

Annual Report of the  
PIERCE SCHOOL COUNCIL  
JUNE 2010

**Pierce School Improvement Plan  
2010-2011**

Submitted to the Superintendent of Schools June 2010

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## 2009-2010 School Council Members

Name	Position	Status	Term Expires
Pipier Smith-Mumford	Principal	Permanent	NA
Karen Sutton	Parent	YR 2/Co-Chair	Re- elected to 2013
Sandy Lundy	Parent	YR2	Re-elected to 2013
Blanka Bogdanovic	Parent	YR3	June 2010
Imari Paris Jeffries	Parent	YR1	June 2012
Amie Buchman	Teacher	YR2	June 2011
Ginny Carroll	Teacher	YR1	June 2012
Gayle Van Hatten	Teacher	YR1	June 2012
Nancy Springer	Teacher	YR1	June 2012
Suzanne Elovecky	Parent	YR2	June 2010
Melanie Alexander	Parent	YR1	June 2012
Chandlee Dickey	Parent	YR1	June 2012

## Summary 2009-2010 Goals

The Pierce School Council met regularly throughout the 2009-10 school year. Meetings were posted and members of the public were welcome to attend. Annual elections were held in May, 2010. Four open three-year terms were filled by the re-election of Karen Sutton and Sandy Lundy along with two new members, Carin Aquiline and Lisa Goldblatt Grace, who will begin in September 2010.

We have made good progress across the Strategic Areas of Focus set by the Public Schools of Brookline. Highlights include:

### Goal 1: Academic Excellence

- According to surveys and feedback in grade level meetings, teachers are reporting greater familiarity and comfort with the K-5 Think Math curriculum. The 2nd grade more math/flexible grouping instructional strategy continues to show great results with students' improved performance on end of year assessments.
- Impact Math has been implemented in grades 6-8 with teachers indicating a more challenging curriculum as evidenced by student performance and parent feedback.
- Parents report more and improved communication from the school, particularly with the increased use of the Blackboard Connect program.
- CST groups reported more teachers bringing students to present. Of the 15 cases, nine were addressed through the district's DCAP with continued follow up with the teachers and specialists. Six were referred for special education evaluation and found eligible.
- Pierce Mentoring Program: Pipeline to Success is continuing to provide opportunities for students and teachers to connect as well as families. The results on MCAS and district assessments are mixed with a third showing improvement, a third maintaining existing levels of performance and a third continuing to fall below proficient on MCAS. The feedback from students, families and mentors is very positive. All report that the program is of value in increasing a comfort level in engaging with the school. As students progress into the upper grades 5th-7th, the mentor's work with the students of color is shifting to more focused discussions about the racial achievement gap and obstacles to high performance. Mentor/teachers are sharing their insights and new learning with each other and with the larger staff as part of their Inquiry Group work.
- New school handbook included a new section which highlights general expectations in grade clusters, K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. Surveys from parents and teachers indicate that this was helpful. Homework remains a concern for some parents. It received the highest percentage of parents (33%) who indicated that it was an area they were concerned about or had questions around.
- The focus on establishing our "Unified Adult Voice " by providing opportunities for parents to network within and across grades and with faculty and staff to support student development resulted in PTO/Principal's Forums focused on this theme and devoted two of the three opportunities to establishing and supporting parent networks across the grades. 49% of those who responded indicated they were interested in being in a parent network or learning more about it. 35% responded that they were not interested and 19% reported they were already in one. Both forums addressed ways that the adults at home and at school could use some of the same language and same strategies to support families and teachers in addressing challenging student behaviors. The first forum was entitled "Avoiding the Power Struggle" and was lead by clinician, Dr. Mitch Pomerantz from the Brookline Mental Health Center. There was also additional information

shared about how to start a parent network led by Karen Campbell from the high school's B-CASA parent group. The other forum was entitled, "Who's in Charge? Setting Limits with Care". Dr. Jenny Berz, also from the Brookline Mental Health Center and Dr. Pomerantz led this discussion to more specifically help empower parents in understanding and meeting the needs of their children in developmentally appropriate ways. Both forums were well attended.

**Goal 2: Educational Equity for All**

- Continuing to focus on students of color and monitoring more closely those referred for special education evaluations and/or services. The CST and the mentoring program helped to address this work. There is a need to continue to modify CST process to more effectively address student needs and encourage use of the District Accommodation Plan. Below is a chart of the breakdown of the students who were presented to CST this year.

	<u>CST</u>	<u>IEP</u>
<i>African American or Mixed Race</i>	<i>6/15</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Asian</i>	<i>3/15</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>White</i>	<i>5/15</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>1/15</i>	

- Faculty evaluated this year identified and worked on equity goals. Faculty and staff working with grades 3 through 8 also attended a presentation with their students by Dr. Michael Fowlin on appreciating and respecting the dignity of our diverse learners. All classroom teachers were in attendance and held follow up discussions with students.

**Goal 3: Thriving in a Complex Global Society**

- Nine teachers and specialists are using Homeworkknow.com actively. Sandra Sicard, educational technology specialist, is running an inquiry group during staff meetings, and teachers have worked on learning to add photos and information to web sites, using the SmartBoard, creating slide shows and using email more effectively to communicate with parents. A pilot program to further this goal is being explored with Kevin Stokes, the town's technology manager, and 7th grade teacher, Jamie Lyons. She has led two training workshops for teachers (15 in the summer workshop and 10 on PD day) on how to develop and maintain their websites.
- 6th and 7th grade students met weekly with 6th grade Social Studies teacher, Chris Smith to discuss world politics and current events. Students requested continuing through 8th grade.

**Goal 4: Continuous Improvement Using Data**

- Pierce's Data team met during Inquiry Group meeting time (faculty meetings). The team is made up of the principal, 6th grade teacher, Ken Haynes, 4th grade teacher, Joe Luongo and 1st grade teacher, David Weinstein. We met with district data analyst, Oscar Louiero on several occasions. He has helped us identify MCAS strands that informed classroom teachers of math strands which also helped the focus for additional support through MCAS Boost sessions.

- MCAS Boost program provides additional support for many students (students of color, low income and special education). Oscar Louiero will help provide data-driven analysis of the effectiveness of this program over the coming years.
- Due to the impending work on the town garage which sits below Pierce's amphitheater, an architect selected by the Committee of 7, presented several options for the amphitheater space and the auditorium. Several meetings with the building department, Peter Rowe and Rebecca Stone helped to inform and involve Pierce School stakeholders in the need for additional space for enrollment and for a new auditorium project.

# 2010-2011 Pierce School Improvement Plan

## Executive Summary

The Pierce School Council considered the need to support existing efforts as well as undertake new initiatives in the new School Improvement Plan. Feedback from parents, teachers and members of the School Council, in addition to analysis of MCAS and district wide data, provided the primary input in determining the Actions we propose taking in support of the Strategic Areas of Focus.

### Continuing Efforts

Continue the collaboration of the math and ECS specialists with classroom teachers to create a study group on "more math/flexible grouping" instructional strategy for grade 4. We utilize the success of the grade 2 model to explore how it might be implemented in 4th grade.

Continue to promote educational equity with an emphasis on the following three components: enhancing Child Study Teams (CST), examining library access, and focusing on literacy efforts (including expanding the Words Their Way curriculum to grades 1-3).

Continue the work of the Pierce Mentoring Program to help students as they progress into the upper grades 5th-7th. The mentor's work with the students of color is shifting to more focused discussions about the racial achievement gap and obstacles to high performance. Mentor/teachers will continue to share their insights and new learning with each other and with the larger staff as part of our work to address the racial achievement gap.

The Political Action Club, expanding to include 8th graders next year and drama/theater opportunities after school for 6th-8th grades will also continue.

We will also continue our focus in effectively communicating to Pierce families around expectations and homework policies, particularly in the upper grades.

Data Team will continue with a focus on how best to share strategies in determining the data to request (with the help of Oscar Louiero) and allowing staff time to review data.

Finally, a clear priority for the coming two years is to continue the effort to inform and involve all Pierce School stakeholders in the need for additional space for increased enrollment as well as a new auditorium project.

### New Initiatives

- In support of the district-wide implementation of Math Challenge Option in 7/8, there will be opportunities for teachers, students and parents to give feedback.
- In support of the district-wide Instructional Rounds Network and Pierce having served as one of the two schools who hosted the Network's observations this year, we have proposed an Action to build on this experience. Almost all staff members expressed interest in exploring next steps that would include piloting a Pierce Instructional Rounds program, renamed the

Pierce Teaching & Learning Tours (PT&LT). A summer workshop is planned to determine these next steps.

- In conjunction with the district's work, we will identify and implement a social competency program, inform all stakeholders, and include the State Legislature's definition of bullying in our future handbook as well as plans for response and notifications.
- We will pilot a technology plan with Kevin Stokes, the town's Chief Information Officer, for a possible parent portal model, while continuing to expand the number of teachers with websites.