



AGILE STRATEGIC PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2018-19

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THE THEORY OF ACTION

In June 2016, the district's prior strategic plan was brought to a close. During the 2016-17 school year, the administrative team, faculty and School Committee began developing a new plan modeled after the agile strategic planning common in fast-paced industries. Technology, society's expectations, students' career needs, and instructional materials are evolving at an ever-faster rate. In this environment, school districts' traditional five-year plans have become anachronistic. Agile planning encourages rapid, incremental changes toward achieving targets, yet enables flexibility so that continuous adjustments can be made in order to achieve the greatest progress.

The first step in the development of an agile strategic plan is the articulation of a "theory of action" or a "theory of change," that is, a statement that outlines the actions that need to be taken in order to achieve the desired goals. It is presented in a simple format of "When we take these actions, then we expect to have these results, so that we reach our desired outcomes." The "when" statements represent what we believe is the most critical work that needs to be done to achieve our ends. The "then" statements represent the mission of the district in terms of results we anticipate. The "so that" statements represent a larger vision statement of the kind of long-term impact we expect from our work. For example, "when" we as educators, parents, and community collaborate to provide every student with rigorous and meaningful learning experiences, "then" students will achieve academic proficiency, "so that" they are propelled toward success in their adult lives.

ANDOVER'S THEORY OF ACTION

When we collaborate to:

- Create safe, caring, and culturally responsive classrooms and schools, and partner with families and the community to support students' academic growth and their social, physical and emotional well-being.
- Ensure that every student engages in a rigorous curriculum that is implemented consistently within and across schools;
- Provide inclusive instruction that engages every student in authentic learning experiences, demonstrates the power of effective effort and fosters inquiry, creativity and positive risk taking;
- Monitor student progress diagnostically and plan instruction after thorough and thoughtful data analysis to ensure each student reaches proficiency . . .

Then all students will:

- Demonstrate academic growth in foundational content and skills;
- Communicate effectively, think critically, problem solve creatively, work collaboratively, and evaluate objectively;
- Be self-directed and persevering agents of their own learning; and
- Demonstrate cultural awareness, an appreciation of self, empathy toward others, a sense of responsibility, and commitment to civic engagement . . .

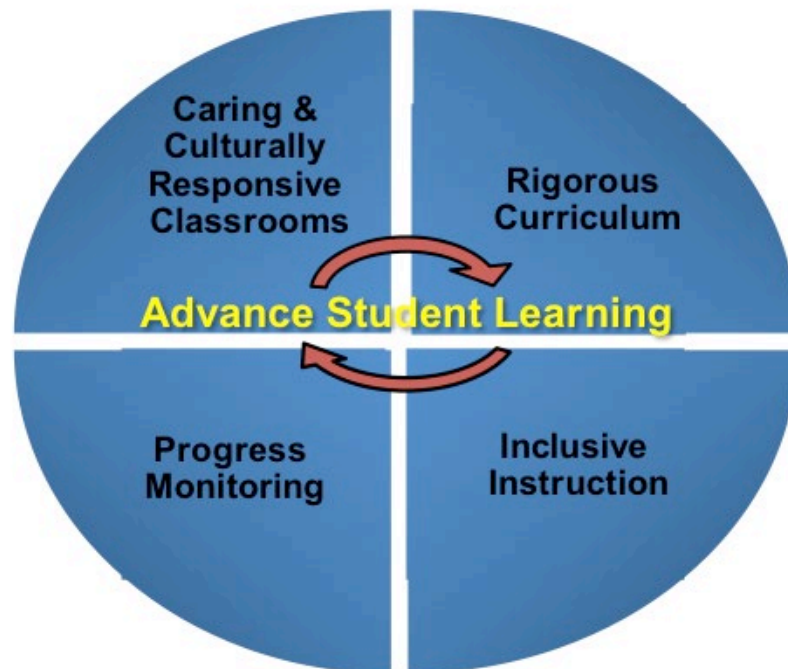
So that all students are prepared to:

- Be lifelong learners able to pursue their personal and professional goals;
- Face adversity and ambiguity with intellectual skill, open-mindedness, adaptability, courage and confidence;
- Make informed, just and ethical decisions; and
- Be connected and compassionate citizens who contribute to a diverse and global society.

As this theory of action statement demonstrates, in order to promote growth in foundational content knowledge and thinking skills that enable students to take ownership of their learning, we need to focus on four specific areas: the culture and climate of our schools, the rigor of our curriculum, the inclusiveness of our instruction, and the close monitoring of student progress in order to adjust instruction to meet the needs of each student.

GOALS THAT ADVANCE STUDENT LEARNING

ADVANCING STUDENT LEARNING



It is important to understand the goals we have set and the strategies for achieving those goals. To focus our efforts, we have established four instrumental goals.

GOAL 1: Create safe, caring, and culturally responsive classrooms and schools, and partner with families and the community to support students' academic growth and their social, physical and emotional well-being.

Research indicates that classroom culture and climate affect learning as dramatically as the academic curriculum does, and that a strong foundation of social and emotional safety supports academic progress. Therefore, teachers must be as thoughtful in structuring the social environment as in preparing academic lessons. When schools create an environment that builds interdependence, compassion and empathy, students feel safe while they learn. Surrounded by a caring network of peer support, students are better able to concentrate on academic work, take risks without fearing failure, and make faster progress.

GOAL 2: Ensure that every student engages in a rigorous curriculum that is implemented consistently within and across schools.

Every student deserves to encounter subject matter that is challenging and purposeful. Parents need to have confidence that their children will be presented with the same rigorous curriculum, regardless of which school they attend or which teacher is providing the instruction. Districtwide consistency in curricular materials, teacher expectations, and instructional pacing also promotes professional collaboration and parental engagement in students' academic activities.

GOAL 3: Provide inclusive instruction that engages every student in authentic learning experiences; demonstrates the power of effective effort; and fosters inquiry, creativity and positive risk taking.

Students are not empty vessels into which we pour knowledge, and learning is not rote memorization. To achieve deeper levels of understanding, students must interact with the material and experience a connection to what they are learning. Instructionally, this means framing questions, setting learning objectives that motivate students to explore material, and designing activities where students solve problems, consider diverse perspectives, and demonstrate understanding in multiple ways. Authentic learning engages students in the collaborative creation of products or solutions that require extended focus over time, match the complex real-world tasks and investigations of professionals in practice, and integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines.

GOAL 4: Monitor student progress diagnostically and plan instruction after thorough and thoughtful data analysis to ensure each student reaches proficiency.

Clearly, teachers need to know their subject matter at a deep level. Beyond content, however, effective teaching is about the continuous study of the students in the classroom, exploring what they understand and don't understand, and finding ways to bridge the gap. Taking a diagnostic approach means listening carefully to class discussions, analyzing students' mistakes, using assessments to monitor progress, and asking questions that reveal how students arrive at their answers. Teachers need to review student work, analyze assessment results, and plan interventions that increase students' grasp of the material. We base our content on the curriculum, but our teaching strategies spring from the detailed diagnoses of students' understanding and from the unshakeable belief that all children can and will learn.

AGILE STRATEGIES

In a traditional planning model, the strategies for achieving goals are blocked out in yearly segments across a three- to five-year period. Agile strategic planning is very different from traditional planning. Agile planning begins with more general targets and then sets in motion action groups, organized as "sprint teams," which are focused on the first steps in a series of actions that will achieve the goal. Instead of having rigid and isolated tasks assigned to individuals, each sprint in an agile plan is undertaken by a team and is designed to build on the district's existing work while moving forward aggressively. (In formal agile planning these teams are called "scrums." However, we decided to use the term "sprint team" instead.) This approach does not overwhelm the district with many new initiatives but instead focuses energy on the few strategic actions that will have the most immediate and beneficial impact. As the sprint unfolds, the team reviews its progress, assesses its impact on the larger goal, identifies what success will look like at the end of the sprint, makes adjustments to improve the likelihood of success, and then moves on to next steps.

In other words, agile strategic planning is in itself a creative endeavor and one that promotes collaboration and an evolving process of solving problems. The object is to remain flexible in pursuit of the target while taking manageable, time-limited steps toward that target. Throughout the process of agile development, the focus is on the target but the work is broken down to enhance the opportunity for success. In addition, because we are not locked into a rigid agenda, agile development allows for "just-in-time" adjustments and changes based on the analysis of progress and impact. We have chosen to adopt agile strategic planning because it supports our professional implementation of the same effective learning strategies we want our students to develop. We believe that this open-ended pursuit of targets—incorporating innovation, engagement, collaboration, and authentic learning—has the strongest likelihood of inspiring all members of the APS staff and of engaging their commitment toward accomplishing our goals.

STRATEGIC SPRINTS

A key element of agile strategic planning is the concept of the sprint. Once an agile strategic plan has defined its targets and goals, as we have with our theory of action, the next step is to determine what the first steps should be in order to move toward that goal. For example, the design of the advisory program during H block of the new high school schedule was an important next step in support of the goal of creating caring and culturally responsive classrooms and schools. Designing the advisory program required a team of people to conceive, plan, pilot and implement the program and then to refine it to ensure it is as effective as possible in supporting students. Within the framework of agile strategic planning, the work of this team would be labeled a “sprint” since it is designed to be the next action step in a series of actions that will achieve the goal within a defined and limited timeline.

At the end of the 2016-17 school year, we established our first set of seven sprints to take the district forward. These sprints are:

1. A **social-emotional learning** (SEL) and culturally responsive pedagogy sprint that will focus on professional development for staff in order to advance the goal of caring and culturally responsive classrooms and schools (goal 1).
2. A comprehensive **mental and behavioral health** sprint focused on the restructuring of services in these areas as another step in advancing caring and culturally responsive classrooms and schools (goal 1).
3. An **AHS schedule implementation** sprint as the next step in advancing caring and culturally responsive classrooms and schools (goal 1) and curricular rigor (goal 2) at the high school. (Note: In 2018-19, we expanded this sprint to include **transition** from middle school to high school.)
4. An **innovation** sprint that fosters authentic student learning experiences in order to move curricular rigor forward (goal 2).
5. A **literacy** sprint that will address reading challenges and select a new approach to teaching literacy as the next step in advancing curricular rigor (goal 2) and inclusive instruction (goal 3).
6. An **accessibility** sprint that builds on our 1:1 technology initiative; the purchase of digital applications, texts and media; and our professional development in universal design for learning in order to support inclusive instructional practices (goal 3).
7. A **progress monitoring** sprint that focuses the district on the implementation of a variety of diagnostic assessments and data analyses to ensure we are adjusting instruction to most effectively meet individual needs through the monitoring of students’ progress (goal 4).

The sprints we selected are broad areas that cross curricular boundaries. In general, sprints don’t focus on technical or procedural changes or projects such as formulating next year’s budget or redesigning a website. A sprint could include the implementation of a new curriculum adoption if the adoption represents a significant change in instructional practice. That is not to diminish the importance of procedural projects or curriculum adoptions, but they represent ongoing work that is already the responsibility of an individual or particular group. Significant new initiatives, such as integrating literacy and arts with the elementary social studies curriculum, are encompassed as one aspect of a larger sprint or sprints. Thus, the *One Community, One Nation* project would be considered as part of the literacy sprint because of its intentional incorporation of multi-cultural reading material, as well as part of the SEL sprint because it is supporting inclusion and diversity.

The sprints we selected for 2017-18 produced significant results and remained viable for another year. The accomplishments within these seven sprints for the 2018-19 school year are described below.

SPRINT ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2018-19

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) SPRINT

The social-emotional learning and culturally responsive pedagogy sprint focuses on professional development for staff in order to advance the goal of caring and culturally responsive classrooms and schools (goal 1).

Target: All students feel safe, valued, and connected to school.

Key Accomplishments:

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

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

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

As a result of the professional development our teachers have participated in over the past three years, most elementary teachers are utilizing morning meetings and other Responsive Classroom strategies to foster a caring sense of community in their classrooms and to teach social skills. Once we add time to the school day in 2019-20, many teachers will also be implementing closing meetings that help bring a positive closure to the day and enhance the sense of community within the classroom. This summer the district again offered a Responsive Classroom summer institute for elementary teachers, sponsoring a level one institute and a level two advanced institute. The Elementary Advanced Course is designed to increase teachers' knowledge and expand their teaching strategies and practices to strengthen the Responsive Classroom approach they are already using.

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

At all levels we have launched significant work in the area of cultural proficiency and cultural awareness. At the elementary level, we selected classroom libraries that provide rich reading resources that encompass stories set in other countries and cultures, writers from other countries, and stories whose main characters are diverse racially, ethnically and nationally. In addition, the *One Community, One Nation* curriculum—which integrates social studies, literacy, and arts—focuses on diversity and equity. Examples include studying four non-European countries from around the world in second grade and studying the evolution of civil liberties and human rights in U.S. history in the fourth and fifth grades.

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

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

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

MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SPRINT

The comprehensive mental and behavioral health sprint focuses on the restructuring of services in these areas as another step in advancing caring and culturally responsive classrooms and schools (goal 1).

Target: Systems and supports are in place to effectively address students with mental and behavioral health issues.

Key Accomplishments:

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

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

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

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

For example, the Transitions program at Andover High School includes Tier II supports designed to provide temporary interventions and Tier III supports to help students and families manage crisis situations. Until recently, however, there were no services for at-risk students at AHS. Students who are at risk may exhibit behaviors such as drug and alcohol use, high absenteeism, poor grades, and low engagement. Rehabilitation for Empowerment, Natural Supports, Education, and Work (RENEW) is a new program that uses school and community support teams to provide clinical wrap-around services to individual students. Last year, four AHS staff were trained as facilitators. Facilitators are coaches who work with the student's

team and help the student through the RENEW planning and personal goal-setting process. Our facilitators include administrators, nurses, special educators, and social workers. This year, we added four more facilitators. RENEW teams received ongoing consultation, coaching and formal training through the Institute on Disabilities at the University of New Hampshire. So far, the RENEW team has worked with 15 students.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The mental and behavioral health sprint team also worked on increasing services for students with significant social skill deficits. Students with severe social skill deficits placed in substantially separate

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

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

Another way we worked to expand inclusionary opportunities and intensity of services was to increase the number of trained staff working directly with students. Our new Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) training program is designed to place highly trained instructional assistant (IA) staff with students who require emotional and behavioral intervention. A Registered Behavior Technician is a credentialed instructional assistant who practices under the supervision of a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. After a rigorous training course, applied practice, and practical and written exams, we are pleased that eight out of ten RBT candidates from our own IA staff have earned the RBT license. We have developed a new instructional assistant staffing model to allow the RBTs to move flexibly to students who need them and to work collaboratively with the BCBAs. This model will increase the intensity and scope of behavioral services across all five of our elementary schools.

We took initial steps toward our third goal of connecting more students to clinical mental health services. It is important for families to have access to emergency, hospital, family therapy, and 24-hour services not available in school settings. However, many of these services are outside our sphere of influence. One way we have begun to think about bridging the gap between private, community, and school services is through a clinic-in-the-schools program. A clinic partnership program is designed to provide mental health counseling to both students and families who do not access treatment outside the school setting. In 2018-19, we collaborated with a local clinic on a Department of Public Health grant proposal to fund and launch such a program. Unfortunately, we learned in July that the grant was not funded. However, the need still exists; we will continue to pursue other funding avenues in the coming year.

ANDOVER HIGH SCHOOL 7+H SCHEDULE AND TRANSITION SPRINT

The AHS schedule implementation and transition sprint will take the next steps in advancing caring and culturally responsive classrooms and schools (goal 1) and curricular rigor (goal 2) at the high school.

Target: All high school students experience personalized instruction that better supports their success, beginning with the transition between 8th and 9th grade.

Key Accomplishments:

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

- ✓ *Surveyed AHS teachers and students about the effectiveness of H block and the yearlong schedule.*

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

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

In the winter of 2018-19, AHS administrators and program coordinators visited each of the middle schools and provided presentations about course opportunities at the high school and the course selection process. In addition, the high school held a curriculum night for eighth grade students and their parents to introduce them to club and extracurricular opportunities, as well as course opportunities and the course selection process. High school guidance counselors followed up this event with visits to each of the middle schools to help with the course selection and transition process. The content area program coordinators, in conjunction with our video production classes and Andover TV, created videos that describe course content and academic opportunities within each subject area. The videos were posted online to help students better understand the offerings in each curricular area. Finally, high school guidance counselors are working with middle school administrators and teachers to identify students who would find the AVID program helpful in supporting their success at the high school and beyond.

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

A new high school schedule can be one of the most difficult changes a school district confronts, so we are pleased that our transition to 7+H has been so smooth. This is a tribute to the time, effort, and thoughtfulness that so many teachers and administrators devoted to preparing for the implementation. In late January, a survey was administered to students, parents and teachers about the effectiveness of H block and the yearlong schedule. The survey results, which were shared with the School Committee and the community in June 2019, reveal that the new schedule better supports student-teacher relationships, reduces academic stress, and is having a positive impact on student progress. Some of the strongest affirmations came from students, with 77 percent saying that 7+H improved their learning and 66 percent reporting closer relationships with their teachers.

In addition, the high school administered the Panorama survey to all high school students. The Panorama data has been shared with the faculty, who spent an entire professional day working with it and other data to consider steps towards making AHS an identity-safe school.

INNOVATION SPRINT

The innovation sprint fosters authentic student learning experiences in order to move curricular rigor forward (goal 2).

Target: Authentic learning experiences are integrated throughout the curriculum.

Key Accomplishments:

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

The innovation sprint focused on collaborative curriculum development and building professional capacity in order to create dynamic, authentic and personalized learning experiences for students. The district has defined authentic learning as strategies that “engage students in the collaborative creation of products or solutions that require extended focus over time, match the complex real-world tasks and investigations of professionals in practice, and integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines.” To achieve this, the innovation sprint and the director of strategic innovation have been involved in working with faculty on a number of innovative practices and programs such as design thinking, the capstone program, global pathways, and the new student resume. These projects individually and collectively have expanded not only *what* we teach, but also *how* we teach.

Design Thinking

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

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

mindset.” Teachers continue to engage in professional development to learn this approach and actively implement it with students.

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

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

Capstone Projects

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

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

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

We are also proud that Andover Public Schools once again helped lead and host the National Capstone Consortium Summer Summit. Approximately 200 schools from across the nation gathered to share and learn from one another’s capstone projects. Our faculty and administrators both participated and presented at this event, garnering a substantial amount of interest in the way we are implementing our capstone program at multiple grade levels.

Global Pathways Program

Global Pathways is an integrated, multi-year track in which high school students take courses and engage in experiences focused on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It leads to a Global Scholar Endorsement on a student’s transcript. The Global Pathways Program began in 2015 with 15 students and

one faculty member. Today, it has expanded to over 200 students and 10 faculty members. This expansion is attributed to the expertise of the faculty facilitating the program and to the desire of our families to prepare their children for a complex and global future.

Another global initiative is the development of the world-ready lab for grades 6-12. This program utilizes the global portal to integrate world language learning and native speakers. The goal is to promote social entrepreneurship and pursue design challenges that explore the world’s most significant issues through the United Nations Goals for Sustainable Global Development.

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

LITERACY SPRINT

The literacy sprint will address reading challenges and select a new approach to teaching literacy as the next step in advancing curricular rigor (goal 2) and inclusive instruction (goal 3).

Target: Students with literacy challenges become successful and fluent readers or are provided with alternatives that allow them to access appropriately challenging text.

Key Accomplishments:

- ✓ *Significantly improved the literacy program district-wide, particularly for those students who are dyslexic or have significant reading challenges. Results from the 2018 MCAS reading assessment show:*
 - ◆ **Increased performance** for all students scoring proficient and advanced.
 - ◆ **Significant improvements** in the proportion of students with disabilities scoring proficient and advanced.
 - ◆ **Decreases** in the proportion of students with disabilities not meeting expectations.

MCAS READING RESULTS 2017 vs 2018			
% All Students Proficient or Advanced			
Grade	2017	2018	% Point Change
3	62%	71%	9%
4	61%	71%	10%
5	65%	70%	5%

MCAS READING RESULTS 2017 vs 2018			
% Students with Disabilities Proficient or Advanced			
Grade	2017	2018	% Point Change
3	19%	33%	14%
4	19%	40%	21%
5	20%	29%	9%

MCAS READING RESULTS 2017 vs 2018			
% Students with Disabilities Not Meeting Expectations			
Grade	2017	2018	% Point Change
3	15%	5%	-10%
4	28%	14%	-14%
5	24%	12%	-12%

- ✓ *Expanded approaches to benefit students with language-based learning difficulties and dyslexia.*
 - ◆ *Assisted Boston Children’s in validating new literacy screening instrument at kindergarten level.*
 - ◆ *Aligned high school annual assessments of IEP progress with other grade levels.*
 - ◆ *Introduced Language! Live for older students with difficulty in comprehension.*
 - ◆ *Expanded use of Report Form to teach older students how to read for information.*
 - ◆ *Established Eye to Eye peer mentoring program for students with learning disabilities.*
 - ◆ *Devoted significant resources to professional development in multiple programs and strategies for reaching all students.*

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

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

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

Assessment

We made progress in many areas of assessment, including screening, individual diagnostic assessment, progress monitoring, and summative assessment. In terms of screening, the Gaab Lab for Developmental Neuroscience at Boston Children’s Hospital is developing an innovative new type of literacy screening app called the Boston Early Literacy App. It is designed to assess the language and pre-literacy skills that are most closely associated with future reading success in very young children. The app is the first comprehensive screener for children as young as three years old. Because of our work in literacy intervention, Children’s Hospital invited Andover to be part of the validation of the Boston Early Literacy App. While we were happy to contribute to the knowledge base on early identification, this project also benefitted our teachers by providing them with examples of current research on foundational literacy skills and offering a model screening program pursuant to Bill H.2872. Kindergarten students in four of our five elementary schools were screened with the app and then evaluated with traditional diagnostic assessments to establish concurrent validity. Teachers participated in a focus group where they reviewed the dashboard for the app and suggested improvements. Follow-up activities will include professional development and beta testing at the preschool level.

By design, screening measures lack the specificity to identify the right intervention plan for an individual. In order to translate screening results into action, teachers need additional tools. Through a unique and collaborative partnership among APS Student Services, Dr. Melissa Orkin of Crafting Minds, and the Hill for Literacy, a Tier III committee worked all year to develop a plan to help teachers take a closer look at students identified by screeners. The process included three steps: 1) examining the results from DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), 2) applying simple follow-up assessments with samples of Andover students, and 3) selecting the right intervention for each student based on that data. The follow-up assessments were selected to determine what types of reading problems children were experiencing. This action research approach allowed committee members to engage in rich discussions

about targeting interventions. Next year, the team will apply the model in the context of a case-study-based professional development series. The results of this project will be included in a chapter of our new dyslexia guide, which will be available in the fall.

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

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

Interventions

We have also made progress on our plan to provide targeted reading interventions to students with a wide variety of needs. Children with language-based reading disorders are often impacted in reading, speaking, listening, and writing. Thus, it is important to provide interventions in all four related strands of language development. In addition, reading can break down at any stage of reading development, so different interventions are required to correct problems associated with each stage. Children also exhibit different types of reading disorders as well as different subtypes of dyslexia. Each subtype requires a different approach and may impact a reader differently at various stages of reading development. None of the interventions cure dyslexia—they simply prepare the reader with the skills to move to the next stage of reading acquisition. Dyslexia is the most well-known reading disorder, but there are other reading disabilities not related to dyslexia. In a public school setting, our responsibility is to provide services for all learners, at all stages of development, in all strands of language functioning. In order to do that, we must have the ability to constantly assess and coordinate multiple approaches.

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

The comprehension of non-fiction text is another critical skill for older students. In the fall, we trained a second cohort of middle and high school special education teachers and reading specialists in Report Form. Report Form is a method for teaching older students with language-based disabilities how to read

for information. Students are taught strategies for identifying main ideas, categorizing facts about those main ideas, and identifying text structure. These skills help students to read and understand textbooks.

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

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

Professional Development

The effectiveness of any reading intervention is highly dependent upon the skills of the teacher. Accordingly, we devoted significant time and resources to professional development. At the elementary level, in-house experts—such as some of our speech-language pathologists and special education teachers—offered courses on specific language-based interventions to both special and regular education teachers. Interventions included Story Grammar Marker—a method for teaching oral language and narrative comprehension to young children with language-based learning disabilities—and Framing Your Thoughts—a method for teaching grammar and writing skills to students at the beginning stages of language development. Due to the efforts of these dedicated Andover language and literacy experts, many regular education teachers expressed an interest in learning how to use these techniques to differentiate their instruction. In many cases, special education teachers, reading specialists, and regular education teachers are now co-teaching and using the techniques in the regular classroom.

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

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

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

Program Development

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

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

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

Finally, we continued to participate in advocacy efforts in relation to literacy. We started the year with a Districts of Distinction award for our work in the areas of literacy and dyslexia. In October, our assistant superintendent for student services was invited to collaborate on a literacy symposium at the International Dyslexia Association conference, and later in the year she was invited to consult on literacy for the education department at Drexel University. Drexel is one of the few universities in the U.S. to be accredited in the Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading by the International Dyslexia Association.

Core Literacy Program for Elementary Students

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

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

This curricular adoption was supported by rigorous professional development. We have been fortunate to develop a partnership with Dr. Cynthia Merrill of the University of New Hampshire. This year, Dr. Merrill provided extensive professional development in Reader's Workshop for all elementary teachers on topics

such as strategic thinking, interactive read-alouds, independent reading, shared reading, book clubs and mini-lessons. These efforts will continue into next school year, as elementary teachers focus on training in the conferring practices, the guided reading approach, and the Benchmark Assessment System.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We have also directed significant attention to integrating literacy with social studies and the arts. Through the development of *One Community, One Nation (OCON)*, and its associated training, elementary teachers

learned a new pedagogical model and created integrated and engaging civics and literacy lessons for K-5 students. We are working on integrating science and literacy, and have identified literature and non-fiction texts that match each of the FOSS science units. These texts will be purchased as part of the FY20 textbook budget.

Literacy Program for Secondary Students

The middle school English Language Arts (ELA) teachers focused on the improvement of reading and writing for students in grades 6-8. To support their professional learning, the district created three middle school writing laboratory classrooms (one in each middle school). These classrooms served as host learning environments for our teachers to engage in peer sharing of lessons. The grades 6-12 ELA program coordinator also met with the literacy laboratory teachers as a professional learning community to develop shared writing instructional practices across our middle schools. This learning will be continued next year with training in writing provided by Teachers College at Columbia University.

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

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

ACCESSIBILITY SPRINT

The accessible digital media sprint builds on our 1:1 initiative; the purchase of digital applications, texts and media; and our professional development in blended learning in order to support inclusive instructional practices (goal 3).

Target: Universally designed instruction that maximizes the productivity of technology is integrated into all classes.

Key Accomplishments:

- ✓ *Provided professional development to spread the use of TextHelp and placed training modules on our website.*
- ✓ *Provided a graduate credit course for 24 teachers on universal design for learning.*
- ✓ *Offered an online course on how to create a UDL classroom using Google Applications.*
- ✓ *Gained approval for the purchase of a learning management system.*

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

Last year the district purchased TextHelp to improve accessibility of written communication. Our focus this year was on providing professional development for teachers and students and letting more people

know about this tool's availability. To accomplish this goal, the Digital Learning Department offered a TechByte Technology series on TextHelp. Digital learning coaches provided students with tutorials, one-on-one demonstrations, and modeling. Information was sent to parents through the PACs and PTOs. TextHelp learning modules are now available on the district's website for teachers, students and parents.

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

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

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

Finally, the purchase of a learning management system (LMS) was approved for FY20. In the fall we will begin piloting the new system with teachers in the district. The accessibility sprint team has begun collecting UDL resources to share through the intranet portion of the LMS.

PROGRESS MONITORING SPRINT

The progress monitoring sprint focuses the district on the implementation of a variety of diagnostic assessments and data analyses to ensure we are adjusting instruction to most effectively meet individual needs through the monitoring of students' progress (goal 4).

Target: Data-reflective culture is present in all schools and data is used to answer questions about student growth and drive instructional improvement.

Key Accomplishments:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF STRATEGIC FOCUS

FACILITIES

Although there was no facilities sprint this past year, significant strides were made and we felt it important to report on our progress in this area.

Key Accomplishments:

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

One of the most significant needs of the district has been the upgrading and renovation or replacement of our aging school facilities. Our capital improvement plan moved some significant projects forward. We built a security vestibule at AHS and improved security throughout the district. We added sound enhancement to classrooms at all our schools except the high school. In the summer of 2018, we completed the air conditioning of High Plain and Wood Hill, which made these school environments much more conducive to learning as we opened school last fall.

The West Elementary building project continues to move forward expeditiously. In December, we were accepted into the feasibility phase of the project by MSBA. Over the past year we convened a building committee, hired an owner's project manager (OPM), submitted a request for services (RFS) for architectural services to MSBA for review, and complied with all of MSBA's requirements for launching work on the project. In our meetings with MSBA, we were able to receive authorization for an enrollment of 925, which will give us a good deal of flexibility to ensure we appropriately size the building, even if we eventually decide to build for a lower enrollment. In addition, the MSBA is willing to consider adding a preschool to the facility. We moved this project forward as quickly as we could in order to maximize our opportunity to address imminent needs at the high school.

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

Working with DiNisco Architects, we made significant progress in assessing how we might best address the needs of the Doherty Middle School building. DiNisco's final report gives us a vision of what a possible

renovation might look like and provides guidance for the next steps we can take within the capital improvement plan to address the school's immediate needs.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

We also did not have a sprint focused on communications. However, it was one of the major goals of the district and we made notable progress.

Key Accomplishments:

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

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

On August 28, 2018, we welcomed the debut of the inaugural edition of the district's e-newsletter *Warrior Wednesdays* which spotlights students, teachers and APS community news. By the end of the 2018-19 school year, our communications coordinator had produced 36 digital editions, which were shared with approximately 8,400 parents, faculty, and community members. We also created a Twitter account for Andover Public Schools (@AndoverPS) and continue to grow our identity on this social media platform, which now has more than 600 followers.

The communications department has also established positive working relationships with local media, including the *Townsmen*, *Eagle Tribune*, *Patch*, *Boston Globe Local*, and Boston-area TV stations. This outreach has not only involved media advisories and press releases, but personal contact with reporters and media representatives.

In November, the communications coordinator was appointed as the Records Access Officer (RAO) for the District. APS has experienced a marked increase in public records requests, mostly from community members.

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

INCREMENTAL STEPS FORWARD

Over the past three years we have taken significant incremental steps to move the district forward by reducing elementary class size, implementing a new high school schedule, supporting a comprehensive

and data-informed plan to address learning needs, expanding students' opportunities for authentic learning, making our classrooms and schools more caring and more culturally responsive, moving forward aggressively on a capital improvement plan, and advancing the work of our sprint teams.

We are proud of what has been accomplished and of everyone's deep commitment to continuing the district's improvement efforts. We are grateful to the School Committee, faculty, staff and parents for recognizing the importance of continuing to move the district forward, and to the community of Andover for their ongoing support of our students.