



Steward School

Topsfield, Massachusetts School Improvement Plan 2011-2012

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Educational Mission Statement and Core Values

The Topsfield Elementary Schools pursue educational excellence by providing the opportunity for every individual in its community of learners to reach his or her full intellectual, social, moral, creative and physical potential.

In cooperation with family and community, our mission is to guide students in becoming personally responsible, self- motivated, disciplined, respectful, competent, and contributing members of society.

It is the belief of the Topsfield School District that all children can learn and be successful. Effective education requires a committed partnership among the schools, home, and community.

Student achievement results from high expectations within an environment that is stimulating and challenging, yet safe and nurturing.

A sense of respect for oneself and others promotes belonging and is essential to learning.

Steward School Strategic Goals

Steward School will meet the unique needs of each learner through continuous assessment and differentiation of instruction.

Steward School will prepare its 21st century learners to think critically, problem solve, apply learned skills and strategies to novel situations, collaborate, be agile and adaptive, take initiative, communicate effectively both orally and in writing, access and analyze information and promote curiosity and imagination.

Steward School will provide a safe facility and a positive school environment.

Introduction:

Each public school in Massachusetts is required to submit a yearly School Improvement Plan since the Education Reform Act of 1993. The Steward School Council has prepared the following plan for the 2011-2012 school year. It is our goal for this cycle of our School Improvement Plan to have one consistent message that becomes ingrained in the fabric of our schools and is easily articulated by all members of our community, including families, students and staff. Therefore, the goals and objectives will be succinct and have one focus. For the 2011-2012 school year, the Topsfield Public Schools will concentrate their efforts on identifying the unique needs of each student and tailoring instruction to enhance academic skills, support social development, while monitoring individual growth. The vehicles through which we will accomplish the identified objective include the differentiation of instruction and implementation of curriculum that correlates with the newly adopted Common Core Standards to meet the needs of all learners, using technology as a tool to engage 21st century learners, and providing a safe and positive environment for students to learn.

Differentiation of Instruction Through the Common Core Standards

The Common Core Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to know and be able to do. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With Topsfield students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy (www.corestandards.org). As Massachusetts has adopted these standards, we now move towards fully aligning our curriculum, assessment and instruction through collaboration, curriculum map development and implementation of programs that are aligned with these state standards.

Since the start of the 2010-2011 school year, educators have been working to align the current curriculum with the Common Core Standards. Administrators attended the State Curriculum Summit in the late fall of 2010 to better understand the implications and timeline of implementation process. Through staff meetings and professional development opportunities, educators have deepened their understanding of the similarities and differences between the Massachusetts State Frameworks and the Common Core Standards.

Using data gathered through multiple formal and informal assessments, educators build a stronger understanding of a student's learning profile. Based on that knowledge, educators design instruction that compliments, extends and accesses a student's interest, learning style and readiness.

Strategic Goal: Steward School will meet the unique needs of each learner through continuous assessment and differentiation of instruction.

Assessments will be used to drive instruction, monitor growth and determine if benchmarks have been met. Through the development of a Data Team in which educators can assess student progress as well as the fidelity of our curriculum, we can make informed decisions regarding teaching and learning. Next year, we will also focus our attention on ways to use assessment data to differentiate instruction and provide accommodations and extensions for students who are successful in the classroom with the core curriculum and are meeting the benchmarks established in the universal screenings. Teachers differentiate the content, product and process based on a student's readiness, interest and learning style.

21st Century Learners

Steward School will prepare its 21st century learners to think critically, problem solve, apply learned skills and strategies to novel situations, collaborate, be agile and adaptive, take initiative, communicate effectively both orally and in writing, access and analyze information and promote curiosity and imagination. With these values in mind, curriculum maps outlining the exit outcomes in writing and defining the units of study have been developed. Professional development continues to be offered to enhance educators' understanding and ability to apply the document to their practice across all curriculum areas. When researching new mathematics curriculum, the characteristics of a 21st century learner were used as a criteria for choosing pilot programs for the fall.

Technology is a platform to enhance academic skills and can allow for more effective and engaging teaching and learning through the differentiation of instruction. The U.S. Department of Education defines technology literacy as, "Computer skills and the ability to use computers and other technology to improve learning, productivity and performance." Students will need to develop technology literacy to acquire and manage knowledge to succeed in school and thrive in our ever-changing world. The members of our school community will use technology as a tool to excel as learners and develop as leaders as they skillfully use technology to access, retrieve and use information school-wide, community-wide, nationally and internationally. Our children are products of the 21st century and need to have the capacity and ability to think critically, problem solve, collaborate, be agile and adaptive, take initiative, communicate, access and analyze information and promote curiosity and imagination. Technology is a means to acquiring these 21st century skills.

Throughout the 2010-2011 school year, teachers used technology to support student learning. Through the use of interactive whiteboards, Mimios, document cameras, computers and a variety of web-based and networked software, student exposure to the world around them was expanded. A new website was designed to increase communication with students, families and community members. Teachers were trained in how to create and maintain a webpage within a defined structure. In addition, staff members continued to participate in professional development opportunities to increase knowledge around the most current technology. A Technology Committee, consisting of parents, teachers, administrators and community members was created to conduct a needs analysis of current and future technology. In addition, the information from the needs assessment will lead to the development of a Technology Planning Initiative and identify the necessary funding to reach our goal. This year the staff has moved towards a web-based progress monitoring system for collecting data and generating reports outlining student progress. The generated reports have illustrated, through charts and graphs, our students' strengths and areas of need.

Strategic Goal: Steward School will prepare its 21st century learners to think critically, problem solve, apply learned skills and strategies to novel situations, collaborate, be agile and adaptive, take initiative, communicate effectively both orally and in writing, access and analyze information and promote curiosity and imagination.

As we move forward, the district is currently working towards articulating a clear and consistent curriculum based on the Common Core Standards. This effort includes the adoption of a comprehensive writing program that was created and defined by the Tri-Town Writing Committee. In addition, the Tri-Town Math Committee continues their investigation of standards-based math programs that are aligned

to the standards but are also “robust and relevant” to the real world. Tri-Town teachers will be piloting chosen programs in their classrooms throughout the school year. A final decision will be presented to the School Committee in each of the three towns. Steward School will be adopting a more sequential and inclusive language word study program for grades K-3. Reading curriculum maps will be formed that mirror those created by the Writing Committee as well. Together, these efforts will result in a consistent curriculum that can be more easily accessible and understood by students, educators and families.

The Technology Committee will work together to establish an action plan to address our technology needs in the areas of personnel, professional development, hardware, software and curriculum. Throughout the year, the school principals will report to the School Committee and School Council the goals and achievements of this committee.

Wellness

The Topsfield Schools work in harmony with community members and school personnel to ensure the wellness of our students while they are under our supervision. Through various vehicles of communication, we are able to educate our students and parents about the procedures that allow our students to be safe, healthy and socially confident individuals.

We work closely and collaboratively with members of the police and fire departments to ensure that we have a common understanding of our safety protocols: fire drills, lockdown and evacuation. Through evacuation and lockdown drills, we monitor student and staff readiness in the event that an emergency occurs during the school day. The Code of Conduct provides a structure that defines behaviors and expectations which lead our students to make positive decisions and helps build a respectful community of learners. We provide social instruction, through *Second Step*, to provide students with skills and strategies to positively interact with peers. The Wellness Committee has worked diligently to research and educate students and families about current issues and preventative measures which allow our students to be healthier and more active.

Strategic Goal: Steward School will provide a safe facility and a positive school environment.

Through the Wellness, Conduct and Safety Committees, we are more prepared to educate the whole child as we understand that the emphasis on students’ safety and wellness is imperative to their academic success. Using the results gained from the Health and Wellness Surveys conducted in the spring of 2010 and the Olweus Survey conducted in the late fall of 2010, the staff will identify the main areas of focus for further educating our students in the area of social, physical and emotional wellness.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program will be implemented in our school community. The curriculum will provide students and staff with the skills and strategies to create a safe, secure and conducive atmosphere for student learning. All staff members will be trained in the program therefore a common language, expectations and outcomes will be developed and understood by all. Parent information sessions will also be designed so all members of the Topsfield community will be educated about the programs mission and core values, establishing the home-school connection and becoming an integral part of creating safer schools.

GOAL #1: Steward School will meet the unique needs of each learner through continuous assessment and differentiation of instruction.

ACTIVITY	INVOLVED	TIMELINE	METHOD(S) OF IMPLEMENTATION	EVIDENCE/DOCUMENTATION
<p>Assessments drive instruction and are continuously evaluated and discussed to ensure efficacy and validity. These tools are being used for screening, progress monitoring, informing instruction and to monitor student progress.</p>	<p>Teachers, Director of Curriculum, Math and Reading Specialists</p>	<p>Completion during 2011-2012 school year Report out during November, March, June School Committee meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of AIMSWeb assessment to preschool teachers and students • Develop protocols for data meetings to further develop analytical and evaluative processes • Provide Professional Development for teachers on use of AIMSWeb data software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing prompts • Math interims • DRA • AIMSWeb • Data Day • Job Alike Meetings (JAM), Instructional Team (IT) and Staff Meeting minutes
<p>Maintain class size consistent with the 15-year history in order to ensure the optimal differentiation of instruction.</p>	<p>Principal, School Committee, Classroom Teachers, School Council</p>	<p>Completion during 2011-2012 school year Report out during October, January, April School Committee meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Committee recommendations and discussions with input from Superintendent and Principals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 1st and March 1st enrollment numbers • Topsfield Schools' Budget
<p>Explore ways in which our schools can enrich and extend learning across all curriculum areas in an effort to continuously challenge our students</p>	<p>Principal, Teachers, Reading and Math Specialists, Extended Studies Liaison</p>	<p>Completion during 2011-2012 school year Report out during November, March, June School Committee meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention/Extension Block • Integration of enrichment opportunities into existing curriculum units • Explore ways Interventionists can provide additional supports to the above average learner • Research extended studies models in neighboring districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily schedule • Assessment analysis for students receiving additional supports • Curriculum maps with extended studies opportunities outlined • Consultation between classroom teachers and Extended Studies Liaison • Observations/Reflections from planned site visits to districts offering extended studies programs /interviews with extended studies facilitators

GOAL #2: Steward School will prepare its 21st century learners to think critically, problem solve, apply learned skills and strategies to novel situations, collaborate, be agile and adaptive, take initiative, communicate effectively both orally and in writing, access and analyze information and promote curiosity and imagination.

ACTIVITY	INVOLVED	TIMELINE	METHOD(S) of IMPLEMENTATION	EVIDENCE/DOCUMENTATION
<p>Members of our school community will use technology as a tool to excel as learners and develop as leaders as they skillfully use technology to access, retrieve and use information school-wide, community-wide, nationally and internationally</p>	<p>Technology Specialist, Teachers, Principal, Technology Committee</p>	<p>Completion during 2011-2012 school year Report out during September, February, May School Committee meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of Topsfield Technology Committee • Evaluate Topsfield Schools' web page • Implementation of Action Plan developed from Technology Needs Assessment • Use of technology tools to monitor academic and social progress • Ongoing Professional Development of Web 2.0 tools and available hardware 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes from Technology Committee, JAM and IT meetings • Observations of technology use in building walk-throughs • Displays of finished products • Web page activity • AIMS Web • Technology Action Plan
<p>Continue to support and refine a balanced literacy approach to reading, writing and language word study</p>	<p>Director of Curriculum, Reading Specialists, Grade Level Teams, Tri-Town Writing Committee</p>	<p>Completion during 2011-2012 school year Report out during October and March School Committee meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development Opportunities, such as 6+1 Traits course • Peer Observations • IT Time and JAM discussions across grade levels • Analysis of assessment data • Implementation of newly developed Writing Curriculum Maps • Implementation of new primary Language Word Study program • Creation of Reading maps, which compliment those created by the Writing Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom observations • Plan books • Reading assessments • Writing Prompts • Curriculum and Pacing revision chart provided by the Writing Committee

Continued research through discussion, pilot and presentation regarding the implementation of a standards-based mathematics program in grades K-6	Director of Curriculum, Math Specialists, Grade Level Teams, Tri-Town Math Committee	Completion during 2011-2012 school year Report out during October and March School Committee meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development Opportunities • Peer Observations • IT Time and JAM discussions across grade levels • Analysis of assessment data • Pilot selected programs • Creation of Math maps, which would align with the Core Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom observations • Plan books • Math interim and AIMSWeb assessments • Minutes from the Tri-Town Math Committee
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GOAL #3 STEWARD SCHOOL WILL PROVIDE A SAFE FACILITY AND A POSITIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT.

ACTIVITY	INVOLVED	TIMELINE	METHOD(S) of IMPLEMENTATION	EVIDENCE/DOCUMENTATION
Teach and reinforce the three Topsfield School focus areas of social wellness: respect, responsibility and safety, through the Olweus Program	Principal, School Counselor, School Psychologist, Safety Team, Wellness Committee, Teachers, Olweus Steering Committee	Completion during 2011-2012 school year Report out during October, January, April School Committee meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade level and whole school assemblies • Evacuation and lockdown drills • Second Step/Olweus Program • Revised Student Handbook • Provide families with the necessary resources and information regarding Olweus • Olweus lessons • Olweus Professional Development • Bullying Prevention and Implementation Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in office referrals • Reports from Police and Fire Departments following drills or emergencies • Minutes from Safety, Wellness and Olweus Steering Committee • Observation of student interactions • Learner quality assessment portion of report card • Olweus Survey •
Maintain school facility to ensure a safe facility and learning environment.	Facilities Director, Head Custodian, Parks and Cemetery Dept, Nurse	Completion during 2011-2012 school year Report provided by Director of Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess school campus and make recommendations to Principal, Superintendent, and School Committee • Work with parent and community organizations to assess the current condition of the Steward playground and take action when possible and/or necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident reports • School budget • Reports of the Facilities Director and Principal's Report

