

Annual Report of the
PIERCE SCHOOL COUNCIL
JUNE 2011

**Pierce School Improvement Plan
2011-2012**

Submitted to the Superintendent of Schools June 2011

Table of Contents

[2010-2011 School Council Members.....](#) 3

[Summary 2010-2011 Goals.....](#) 4

[Updates on 2010-2011 Efforts.....](#) 7

2010-2011 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 2011
Carin Aquiline	Parent	YR1	June 2012
Imari Paris Jeffries	Parent	YR2	June 2011
Amie Buchman	Teacher	YR2	June 2011
Ginny Carroll	Teacher	YR2	June 2011
Gayle Van Hatten	Teacher	YR1	June 2012
Nancy Springer	Teacher	YR1	June 2012
Lisa Goldblatt Grace	Parent	YR1	June 2013
Melanie Alexander	Parent	YR2	June 2012
Chandlee Dickey	Parent	YR2	June 2012

Summary 2010-2011 Goals

The Pierce School Council met regularly throughout the 2010-11 school year. Meetings were posted and members of the public were welcome to attend. Annual elections were held in May, 2011. Openings were filled by the re-election of Karen Sutton, Melanee Alexander and we welcome new members, Melissa London, 6th grade teacher, parents, Silvia Wan-chiun Lee, Jennie Roffman and Sam Tolkoff, who will begin in September 2011.

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

Goal 1: Academic Excellence

- **Math Differentiation:**

The collaboration of the math and ECS specialists with classroom teachers to study and create "more math/flexible grouping" instructional strategy for grade 4 continues. The 5th grade implemented a pilot this year in 3 out of 4 classrooms. Observations of the grade 2 model and consultation with ECS specialist, math specialists and special education teachers, informed this implementation. More challenge options were explored and implemented at 5th grade.

In support of the district-wide implementation of Math Challenge Option in 7/8, the feedback from students, parents and teachers, as well as math coordinator, is that the process helped to provide more challenge to those who sought more. Initial concern from some parents was that students would chose not to take on the Math Challenge but need encouragement. Teachers report that the differentiation allowed more students to feel successful and more students to feel challenged by the math program. It also taught students to stretch themselves, as students picked the level of work that they do on any given day. The expectation of all students is that they will do the hardest work they can do and that they will improve as the year goes on. Teachers reported that students took more challenge as they encouraged them to do so.

- **Pierce Teaching and Learning Tours:**

The Pierce Teaching and Learning Tour Team (PT<) met during the summer to plan for Instructional Rounds. Our focus was to examine transitions. With the increase of students we decided that we wanted to investigate how transitions both in and out of the classroom might impact time and learning across our Pierce Community. We conducted our rounds in October, had a debriefing session, and shared our notes with the staff at a faculty meeting. We then decided to utilize our staff meeting inquiry time to meet as a group to study the data we collected and then look at both short-term and long-term solutions to concerns.

- **Communication:**

With increased number of teachers using a classroom website, more report increased communication with certain families. Twelve teachers and specialists are using Homeworkknow.com actively and using email more effectively to communicate with parents.

Five additional teachers have created websites this year. They report significant use by students and families with positive feedback from parents on this communication tool. Teachers reported that a small percentage of families seem to need more contact and ask similar questions that could be helpful for all parents. A summer workshop is planned to create a FAQ sheet for incoming 7th grade parents.

Parents continue to report the improved communication from the school, particularly with the increased use of the Blackboard Connect program.

Goal 2: Educational Equity for All

- **Enhanced CST:**

This year, our CST process was modified to include the role of liaison. This new role addressed educational equity in that the teacher was afforded additional support from the liaison in addition to the entire CST group. Teachers reported more appreciation of working with CST from feedback surveys. CST leaders reported that 3 additional teachers presented students to CST this year than last. All 18 cases presented to the CST were addressed through the district's DCAP with continued follow up with the teachers and specialists. A total of seven cases were referred for special education evaluation.

- **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.

Goal 3: Thriving in a Complex Global Society

- **Technology:**

Twelve 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. Five additional teachers have created websites this year. They report significant use and positive feedback from parents on this communication tool.

Goal 4: Continuous Improvement Using Data

- Pierce's various PD groups collect data and meet to discuss and revise actions according to information shared. For example, CST group work was enhanced with more use of data and the Math differentiation at 5th grade looked at student work to make decisions on how best to meet the needs of students who need more challenge.
- MCAS Boost program provides additional support for many students (students of color, low income and special education). Oscar Louiero helps to provide data-driven analysis of the effectiveness of this program.
- Due to the impending work on Pierce's amphitheater and auditorium, ongoing meetings with town building officials, parent groups and teachers, architects have been selected by the Committee of 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 also identifying additional space needed due to increased enrollment. Amphitheater construction is scheduled for summer and to be completed by October. Auditorium reconstruction is scheduled for Summer 2012 and to be completed by October 2012.

2011-2012 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 district's Strategic Areas of Focus.

Updates on 2010-2011 Efforts

Math Differentiation:

The collaboration of the math and ECS specialists with classroom teachers to study and create "more math/flexible grouping" instructional strategy for grade 4 continues. The 5th grade implemented a pilot this year in 3 out of 4 classrooms. Observations of the grade 2 model and consultation with ECS specialist, math specialists and special education teachers, informed this implementation.

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Enhanced Child Study Team (CST):

This year, our CST process was modified to include the role of liaison. This new role addressed educational equity in that the teacher was afforded additional support from the liaison in addition to the entire CST group. Teachers reported more appreciation of working with CST from feedback surveys. CST leaders reported that 3 additional teachers presented students to CST this year than last. All 18 cases presented

to the CST were addressed through the district's DCAP with continued follow up with the teachers and specialists. A total of seven cases were referred for special education evaluation.

Bullying Initiatives:

In addition to the system wide prevention and intervention plans, Pierce has created a program with 5th graders this year, called Bully Busters.

Pierce Mentoring Program:

We are in the fourth year of the Pierce Mentoring Program for Black and Latino children. The goal of this voluntary project is to increase academic success and social competency in Black and Latino children by developing resiliency through a supportive relationship with a mentor and by making the entire faculty more aware of their needs. Presently, we have 18 children in grades 5-7 continuing to participate in the program. Volunteer faculty mentors meet with their mentees each week for a minimum of 30 minutes. They also stay in touch with families and teachers of their mentees. Additionally, they participated in two family dinners and several social events that we have had this year. Berklee College of Music also hosted an event, encouraging the students to succeed in school and anticipate going to college in the future.

Three year follow-up data that was presented at the national conference of psychologists this year suggests that the program has helped our students be successful as demonstrated by teacher reports of academic and social skills. Also, findings showed that parents of the children in the program were more involved with their schooling.

Building Initiatives:

New Spaces

As enrollment at Pierce School continues to grow, we are moving ahead with creating small group meeting spaces and classroom spaces. We have two new spaces above the Pre-K classrooms where teachers and students will be able to hold small group activities, have lunch group meetings, and private parent meetings.

Additionally, new classrooms will be created over the summer. We will have a new classroom in the Unit A library area that presently serves as the 7/8 Mandarin and lower grade Spanish room. The 5/6 Learning Center will have a new space in the area just before the art rooms, and there will be a new 1st grade classroom in the present 5/6 Learning Center. Our music room will be divided into two spaces so that both the K-2 music program and the 3-8 music programs will be located in the two new separate spaces.

Amphitheater

Construction on the amphitheater is slated to begin Summer 2011. It will house outdoor classroom space, green spaces and a performance space. Completion is scheduled for October 2011.

Auditorium

Renovation of the auditorium is on track to begin Summer 2012. Completion is scheduled for October 2012.

New and Continued Goals for 2011-2012

Literacy Goal: Pierce as a Literacy Collaborative (LC) School

Pierce has been selected as one of two schools in Brookline to be a part of a Literacy Collaborative in partnership with Lesley University. This program will better serve our students as our teachers receive the training needed from participating in the LC. A Literacy Team, Literacy Coach and literacy specialist trained in Leveled Literacy Instruction (LLI) will help provide a more cohesive approach to meeting students' needs.

Math Differentiation:

The collaboration of the math and ECS specialists with classroom teachers to implement "more math/flexible grouping" instructional strategy will be piloted in grade 4. The 5th grade pilot will expand to all 4 classrooms with continued consultation with ECS specialist, math specialists and special education teachers to monitor these implementations.

Pierce Teaching and Learning Tours (PT<)- Continue the Collaborative Inquiry Group work during faculty meeting time. The group will continue to work on the issues identified from the 1st tour on transitions and identify next steps in the new focus area for the next year's tour. Next year's focus topic is on identifying students' higher order thinking skills.

Bullying Initiatives-In addition to the system wide prevention and intervention plans, Pierce has created a program with 5th graders this year. The Bully Busters Program plans to expand into the 6th and continue the 5th grade next year.

Communication- Continue to communicate expectations, homework practices and policies to students and families, particularly in grades 6-8; update handbook and create a FAQ sheet for 7/8 families.

Technology and the Impact on Education Building on this year's efforts to expand the number of teacher websites, increase technology use for curriculum enhancement, and provide differentiation of instruction to improve student learning, Pierce will move forward with an initiative to explore technology with a focus on its impact on the development and learning of young people.

Teachers and parents will come together to discuss Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives (Palfrey and Gasser). From the book discussion, we will generate specific next steps for enhancing how adults in the Pierce community "understand and support young people as they grow up in a digital age" (www.borndigitalbook.com). Additional action steps might therefore include professional learning opportunities based on works such as Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Tools for Classrooms (Richardson.)

PIERCE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Goal 1: Increase the achievement of all students by creating learning environments that successfully balance content, pedagogy and student-teacher relationships.

Strategy 1.4: Create goals and implement actions to strengthen student-teacher relationships and improve student achievement.

Strategy 1.5: Develop home-school partnerships to increase student achievement in light of the important role our families play in the education of our children.

Action	Baseline Data	Person(s)Responsible	Timeline	Indicators of Progress/Success	Resources Needed/Anticipated Funding Source
Continue the collaboration of the math and ECS specialists with classroom teachers to create "more math/flexible grouping" with grades 4 and include all at grade 5.	Partial implementation in grade 5 of flexible grouping format was successful in increasing math achievement (BOYA, EOYA, Teacher feedback, Progress Reports). Utilize that success to implement at 4th grade.	ECS and Math Specialists and classroom teachers	2011-2012	Increase performance on a variety of assessments in math	FY12 Budget for summer workshop/Faculty meeting time
Participate in Literacy Collaborative in partnership with Lesley	Inconsistent programming for reading instruction results in inconsistent and undocumented evidence of progress or lack of progress for some students	Reading Specialists and classroom teachers K-8	2011-2014	Increase performance on a variety of assessments in reading and writing	FY12/13Budget
Action	Baseline Data	Person(s)Responsible	Timeline	Indicators of Progress/Success	Resources Needed/Anticipated Funding Source
Continue to communicate expectations, homework practices and policies to families,	Survey results from parents; feedback place	All faculty and administration and Pierce School Council	2011-2012	Survey results that indicate increased parent/teacher	Summer Workshop for 7/8 Staff to review policies and create a document of FAQ for

particularly in grades 6-8	communication between home and school as a priority in upper grades			satisfaction and increased student achievement	parents; Technology book group to discuss the impact of technology on teaching and learning; develop more teacher websites./FY12Budget/PTO
Continue to support students in grades 4-8 who received Needs Improvement or Warning with the creation of an Individual Student Success Plan (ISSP)	MCAS scores spring 2011	Specialists, teachers, parents	2011-2012	Improved performance on MCAS	HW Centers, MCAS Boost sessions with more focused support for those on ISSPs

Goal 2: Eliminate achievement gaps with respect to race, ethnicity and socio-economic status and increase the achievement of students with special needs through individualized strategies and programs.

Strategy 2.5: Decrease the over-representation of students of color who have been identified for special education.

Strategy 2.6: Investigate and address issues that may constrain the participation of students of color, students who are economically disadvantaged and students with special needs in extra and co-curricular activities.

Action	Baseline Data	Person(s)Responsible	Timeline	Indicators of Progress/Success	Resources Needed/Anticipated Funding Source
Continue to incorporate learning from the Mentoring program to better understand possible obstacles to achievement	Results of a summary of the program after 4 years showed mixed findings on academic improvement of involved students; Data indicated that students require more time to understand the impact of race and achievement. Parent data showed increased involvement in	Mentor Facilitators, Gayle Van Hatten, Carol Sepkoski, and Nancy Springer and Mentors, Pierce Data Team and staff members	2011-2012	An increase in achievement of student participants and enhanced Mentor relationships and more effective staff practices	Program events/PTO support

	school activities				
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Goal 3: Prepare students with the intellectual, interpersonal and reflective skills needed to thrive in an increasingly complex and diverse global society. This includes identifying common language and practices to support a safe, just and caring community and to promote social emotional learning.

Strategy 3.0: Develop opportunities to enhance the global awareness of every student.

Strategy 3.2: Foster opportunities for students and teachers to use technology in sophisticated ways to enhance their learning.

Action	Baseline Data	Person(s)Responsible	Timeline	Indicators of Progress/Success	Resources Needed/Anticipated Funding Source
Pierce has created a Bully Busters Program with 5 th graders. The plan is to expand into the 6 th and continue the 5 th grade program next year.	The district Bullying survey and the school ' s survey of 5 th graders indicate a need to specifically address bullying.	All teachers, administrators and parents	2011-2012	Decrease in incidents of bullying	FY12 Budget and PTO funding
Teachers and parents will come together to discuss <u>Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives</u> (Palfrey and Gasser). From the book discussion, determine specific next steps for enhancing how adults in the Pierce community “understand and support young people as they grow up in a digital age” (www.borndigitalbook.com). Additional action steps might therefore include professional learning opportunities based on works such as Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Tools for Classrooms	Pierce Survey results showed parents and teachers interested in exploring the short and long term effects of technology use in and out of the classroom and how that use impacts teaching and learning	School Council members	2011-2012	Better understanding of the appropriate use of technology and enhancement of the teaching and learning process using technology as a classroom and communication tool	PTO funding

GOAL 4:
Foster a cycle of continuous improvement by using data to effectively examine system-wide programs and practices.

STRATEGY 4.1: Establish Data Teams at the school and system level to support educators in the use of data to inform decision-making
STRATEGY 4.7: Create a program evaluation model for operations (e.g. facilities, food services, custodial) that incorporates data and develops strategies for using those data to improve programs and practices.

Action	Baseline Data	Person(s)Responsible	Timeline	Indicators of Progress/Success	Resources Needed/Anticipated Funding Source
<p>Continue to use the ongoing groups to inform the community of needs and the rationale driving decisions</p>	<p>Administration and teachers on School Council are collecting data on student achievement on MCAS, BOYA/EOYA, daily attendance, participation in HW centers and Mentoring program</p> <p>Wellness and Nutrition reps are collecting data on cafeteria, and classroom practices</p> <p>Green Team efforts are progressing with their programming</p>	<p>Administration, teachers, school council members, parents</p> <p>Pierce Nutrition and Wellness Reps</p> <p>Pierce Green Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Data is understood and used to inform practice as a result, Pierce students and graduates indicate improved performance and high achievement</p> <p>Increased daily attendance and participation in HW Centers</p> <p>Expanded use of wellness and nutrition guidelines , healthier students as evidenced by improved BMI reports</p> <p>Increased numbers of teachers, students and families on and using Green Team activities</p>	<p>Faculty meetings</p> <p>PTO support</p>