

Portsmouth School Board Establishes Goals for 2009-10

Ensuring that all students learn

This brochure is dedicated to sharing with the community the Board's goals and the context behind them.

At its August 1st retreat, the School Board reviewed the prior year's goals and took stock of the upcoming year. On September 22, 2009 the Board adopted revised goals for the 2009-2010 school year. The full text of these goals can be found on the back page of this newsletter.

In broad terms, there are three (3) overarching goals, each with a number of more specific actions designed to achieve the ends of each major goal. As an example,

Goal # 1 is to support the District's mission, which is to educate all students to high

levels. The board has identified five (5) key actions in order to bring about this result.

First, it will review efforts to implement professional learning communities throughout the district, and most importantly, monitor and report out the results of building-level student achievement goals.

Second, the board will support professional development for staff in how to analyze and use student data.

The remaining actions speak to sustaining the curriculum revision plan, developing school-specific interventions to ensure the progress of every student and supporting teachers in integrating tech-

nology into their classroom instruction.

Goal # 2 addresses the need to implement policies, procedures and practices that will allow the District to continuously improve its organizational systems and structures.

Goal # 3 is an effort to develop specific strategies for improving communication and community relations about the school district.



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Portsmouth School District Mission

Academics, Arts, Athletics

"The purpose of the Portsmouth Schools is to educate all students by challenging them to become responsible, contributing citizens who continue to learn throughout their lives"

Improving communication about the schools

The Portsmouth School Board has established a goal to develop specific strategies for improving communication and community relations. One strategy is to provide more frequent communication about our schools and to find opportunities to

engage the community in conversations about school related issues.

This newsletter is the first of three updates you can expect from the School Board this year. This update will focus on the goals the board

has established. In January, a second newsletter will focus on the proposed FY '11 budget and in late May the school board will report out the results of its work, especially the student achievement goals set by teacher teams at each building.

Professional Learning Communities “the lever for increased student achievement”

In essence, a professional learning community (PLC) is a teacher team that works together to focus on student achievement. Effective PLCs have three critical components:

- 1) A focus on learning, rather than teaching;
- 2) Collaboration, and
- 3) Accountability for results

Teachers work together to identify key knowledge and skills that we expect all children will know and be able to do by year’s end. Staff create multiple measures to monitor each child’s progress against

these standards. We call these check-ins *common formative assessments, common* in that they are administered to all and *formative* in that they provide feedback to the teacher about which children have learned and who has not. Teachers then share their collective wisdom to learn how to improve learning for all.

Over the last few years, the district has invested significant time, money and energy into the development of professional learning communities (PLC’s) as a means to improve student achievement. Rick Dufour, a national educational consultant, notes that “the best professional

development is in the workplace, not in a workshop” and has urged schools to create job embedded conditions for staff to grow and learn. A PLC is professional development in the workplace and our schools are using the nine (9) delayed starts to engage in this work.



Mr. Chasse and Mr. Moss collaborate at Portsmouth High School

Connecting Student Achievement Data to Goals

As schools shift to a focus on learning, rather than teaching, student achievement data is critical. Two key elements of this year’s work are knowing the achievement levels of our learners and remaining focused on results.

The Board has asked every teacher to work in a PLC and to engage in a process to look at data first, then, establish a goal to improve upon achievement gaps agreed upon the data. These goals are called SMART goals, an acronym indicat-

ing a goal that is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound. PLC’s will share their goals and develop a plan of action. In May, PLC’s will report out results, celebrate successes, and assess next steps.

Simply stated, this critical strategy will help us get to scale with PLC work, assume internal accountability as collaborative teams for a student achievement goal, ensure all children are learning and move us one step closer to realizing the

district’s mission. The district will offer after-school professional development courses to assist teachers in developing common assessments and how to effectively use this data.

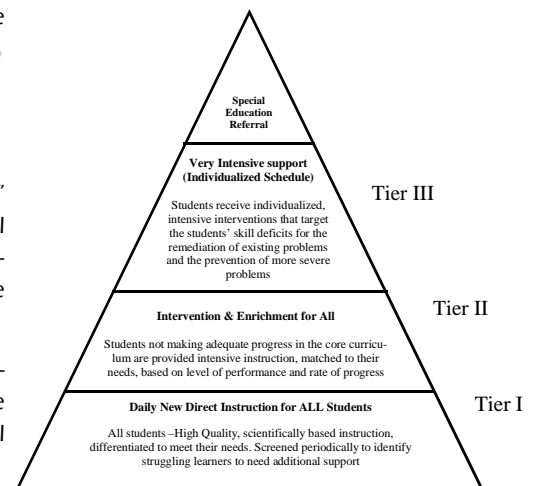
Pyramid of Interventions

As PLC teams look at data and respond to student needs, each school will continue to develop a pyramid of interventions for learners who need more time to secure key knowledge and skills, as well as those who are already successful.

In January, the district will offer an in-house course to help teachers focus on this important element. We hope to answer the questions: “So how do we re-

spond when students do not learn?” How can we be sure ALL students will learn at high levels really means ALL students?” “What are we doing for those children who need more challenge?”

Each school will need to develop systemic responses to student needs. The pyramid developed at each building will ensure progress for every student.



A Pyramid of Interventions

Implementing policies, procedures and practices to improve the system

The district's teachers and administration have agreed to work together to develop a more meaningful supervision and evaluation system and will report its recommendations to the School Board at its February 9, 2010 meeting.

Because the purposes of an evaluation system are to help individuals grow professionally, to encourage high standards in the field of education and to enhance the quality of services provided to students, the committee will look to better align supervision with the district's pro-

fessional learning community work. The committee will work to develop a system-wide program that provides quality feedback to teachers.

A critical part of the work will be the establishment of a coordinated induction process for new teachers to assure only the highest quality educators are retained by the district.

Finally, other key components the committee will consider will be how to provide an annual summative evaluation for all employees in the district, as well as

how to provide more opportunities to have principals more closely monitor instruction.



FY 2011 Budget: Aligning Resources with Intended Results

In October, the School Board will begin its FY 2011 budget preparations and examine current expenditure structures. By analyzing resource use patterns, the school board will be able to align its proposed budget with intended outcomes.

A key component will be the development of a quality educational metrics index as a way to track what is important in the Portsmouth School District and to use

this index to help guide spending priorities.

Because of the success that both the city and the school department have experienced sharing athletic and school department resource, the school board hopes to explore conversations with the city to discuss next steps to share other resource and achieve efficiencies.

While the school board anticipates a chal-

"A key component will be the development of a quality educational metrics index"

lenging year ahead, it wishes to communicate transparently with the public how it uses its dollars, organizes its people and structures its time to achieve intended results.

Facilities & Redistricting

Three members of the school board will serve as members of the middle school's Joint Building Committee and the process will begin in October.

While this process begins, the school board will turn its attention to completing a facilities assessment of the district's K-5 buildings and recommending a course of action to balance enrollments

at the elementary schools.

In 2000, Dondero's enrollment was considerably higher than the other schools. The School Board initiated a process whereby eight study circles were formed to determine what issues and criteria should be considered in balancing enrollments at the three schools.

In 2001, school attendance lines were redrawn.

In 2009, Little Harbour's enrollment is considerably higher. The School Board noted that redistricting, along with a review of the school facilities, will need to run on parallel tracks. Both are necessary and interdependent in order to meet the needs of K-5 pupils.

Portsmouth School Board Goals 2009-2010

Portsmouth School Board



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Academics, Arts, Athletics

All School Board meetings,
located at City Hall, are
televised on Channel 22

School Board Meetings

October 27, 2009	7 pm	New Franklin
November 10, 2009	7 pm	City Hall Chambers
November 17, 2009	TBA	TBA
December 8, 2009	7 pm	City Hall Chambers
January 12, 2010	7 pm	City Hall Chambers
January 26, 2010	7 pm	Lister Academy
February 9, 2010	7 pm	City Hall Chambers
March 9, 2010	7 pm	City Hall Chambers
March 23, 2010	7 pm	Middle School
April 13, 2010	7 pm	City Hall Chambers
May 11, 2010	7 pm	City Hall Chambers
May 25, 2010	7 pm	High School
June 8, 2010	7 pm	City Hall Chambers
June 22, 2010	7 pm	Little Harbour

1. Support the Portsmouth School District's mission to educate *all* students by:

- Supporting our efforts to build professional learning communities (PLC's) by reviewing and evaluating not only PLC implementation, but most importantly, the results of building level student achievement goals (SAG).
- Providing teachers focused professional development in the use of student data to inform instructional practice (data-wise).
- Monitoring the implementation of the Curriculum Revision Plan developed by the Curriculum Council, including development of power standards and a system of student assessment.
- Supporting our efforts to build systemic, school-specific pyramid of interventions to ensure progress in learning for every student.
- Providing necessary supports for all teachers to be able to more fully integrate technology into classroom instruction and expectations for student learning.

2. Implement policies, procedures and practices that will allow the Portsmouth School District to continuously improve its organizational systems and structures by

- Establishing a coherent supervision and evaluation system that
 1. provides a formal annual summative evaluation process for all employees in the Portsmouth School Department;
 2. documents supervision for professional staff aligned with PLC work;
 3. establishes an induction process for new teachers that assures only the highest quality teachers are retained in the Portsmouth School District;
 4. enables administrators to better monitor instruction.
- Examining Portsmouth School District expenditure structures to analyze resource use patterns, alignment with intended strategies and communicate with clarity to the public how we use our dollars, organize our people and structure our time to achieve intended results.
- Recommending a course of action for redistricting Portsmouth's K-5 schools.
- Exploring conversations with city departments to discuss possible efficiencies and sharing of resources.
- Completing a facilities assessment overview of the district's buildings.

3. Develop specific strategies for improving communication and community relations including frequent communication about the Portsmouth Schools and opportunities to engage the community in conversation about school related issues.

- Publishing an annual district progress report that tracks student performance results.
- Developing a quality educational metrics index including, but not limited to per pupil ration, class size, drop out rates, student assessments and budget allocations as a way of creating a clear criteria for spending priorities.
- Communicating via quarterly School Board updates the work of the board in monitoring the 2009-10 school district goals.
- Investigating options to better disseminate information, educate the community and provide advocacy for the schools.

PSD MAKES THE GRADE!!

Be sure to check out the Portsmouth School District's Progress Report on the School District's webpage:

www.cityofportsmouth.com/school/centraloffice