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Superintendent Mid-Year Progress Report

2015 – 2016 School Year

February 23, 2016

Submitted by John P. Phelan, Superintendent Belmont Public Schools

Preface:

The mid-year progress report gives the School Committee an update on my progress toward the approved Goals set in August as well as an update on other major district initiatives and work done thus far in the academic year.

Section One: Superintendent's Goals Summary

Section Two: Superintendent's Rubric Summary

Please see the three attached documents:

1. Superintendent Goals for 2015/16
2. Superintendent Rubric
3. 2015/16 Strategic Plan

**Section One:
Superintendent's Goals Summary**

Goal 1: Effective Strategic Planning (Standard IV {E})

The Strategic Plan adopted for the 2015/16 school year was a result of utilization of the good work done prior to my arrival, the time intensive and thoughtful work of the Leadership Council throughout the 2014/15 school year, and the Leadership Retreat in June 2015. The current plan represents the prioritization of the Leadership Council goals for moving the district forward. This plan has guided our work this year in budgeting, professional development, engagement of the community and the work of the Leadership Council during this year. Key Actions # 1 and # 2 have been fulfilled.

As we look toward the Strategic Planning process for the 2016/17 school year, two points of interest have become important discussion items that would change the goal for this year as it relates to the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan has been rooted in the work of the entire Leadership Council. In our January meeting the Leadership Council discussed and decided to move forward with our present goals, in a manner that would keep the integrity of the current plan. This was largely due to the fact that the current plan represents several years of work (prior to my arrival) and a clear prioritization of the work that we accomplished this year (for 2015/16 SY) as a team. With the new high school building project becoming a reality, the Massachusetts School Building Authority prescribes a "visioning" component to the planning work. This work will take place next year per the MSBA schedule. It may be prudent to pause on doing any strategic planning for the district in isolation of discussion as it relates to our new high school proposal. Conducting two separate conversations on goals, vision, strategic planning (one for BHS and one for District) may be confusing to the staff and the community. This work may be most efficiently done in unison, in the fall of 2016. The current plan (see attached) has served us well this year and is one that the Leadership Council is invested in utilizing for 2016/17 school year.

Goal 2: Student Learning Goal (Standard 1{B, D, E})

During the 2014/15 school year the Leadership Council took part in several meetings that included reviewing student outcome data. The initial view of the data showed great progress and proficiency for the majority of our students. However the second phase of the review focused on data that represented students and student groups who were not meeting with success. These meetings spurred the Leadership Council to make this a priority in our Strategic Plan for the 2015/16 school year (see Strategic Plan {Focus Area A.2}).

Even though Social Emotional Learning is the major initiative of the district (see Strategic Plan {Focus Area A.1}), this work has been the focus of my student learning goal this year. A Task Force has been formed and the group has met throughout the school year to gather data, conduct a literature review, conduct student focus groups, and discuss other data points or artifacts that should be considered. The group will give an update to their peers at the Leadership Council meeting in March. We have completed the first three Key Actions and will be updating the School Committee on our findings in the spring with the submission of an Executive Summary in June.

Goal 3: (Professional Practice) New Superintendent Induction Program Year 2 (Standard IV{D})

I have been an active participant in Year 2 of the New Superintendent Induction Program. I attended all full day sessions and continue to meet regularly with my “Coach” Rose DiTullio. Additionally, I have completed all homework assignments and continue to utilize the program as a useful resource to navigate my second year as a Superintendent. Belonging to this cohort of superintendents, under the guidance of a group of experienced superintendent mentors, has proven to be an effective use of time. The focus on strategic thinking and planning combined with the group support around our “problem of practice” protocol activities has been very helpful to me as a superintendent.

***Section Two:
Superintendents Rubrics Summary***

As you know there is substantial work being done in the district beyond what is represented in my stated “goals” for the 2015/16 school year. Please see the attached summary of highlights as it relates to the Superintendent Rubric.

Standard I: Instructional Leadership

Learning Walks have been expanded and scheduled for the entire year. Assistant Superintendent Darias and I conduct a Learning Walk with a building principal once a week. This practice allow us to observe teaching and learning, talk with principals about our observations, and create a culture of professional dialogue with our administrative team (Standard 1: D, E). These walks create rich discussions about assessment, quality teaching strategies, curriculum work, and student engagement (Standard 1: B, C).

Standard II: Management and Operations

The district has been progressing with our Social Emotional Learning (SEL) initiative (Strategic Plan: Focus Goal #1). The Leadership Council, especially the building principals, have fully invested and prioritized their work this year around SEL training and building-based teams (Standard 2: A, B, C). The Strategic Plan also addresses the ongoing “operational work” which is important to the district (see Strategic Plan B. 2 and C. 1). Two items on this list are 1) the need to increase our capacity to expand the diversity of our staff (Standard 2: B) and 2) to develop a fiscal management plan for procuring texts, materials and supplies for our staff (Standard 2: E). We are making progress with both key initiatives. Most recently in our budgeting process we engaged in a zero-based budgeting session with each member of the Leadership Council, when preparing our FY17 budget.

Standard 3: Family and Community Engagement

It has been a priority of mine to communicate with our families and the community. I have continued to make myself available to our parents and community members in person and via phone / email. The newsletter and blog have been well-received and give quality information to our families and staff. The *Belmont Now* cable show will continue this year with the last taping of the show having taken place last week. I have attended and presented at many school PTO meetings and events, as well as other community events on behalf of the schools. My visibility in schools and in the community provides me with a great opportunity to hear firsthand the issues that may be of interest to our school community, as well as the time to communicate the school's goals. This two way communication is done in group forums and in individual meetings and discussions. These daily and weekly interactions represent almost every indicator in Standard III.

Standard 4: Professional Culture

The Leadership Council is the backbone of the Belmont Public Schools. This team of educators is second to none in their commitment to the students and teachers of Belmont, their professionalism, and their incredible talent and intellectual approach to the work. That said, the work is to get all of the Leadership Council on the same page with a shared vision of our Strategic Plan is essential (Standard 4: A, E). I believe we have accomplished this through consensus building, keeping to the mission of our plan, and having hard conversations to come to agreement on our priorities (Standard 4: A, F). The SEL work in particular has been a learning opportunity for every member of the Leadership Council, as well as the building based teams and our faculty and staff (Standard 4: D).

It should be noted that the work we have done this year on Space Task Force and in the planning for next year's space needs in addition to the new high school building project has absorbed a tremendous amount of our time and stretches over all four standards.

SUPERINTENDENT GOALS FOR 2016/16

Goal 1: Effective Strategic Planning {Standard IV (E)}. To implement year two strategic plan (2015/15) as presented in August 2015; and to lead the process of securing a facilitator to facilitate the district strategic planning process to ensure that by early spring, the district will have broad agreement from key stakeholder groups about (1) the district's most critical needs, (b) the strategies and goals that will address them most effectively, and (c) the measures that will be used to assess progress.

Key Actions

1. Summer of 2015 lead Leadership Retreat to conclude the Strategic Planning work for the 2015/16 school year.
2. By August present updated 2015/16 Strategic Plan to School Committee and to hold joint retreat of Leadership Council and School Committee to discuss strategic planning work.
3. By February, identify a facilitator to conduct focus groups with key stakeholders to identify strengths of the system and the most critical areas for improvement; support the Leadership Team with the prioritization of these areas of improvement and support the drafting of the Belmont Public School Strategic Plan for 2016-2020.
4. By May, secure stakeholder feedback.
5. Summer 2016, collaborate the Leadership Council to identify three to five student learning and district improvement goals.

Benchmarks

1. Meetings conducted on schedule (process).
2. Goals adopted (process).
3. Strategic Plan adopted (outcome)

Goal 2: Student Learning Goal {Standard 1 (B, D, E)}. To conduct a review of the Belmont Public Schools ability and capacity to support "all students" by commissioning an Achievement Gap Task Force charged with an analysis of our student data, a literature review of the research, and a study of best practices.

Key Actions

1. By August, meet with Leadership Council to determine the membership of the task force.
2. By November, convene the Achievement Gap Task Force to set the action plan for the group.
3. By February, update the Leadership Council on the initial findings of the Task Force.
4. By April, present initial findings to School Committee
5. By June, complete and present an Executive Summary for School Committee review.

Benchmarks

1. Meetings conducted on schedule (process).
2. Agendas of meetings (process).
3. Executive Report completed by June (outcome)

Goal 3: (Professional Practice) New Superintendent Induction Program Year 2 {Standard IV (D)}.
Develop skills in strategy development, data analysis, and instructional leadership by completing the second year of the New Superintendent Induction Program and earning at least Proficient ratings on each major assignment.

Key Actions

1. Attend six daylong sessions.
2. Complete all assignments.
3. Consult with my assigned coach at least monthly.

Benchmarks

1. Calendar documents attendance and contact with coach (process).
2. Rubric rating on each assignment demonstrates proficiency (process and outcome).

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SUPERINTENDENT RUBRIC

Superintendent Rubric At-A-Glance

Standard I: Instructional Leadership	Standard II: Management & Operations	Standard III: Family and Community Engagement	Standard IV: Professional Culture
<p>A. Curriculum Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standards-Based Unit Design 2. Lesson Development Support 	<p>A. Environment Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plans, Procedures, and Routines 2. Operational Systems 3. Student Safety, Health, and Social and Emotional Needs 	<p>A. Engagement Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family Engagement 2. Community and Business Engagement 	<p>A. Commitment to High Standards Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commitment to High Standards 2. Mission and Core Values 3. Meetings
<p>B. Instruction Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructional Practices 2. Quality of Effort & Work 3. Diverse Learners' Needs 	<p>B. Human Resources Management & Development Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruitment & Hiring Strategies 2. Induction, Professional Development, and Career Growth Strategies 	<p>B. Sharing Responsibility Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student Support 2. Family Collaboration 	<p>B. Cultural Proficiency Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policies and Practices
<p>C. Assessment Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Variety of Assessments 2. Adjustment to Practice 	<p>C. Scheduling & Management Information Systems Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time for Teaching and Learning 2. Time for Collaboration 	<p>C. Communication Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Two-Way Communication 2. Culturally Proficient Communication 	<p>C. Communications Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communications Skills
<p>D. Evaluation Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educator Goals 2. Observations & Feedback 3. Ratings 4. Alignment Review 	<p>D. Law, Ethics & Policies Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Laws and Policies 2. Ethical Behavior 	<p>D. Family Concerns Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family Concerns 	<p>D. Continuous Learning Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuous Learning of Staff 2. Continuous Learning of Administrator
<p>E. Data-Informed Decision Making Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge & Use of Data 2. School and District Goals 3. Improvement of Performance, Effectiveness, and Learning 	<p>E. Fiscal Systems Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fiscal Systems 		<p>E. Shared Vision Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shared Vision Development
			<p>F. Managing Conflict Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Response to Disagreement 2. Conflict Resolution 3. Consensus Building

2015/16 STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION STATEMENT: 2012 – 2017

With a commitment to teaching and learning, the Belmont Public Schools strive to nurture the knowledge, skills, and emotional development of each student in order to create a community of engaged learners who contribute to the common good and are of service to others.

CORE BELIEFS

We believe that

All students are capable of learning at high levels.

Everyone deserves to learn in a safe and supported learning environment in which all members of the school community demonstrate respect for each other.

Successful students and educators need 21st century skills, including the ability to solve problems, communicate effectively, collaborate, and think critically.

A sense of community is essential for the development of every learner.

Education for the whole child requires development of the child's academic, social, physical, and emotional well-being.

Education is best achieved when students, teachers, and parents work together.

Students will work and live in a world very different from the one in which they, their teachers, and their parents grew up.

Student success is measured in a variety of ways.

Public education is the primary means society has for safeguarding democracy and achieving social justice.

VISION STATEMENT: 2017

The Belmont Public Schools provide an innovative environment where all adults and children develop and apply the curiosity, skills, and habits of life-long learners. Our success is built on a partnership of educators, families, and community members that is committed to providing the means for Belmont's children to create happy and successful lives.

In June 2017, all students in the Belmont Public Schools

- Learn: Develop the confidence and resilience that result from exceptional effort;
- Think: Authentically engage in a rigorous curriculum;
- Create: Apply their learning to address important challenges;
- Serve: Make a positive difference in the lives of other people.

MOTTO: 2012 - 2017

Learn * Think * Create * Serve

STRATEGIC PLAN

	Strategic Goals	Key Initiatives for 2015-2016
A.	<p><i>To prepare all students for college, career, and life-long learning through</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a balanced and healthy school experience, • continuity of curricula aligned with Commonwealth and community standards, • support for educators to experiment and innovate, and • clear articulation of instructional models. 	<p><u>Focus Areas:</u> A1. Implement district-wide Social Emotional Learning framework A2. Develop a short and long term plan to address student performance achievement gaps</p> <p><u>Ongoing Operational Work:</u> A3. Improve the use of common assessment data. A4. Continue to implement state model for English language learners A5. Align Belmont curriculum to state core curriculum, especially science</p>
B.	<p><i>To support continuous improvement and overall programmatic and fiscal stability by</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaging administrators, teachers, students, and community stakeholders in generally accepted practices of long-term strategic planning. 	<p><u>Ongoing Operational Work:</u> B1. Develop a short and long term plan to address increasing enrollment including space, staff, and resources. B2. Develop a fiscal management plan for texts, materials, supplies, furniture, technology, and substitutes. B3. Develop a Technology Plan to articulate short and long plan for technology infrastructure and integration for teaching and learning B4. Develop, communicate, quantify, and incorporate into the budget a plan for preventative maintenance and capital needs. B5. Develop a plan to increase in-district special education capacity through a review of current programs and service-delivery models B6. Review, revise, and practice district/school safety protocols. B7. Review and respond to NEASC findings at BHS. B8. Establish a task for to develop the next three year Strategic Plan</p>
C.	<p><i>To ensure that students receive instruction from consistently highly qualified educators who pursue continuous improvement of their art by</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hiring well-prepared and diverse professionals, • sustaining continuous professional development by means of clear and coherent plans, and • implementing a successful educator evaluation system in line with new Commonwealth standards. 	<p><u>Ongoing Operational Work:</u> C1. Extend professional personnel recruitment to expand the diversity of the applicant pool C2. Develop a sustainable substitute system</p>