this fall, teachers began integrating practices from Responsive Classroom into our elementary classrooms. This evidence-based approach is associated with greater teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement in math and reading, and improved school climate.

Emphasizing the modeling of appropriate behaviors and responses, the program sends students a strong message that all students belong and are important contributing members of their class and school. Responsive Classroom has been described by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) as one of the most “well-designed evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs.” To date we have trained 46 elementary staff members representing all five elementary schools. Another on-site training for 30 elementary teachers is scheduled for this summer. Teachers from the middle school level will attend Responsive Classroom trainings at other sites.

The fourth initiative focuses on the issue of cultural proficiency and ensuring an inclusive environment for students of varied cultures in our schools. To address this need, the sprint team created a Cultural Climate Committee, known as the C3. This sub-sprint or “dart” of the SEL sprint was begun by Adrienne Bock and Jorge Allen. Its vision is to become the district resource that can offer triage and treatment support when incidents of racism or discrimination occur in our schools or in our community. To this end, C3 brings together building principals and assistant principals, classroom teachers, social workers, and curricular coordinators to combat racism and create identity-safe schools. The committee has met bi-weekly and provided schools with resources and recommendations.

In January, the C3 identified three priority areas for district professional development:

- Terms and Concepts Training – What terminology do we need to understand relative to diversity, inclusion and membership in order to create safe and inclusive environments?
- Response Training – How do we respond when racism or discrimination occurs in our classrooms and schools?
- Curriculum Evaluation – How can we ensure our curriculum is inclusive of all voices, narratives, and cultures?

The C3 identified Terms and Concepts Training as the highest priority and foundational need for our district. In the winter of 2018, the C3 invited professional development providers—Visions, Inc., Julie Mavity-Maddelena (Brooks School Director of Spiritual Life), and Facing History and Ourselves—to share how they might support our professional development in these areas. The C3 recommended Facing History and Ourselves as the professional development provider that can best address the need for terms and concepts foundational training. Facing History and Ourselves will help support the early release day workshops throughout the 2018-19 school year.

The next steps to bolster our work in social and emotional learning will include:

- Partnering with Facing History and Ourselves to provide district-wide training for educators and administrators throughout the 2018-19 school year on the topics of identity, membership and belonging. Members of the Early Release Day Committee, the C3 and the SEL sprint have been working with the assistant superintendent to build and solidify this plan.
- Continuing to provide opportunities for professional development in Responsive Classroom.
- Administering the Panorama survey again and including the high school in addition to grades 3 through 8.
- Sending a second team in the fall to work toward earning a William James College Graduate Certificate in School Climate and Social Emotional Learning.
- Continuing meetings of the C3 to monitor the professional development and pursue other strategies that promote cultural proficiency and prevent racism and discrimination.
- Recommending to the School Committee that the district create an administrative program coordinator position for social-emotional learning and/or restore the director of social work position to 1.0 FTE to oversee SEL programs and initiatives district-wide.
- Recommending that the School Committee consider restoring health education at the elementary level. For a thorough presentation on this recommendation, please go to:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/10H858z3ZrzTWTYvoLI6XDkk02xHLD_CMLhoxH7Qkl1g/edit?usp=sharing

ACCESSIBILITY

The accessibility sprint focused on increasing our instructional staff's understanding and use of a variety of applications that ensure every student can access the content of the curriculum. We recognize that not all students learn in the same way, nor do they approach curricular content from identical skill levels. Part of our responsibility as educators is to provide pathways that enable all students to access and master the same high-quality content.

This fall, we provided all APS students with TextHelp, which is a key accessibility platform. TextHelp is a toolbar that enables students to flexibly and independently individualize the support they need in order to access print media. To maximize the advantages of the TextHelp platform, we provided teachers with professional development so they would be confident incorporating it into their daily instruction. To encourage student usage of this new digital tool, the Digital Learning Coaches (DLCs) provided opportunities for students at all grade levels to learn about TextHelp through tutorials, one-to-one demonstrations and modeling.

Beyond TextHelp, we also provided accessibility-related professional development in a variety of other ways, including during the summer for special education teachers, through instructional videos that teachers can use individually at their own convenience, and through the after-school TechByte Technology Series.

Our other major accessibility initiative was Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The accessibility sprint helped organize our opening-day activities with David Rose. We provided all teachers with a webpage of resources and links to a UDL checklist. We also made our district website accessible.

Members of the elementary and middle school leadership team and digital learning leaders took part in a seven-week professional development program entitled Universally Designed Leadership. This training opportunity was offered through the CREST Collaborative.

Next steps for increasing accessibility include:

- Evaluating options, securing funding and implementing a system-wide Learning Management System (LMS), which will further help evaluate and provide accessible content for students. An effective LMS is a complex ecosystem designed to make it easy for teachers and students to access and manage digital learning resources from multiple sources in one place. An LMS will allow teachers to create lessons and resources that engage their students, and deliver personalized learning.
- Creating a toolbox for teachers to connect UDL principles and accessibility tools to classroom content.
- Following up on the UDL training offered through the CREST Collaborative. Sara Stetson, Tracy Crowley and Joanne Najarian will be teaching a UDL course for teachers and administrators in the fall of 2018. Graduate credit will be offered for this coursework.
- Continuing to provide multiple professional development opportunities for teachers, infusing UDL strategies into already scheduled professional development experiences on multiple curricular topics.

PROGRESS MONITORING

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.

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.
- Used to make decisions at a systems level around school-wide interventions.

This year we have made significant progress in advancing a data-reflective culture. Throughout the year, teachers collected and analyzed data utilizing a variety of universal screening and assessment tools to determine appropriate instructional levels, groupings and interventions for *all* students. However, the most significant improvement was the regular data meeting held at the elementary and middle schools to better understand students' needs and to adjust instruction to meet those needs.

Students in grades K-5 were administered the universal screening tool DIBELS (Dynamic Indicator of Early Literacy Skills). Students were assessed in phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency with connected text, reading comprehension and vocabulary to determine appropriate instructional focus.

In collaboration with the Hill for Literacy, principals, assistant principals and reading specialists were trained in how to conduct data meetings to determine appropriate instructional reading focus areas for every child. All students were given a benchmark assessment three times this year and students in need of intervention were monitored and assessed every six weeks.

We also purchased and began using the Lexia Core 5 program, an adaptive computer-aided instructional tool that allows children to practice early literacy skills. Lexia takes data on the mastery of skills based on the standards and adapts to the instructional level of the student. Lexia produces just-in-time data, which is then used by the teacher to make decisions about the instructional focus for each child and the groupings that will best serve children in the classroom.

At the elementary and middle school levels, teachers also began using adaptive computer-aided instruction in math through such programs as Dreambox, Prodigy, and IXL, which allow children to practice and enhance their math skills. These programs adapt to the instructional level of the student and collect data based on the mastery of skills. Teachers used this just-in-time data to make daily decisions about the appropriate instructional focus for particular children.

Students also participated in reading and math MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) testing. MAP is a nationally normed and standardized test. We administered MAP to all students in grades 3-6 and to some students in grades 7 and 8. MAP provides a student's RIT (Rasch Unit) Score, which indicates the range of where a child is currently achieving and the appropriate instructional focus based on the standards. MAP also determines Lexile range (reading range) for individual students and the appropriate text level.

Teachers also analyzed students' MCAS results to review both student performance and curricular coverage. Based on that analysis, schools and individual teachers made adjustments to ensure that we were covering sufficiently the material to be tested so that our students would perform as best they could.

Next steps in progress monitoring will include:

- Continuing to further the work of data teams at each level and deepen the use of data in practice.
- Utilizing elementary progress monitoring data for students transitioning to the middle schools to better determine instructional focus areas for the next year.
- Working with the Accessibility Sprint team to identify, purchase and implement a learning management system (LMS) that provides a platform (dashboard) synthesizing the data

- being collected. The dashboard needs to provide a data snapshot so that teachers more easily understand how students are doing in the moment and over time.
- Continuing to work with the Director of Digital Learning and the IT Applications Team to identify a data systems dashboard that monitors student progress toward the standards.

INNOVATION

The innovation sprint team has been working to promote new and bold approaches to traditional classroom activities, mainly by encouraging teachers to involve students in both design thinking and authentic learning experiences. Design thinking is a problem-solving strategy that incorporates creativity and collaboration and can be integrated into each area of the academic curriculum. Authentic learning complements design thinking. It engages students in the collaborative creation of products or solutions that require extended focus over time, mirror the complex real-world tasks and investigations of professionals in practice, and integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines.

Last summer, ten APS faculty members traveled to Detroit to learn about design thinking at the Henry Ford Learning Institute (HFLI). Ten district teachers had attended this institute previously and found it beneficial.

At the elementary level we empowered teacher facilitators, in tandem with administrators, to lead rapid design challenges. The innovation sprint team used the district's scheduled "open content days" as an opportunity for teachers trained in design thinking to lead grade-level colleagues in professional development about the design thinking components of empathy, defining the problem, ideating, prototyping, feedback and reflection. In some schools, design thinking challenges were replicated in classrooms across all grade levels. In addition, some faculties applied the design-thinking approach in order to problem solve ways to implement UDL. Two fifth-grade classrooms piloted student capstone projects using design thinking.

Another authentic learning experience that was well received by teachers and students was New England Arts in Literacy (NEAL). To date, 63 elementary and middle school teachers have completed the extensive NEAL training program. In addition, 26 faculty members have implemented NEAL for two or three years and mentored the teachers who were new to it. At least 1,575 students benefited from this universally designed and innovative teaching method that emphasizes a positive emotional climate and affords students multiple ways to express their learning. NEAL presentations were made to several faculties, and parents were invited to see the students' final performances.

Other innovative work was continued and/or expanded. Capstone training was provided to ten more teachers. The use of Capstone projects spread downward from the high school to pilots at the middle and elementary levels. The 2nd Annual Senior Capstone Showcase involved students from all three levels, with 77 students participating. The capstone initiative at the high school has grown significantly. Pioneered with five students in 2015, 57 students are enrolled in the Capstone course for next year. To further the innovative work at the high school, the AHS Innovation Lab transitioned into the IDEASstudio as space in the high school media center was reorganized to accommodate the iLab, engineering and computing spaces in one area.

Additionally, more than 40 teachers collaborated districtwide through a variety of innovative initiatives, such as maker spaces and Global Pathways. The Global Pathways program has expanded significantly. Begun with 18 students in 2015, it will have 193 enrolled in the pathway in 2018-19.

A particularly significant breakthrough was the arrival of the Global Portal. As the first district in the country to implement this innovation, it has enabled our students to experience other countries and cultures more directly and to begin initiating international collaborations with students in other countries. Every school had an opportunity for its students and parents to

participate. The Portal is also being integrated into the second-grade social studies curriculum, which will focus on the study of four countries, each possessing a portal that enables our students to meet and converse with students in those countries. ACE has funded our use of the Global Portal for six months and is raising funds to enable us to keep it for an entire year.

Next steps for our work in innovation include:

- Expanding the Capstone initiative to more classrooms and students.
- Expanding the Global Pathway.
- Deepening the use of the Global Portal across the district.
- Increasing the number of teachers trained in design thinking.
- Piloting the New Student Resume to enable students to document their work in authentic learning experiences, service, leadership, etc.

LITERACY

The progress report for the literacy sprint is discussed at length under superintendent goal 3. In summary, given the extensive work in progress monitoring, data analysis, professional development for both regular education and special education teachers, consultation to our language-based programs, and implementation and expansion of programs to better address literacy and language-based learning difficulties, we project positive results for student performance in the coming years. Our concerted efforts to provide teachers with strong professional development in the areas of phonics and phonemic awareness, coupled with our efforts to collaborate in analyzing data to make instructional decisions, are building a solid foundation for the future.

Looking ahead, our next steps for the 2018–19 school year include:

- Continuing our work with Just Right Phonological Awareness Curriculum in kindergarten.
- Focusing professional development on effectively utilizing the literacy workshop model.
- Deepening the use of data meetings to drive literacy instruction and tier II interventions.
- Working towards implementation of the Units of Study Writing program in grades 6 and 8.
- Further enhancing our literacy and language-based programs at the high school.
- Training literacy tutors through our partnership with MGH.
- Developing a LEXILE-based reading list and refining our co-teaching model at AHS.
- Continuing to train teachers in research-based interventions.
- Continuing our outreach efforts through the International Dyslexia Association and other nationally recognized organizations.
- Developing a summer reading clinic.