

NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL

TO THINK – TO RESPECT – TO COMMUNICATE



School Improvement Plan 2010-2012

*Needham High School
609 Webster Street
Needham, MA 02494*

Introduction

Development of the Needham High School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2010-2012 has been a collaborative effort among all school constituencies, including the School Council; the Social Emotional Learning Committee; members of the Standards-Based Education Committee; the Principal's Cabinet; and the entire instructional staff. Several data points were utilized in selecting each area for improvement and its corresponding goals. Sources included the NEASC Self-Study and Evaluation Visit Reports; the NPS District Goals; the NHS SIP for 2007-2009; the 2009 Metro West Adolescent Health Survey; the 2009 NHS Parent Survey; and the bodies of professional research surrounding adolescent resiliency, professional learning communities, and standards-based practices. The professional staff at Needham High strongly believes that this plan readily reflects and supports the school's three core values: To Think - To Respect - To Communicate and that the work outlined herein will aid the entire school community in realizing its stated mission.

The purpose of the plan is to set the instructional agenda for school over the next two years. The overarching objectives of this plan are to foster and support the academic achievement and social-emotional growth of Needham High's racially, ethnically, and socially diverse student community. It is with these objectives in mind that the NHS professional community will review this plan in its entirety in the spring of 2011 to assess the school's performance in each area for improvement and to modify the plan for SY 2012 as necessary. This SIP is comprised of three "Improvement Areas" that are directly linked to the NPS District Goals. For example, Improvement Area 1 - Ensuring the High Academic Achievement of *All Students*, and its associated goals, is closely aligned with the first district goal, "Advancing Standards-Based Learning". Likewise, Improvement Area 2 - Developing the Social and Emotional Resiliency of All Students, reflects NPS Goal #2 - Developing the Social and Emotional Skills of All Students. Finally, NHS Improvement Area 3 - Practicing Operational Excellence in Support of High Quality Instruction, and its associated goals coincides with district Goal #4 - Ensure infrastructure supports district values and learning goals.

To be sure, the NHS Areas for Improvement outlined herein are broad in nature. However, the goals under each area represent specific bodies of work toward which the entire professional staff (and in some cases parents and students) is committed to work.

NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION

NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL DRAWS FROM THE STRENGTHS OF THE COMMUNITY TO CREATE TEACHING AND LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN FACULTY, PARENTS, AND STUDENTS, BOTH ON AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL AND IN GROUPS, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION.

THE SCHOOL OFFERS STUDENTS A VARIETY OF OPPORTUNITIES TO EXCEL AND A DIVERSITY OF PERSPECTIVES FROM WHICH TO LEARN IN AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS BOTH NURTURING AND CHALLENGING.

THE BALANCED STUDENT IS ABLE TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN SCHOOL AND SOCIETY, BE CREATIVE, AND SELF-ADVOCATE WHILE DETERMINING HIS OR HER UNIQUE PATH TO FULFILLMENT.

Improvement Area 1 – Ensuring the High Academic Achievement of <u>All</u> Students					
GOAL	DESCRIPTION	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE	STATUS
1.1 Alignment of Curriculum & Learning Goals	Learning goals and master curriculum maps aligned with the Massachusetts state frameworks will be developed for all courses and entered into the ATLAS curriculum database for ongoing use and revision. Curricular materials will be reviewed to reflect the racial, ethnic, and social diversity that exists at Needham High School.	Curriculum review by intradepartmental teams during early release time, department meetings, and summer curriculum workshops.	Teachers, Program Directors, and Department Chairs	April 2010 – June 2012	In progress and ongoing
		Incorporation of school-wide rubrics into master curriculum maps as a means of assessing student performance on key projects and assignments.	Teachers, Program Directors, and Department Chairs	Spring 2010 – June 2012	In progress and ongoing
		NHS Standards-Based Education Course	Teachers, Program Directors, and Department Chairs	Spring Semester 2011	Syllabus Drafted, School-Based Instructors Retained
1.2 Improving Differentiated Instructional Strategies	Each classroom environment will offer differentiated instructional strategies to ensure that all students are able to access the general curriculum and achieve at high levels.	IEP & 504 Instructional Accommodation Workshops	All Faculty & Staff	August 30, 2010	Planning Stages Spring 2010
		"Instruction for All" Summer Course	Participating Faculty & Administration	Summer 2010	Registration in progress
		NHS Standards-Based Education Course	Teachers, Program Directors, and Department Chairs	Spring Semester 2011	Syllabus Drafted, School-Based Instructors Retained
1.3 Student Assessment	It is the goal of the Needham High School Professional Community to administer one common formative assessment per course per term.	Teacher demonstrations & review of MSSAA Workshop	All Faculty & Staff	August 30, 2010	Planning & Research Activities Spring 2010
		Interdepartmental text-based research & discussion.	Faculty & Administration	SY 2010 – SY 2012	In progress and ongoing
		Course-alike teacher teams creating common assessments and reviewing student performance data.	Teachers, Program Directors, and Department Chairs	SY 2010 – SY 2012	Planning Stages Spring 2010
1.4 Building Capacity for Instructional Leadership	Administrators will investigate and implement new methods for conducting purposeful and effective classroom walkthroughs to support administrator growth and learning.	Common Readings: <i>Mindset</i> , Carol Dweck	Principal's Cabinet	Text-based discussions, planning, and preparation	Summer 2010 - Fall 2010
		<i>Instructional Rounds in Education</i> , Richard Elmore et. al.		Implementation of Instructional Rounds	Winter 2010 - Spring 2011

Improvement Area 2 – Developing the Social & Emotional Resiliency of All Students

GOAL	DESCRIPTION	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE	STATUS
2.1 Preparation for Resiliency Work	The SEL Committee will examine current research to define the parameters of adolescent resiliency.	SEL Retreat, May 2010	SEL Committee & Principal	Spring 2010	Completed
	Faculty, Staff, & School Council will provide feedback on the resiliency concept and proposed SEL agenda.	Interdepartmental Faculty Meetings, School Council, & Cabinet Meetings.	NHS Faculty, Staff, & School Council	Spring 2010	Completed
	SEL Committee members will develop a resiliency-based curriculum and professional development that accounts for the racial, ethnic, and social diversity of the student body.	Summer 2010 curriculum work. <i>(DESE SEL Standards to be released 6/2011)</i>	SEL Committee Members	Fall 2010	In progress
2.2 Understanding the Tenets of Social-Emotional Resiliency	Faculty & staff will understand the four tenets of social-emotional resiliency: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fostering Autonomy 2. Developing Problem Solving Skills 3. Achieving Social Competence 4. Designing and Understanding a Sense of Purpose & Future* <i>*See appendices</i>	August 30 Professional Development Monthly Interdepartmental Meetings; mentor homerooms.	All faculty, staff, students, and administration	August 2010 – June 2011	In preparation
	The professional staff will identify and implement regular and ongoing classroom practices and identify outcomes that support the resiliency of Needham's racially, ethnically, and socially diverse student population.	Classroom instruction, Mentor homerooms, faculty meetings, professional readings.	SEL Committee & all faculty	August 2010 – June 2011	In preparation
	Resiliency work will be assessed through teacher, student, and parental feedback in the form of qualitative (interviews, focus groups) & quantitative (survey) data.	Gathering & analysis of data from all constituent groups.	SEL Committee & Administration	January 2011 – March 2011	In preparation
2.3 Focus on Anti-Bullying	NHS & NPS staff and administrators will attend Commonwealth-sponsored professional development on the new anti-bullying legislation. The model for these sessions is "train the trainer."	Workshop series, June 2010	Principal, assistant principals, select department chairs	Spring 2010	Scheduled
	NHS faculty & staff will be trained in the scope, sequence, and implementation of the Commonwealth anti-bullying legislation.	Early release September 30, 2010	NHS faculty, staff, and administration	Fall 2010	Scheduled
	NHS students will learn and understand the basic elements of the anti-bullying legislation and demonstrate techniques to prevent, interrupt, and report bullying.	Mentor homeroom sessions, October extended homeroom.	NHS homeroom mentors, students, and the SEL Committee	Fall 2010	In preparation

Improvement Area 3 – Practicing Operational Excellence in Support of High Quality Instruction					
GOAL	DESCRIPTION	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE	STATUS
3.1 Utilize Technology to Promote Instructional & Managerial Efficiency	School and district technology staff will work to maximize student information management systems to incorporate student discipline and co-curricular activity information.	Designing concept maps and information flow charts according to needs; development of modules	Principal, Assistant Principals, and NHS & NPS technology staff	Winter 2010 – Winter 2011	In progress
3.2 Ensure a Sustainable and Effective Administrative Support Model	Review efficiency and efficacy of 2009-2010 administrative support model. Reorganize and implement model to maximize the skills and talents of the support staff.	Training and professional development as needed for support staff.	Principal, support staff, central office team	Ongoing through June 2010	In progress
3.3 Communicate, Implement, & Support Uniform Operational Policies, Procedures, & Expectations	The faculty, staff, and administration will work to articulate and align operational practices and that support high quality instruction. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of common field trip forms - Creation of an NHS Assessment Calendar - Continued alignment of business and financial practices - Use of "School Dude" to support physical-plant needs - Regular communication and practice of safety and security policies and procedures 	N/A	Faculty, staff & administration	Ongoing through June 2010	In preparation

Group Membership**School Council SY 2009-2010**

June Atkind	Parent
Ted Baker	Parent
Emma Castiglia	Class of 2011
Susan Doisineau	Parent
Rhiannon Ecsedy	Class of 2010
Cindy Jackson	Parent
Tema Katz	Class of 2011
Stephen Koup	English Teacher
Drew Lawrence	Math Teacher
Molly McCleary	Class of 2010
Susan Neckes	Parent
Rick Olin	Parent
Mary Piltch	Parent
Jonathan Pizzi	Principal
Karen Price	Community Member
Arial Sherry	Class of 2011

Principal's Cabinet

Joanne Allen Willoughby, Ph.D.	K-12 Director, METCO
Tamatha Bibbo	Assistant Principal
Linda Conneely	K-12 Director, Technology
Tom Denton	K-12 Director, Guidance
Susan Duncan	Social Studies Department Chair
Fran Fleming	English Department Chair
Micah Hauben	6-12 Director Athletics
Cathy Heller	Student Support Services Department Chair
Leo Hogan, Ed.D.	Assistant Principal
Bob Lockhart	Science Department Chair
David Neves, Ed.D.	K-12 Fine & Performing Arts Director
Kathy Pinkham, Ed.D.	K-12 Wellness Director Wellness
Jonathan D. Pizzi, Ph.D.	Principal
John Shea	Mathematics Department Chair
Mimi Stamer	K-12 Health Services Director
Debbie Watters	K-12 World Languages Director

APPENDIX A

The Tenets of Student Resiliency at Needham High School*

<i>Element:</i>	Social Competence	Problem Solving	Autonomy	Sense of Purpose & Future
Description:	Ability to elicit positive responses from others, thus establishing positive relationships with both adults and peers.	Planning that facilitates seeing oneself in control and resourcefulness in seeking help from others.	A sense of one's own identity and an ability to act independently and exert some control over one's environment.	Goals, educational aspirations, persistence, hopefulness, and a sense of a bright future.
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsiveness • Communication • Empathy • Caring • Compassion • Altruism • Forgiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Flexibility • Resourcefulness • Critical thinking • Insight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive identity • Internal locus of control • Initiative • Self-efficacy • Mastery • Adaptive distancing • Resistance • Self-awareness • Mindfulness • Humor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal & Achievement orientation • Motivation • Educational aspirations • Special interests • Creativity • Imagination • Hope • Optimism • Sense of meaning

*Adapted from *Fostering Resilience: Expecting All Students to Use Their Hearts & Minds Well* (Krovetz, 2007)

APPENDIX B

Elements of a School Climate that Fosters Student Resiliency*	
<u>Focus Area</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
<u>Relationships</u> between and among teachers, students and parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring • Encouraging • Participatory.
<u>Curriculum and Instruction</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission-driven, integrated, experience-based/service learning. • Cultures of all students reflected; • Rigorous instruction available to all; • Broad variety of courses and activities; • Broad range of learning styles accommodated; • Constructivist, inquiry-based instruction that supports critical thinking.
<u>Educator Beliefs and Practices</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset-based instruction • Recognize and utilize the instructional strengths of each student
<u>Grouping of Students</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heterogeneous • Cooperative groups • Integrated programs • Class sizes that maximize learning
<u>Physical Environment</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and fresh; no graffiti • Plant well maintained • Student work on display with accompanying rubric(s) • Varied examples of student achievement
<u>Assessment of Student Learning</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic • Multiple measures • Range of intelligences measured Focus on fostering self-assessment and reflection.
<u>Motivation to Learn</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative • Intrinsic rewards • Active student engagement • Connecting learning to interests, strengths, and real world
<u>School & Classroom Discipline</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic, consensual norms and rules • Restorative, active student participation in decision-making.

*Adapted from *Resilience: What We Have Learned* (Bernard, 2004)