

HEATH SCHOOL COUNCIL REPORT

**Report on the School Year 2007-2008
School Improvement Plan 2008-2009**

**Submitted by members of the Heath School Council
April 28, 2008**

Members of the Heath School Council

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The first part of the Heath School Council Report for 2007-2008 is a review of accomplishments based on the goals submitted to the Brookline School Committee last spring. The second part is a presentation of Heath's goals for the school year 2008-2009 with indicators of success and benchmarks for meeting those goals.

The Council met six times during the year 07-08. All meetings were posted with the Town Clerk's Office in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and were listed on the PTO calendar that goes home to all families.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Bill Lupini, Dr. Jennifer Fischer-Mueller and Mr. Peter Rowe for their support throughout the year. Special thanks to Gene Thompson-Grove for her work as the facilitator of our Equity Team. Gene has been an inspiration to this group. Many thanks also to the entire Heath community for their continuous support throughout the year on behalf of all our children.

REPORT OF THE SCHOOL YEAR 2007-2008

I. Increase educational equity among all students with particular attention to closing the achievement gaps for underperforming students so that:

- ***All students entering kindergarten or first grade in September 2006 will read on grade level by the end grade 3.***
- ***All students in grades 3-8 will pass the ELA and Math MCAS tests.***
- ***All students entering 7th grade will take world language by the year 2011.***
- ***All black and Latino 8th grade students from Heath School will enroll in at least one Honors course in grade 9.***
- ***All students will have the opportunity to achieve at high levels with the increasing use of differentiated instruction.***

This is the second year we can report on this five year long term goal. Last spring, in our efforts to set high expectations for all students and to look for continuous improvement, we added two sub goals: "All students in grades 3-8 will pass the ELA/Reading and Math MCAS tests" and "All students will have the opportunity to achieve at high levels with the increasing use of differentiated instruction."

We are very pleased at the progress we continue to make in the area of high academic achievement for all students. Our indicators of success helped us track the progress we made and the areas in which we continue to need to improve.

- ***Fall and spring literacy assessments to track student progress.***

Teachers in grades 1-6 gave batteries of literacy assessments in September 2007. The literacy specialists reviewed the assessments with teachers who then used the information in the primary grades to form guided reading groups. Literacy specialists found the information helpful in assessing progress of children who participated in summer literacy programs in Brookline. The data also helped literacy specialists and teachers make informed decisions about groupings for reading support.

- ***Grades 3-8 ELA/Reading and Math MCAS scores***

According to the MA DOE report indicating Adequate Yearly Progress in the fall of 2007, all Heath students in Grades 3-8 achieved Proficient in the ELA tests within a statistical margin of error. In math, the number of students scoring Warning or Needs Improvement decreased significantly. (Out of all students

tested in grades 3-8, only 3 students received a Warning score.)

- *Percentage of 7th graders enrolled in a world language.*

The number of students not enrolled in world language this year increased this year. We continue to struggle with finding a schedule that provides Learning Center time for 7th and 8th graders *and* world language. We have, however, encouraged 7th graders with special needs to try to take a world language. If a team decides a youngster does need the Learning Center support after the first or second report card period, he/she can drop the language.

- *Percentage of black and Latino students who enroll in an honors course in 9th grade and maintain a passing grade for the year.*

All black and Latino 9th graders from Heath enrolled in at least one Honors course at BHS this year. First quarter report card grades showed that these students received a B or better in these courses.

For the current class of 8th graders, 3 of the 6 students selected honors courses, and two of the three selected at least 2 or more Honors classes. Two students were named as African-American scholars based on their grades since 6th grade, including one student with special needs. One other student will be reconsidered after first term grades next year because of tremendous improvement in his 8th grade report cards.

- *Documented evidence of differentiated instruction through teacher evaluation process.*

All pre-professional and professional status teachers demonstrated evidence of ongoing differentiated instruction in a variety of curriculum areas. Additional evidence was gathered during informal observations and discussions related to student work. Teachers piloting *Think Math!* in grade 5 worked with math specialist Eleanor Demont to regularly include differentiated instruction as part of ongoing instruction. Eleanor also collaborated with teachers at other grade levels to help teachers include more differentiation in math, and she regularly worked in classrooms with small groups. The result was a greater emphasis on differentiation in math this year.

- *Use of assessment data to inform decisions related to differentiated instruction.*

A number of teachers piloted *Words Their Way*, a word study program. Students were given pre-assessments to determine word study levels. Some students scored high enough that they had individual challenge work in lieu of the word study. Literacy specialists collected data from beginning and end of year assessments. First year findings show that struggling students who received *Words Their Way* instruction made significant gains that begin to close the achievement gap. Furthermore, the assessment tools associated with *Words Their Way* helped teachers more accurately assess growth over time, target instruction and use differentiated instruction.

In the primary and intermediate grades, teachers used the DRA or QRI to form flexible guided reading groups. Pre and post assessments were also used in math so teachers could make decisions about individual and group work. The math specialist gave the Kathy Richardson assessment in math to struggling students in K-3 as recommended by teachers. (This is a 1:1 testing situation.) The

math specialists then collaborated with teachers to determine specifically the kind of support individual children needed.

In addition to the indicators of success listed in last year's report, we also used first quarter report card data to provide us with information about student progress.

Our current students' (grades 6/7/8) first quarter report card data showed the following:

- 21 of 33 sixth graders achieved honor roll or high honors. 8 of the 21 students earned high honors.
- 20 of 35 seventh graders achieved honor roll or high honors. 6 of the 25 students earned high honors.
- 30 of 39 eighth graders achieved honor roll or high honors. 9 of the 30 students earned high honors.

Heath 2007 graduates currently enrolled at Brookline High School selected the following courses:

- 70% of the students enrolled in Honors English. 22 students earned A's and B's. In standard courses, there were 2A's and 7 B's.
- 73% of the students enrolled in Advanced and Honors Math. 21 students earned A's and B's. In IMP, all students received A's or B's. In standard courses, there were 5 A's and 3 B's.
- 81% of the students enrolled in Honors Science (Physics). 30 students earned A's and B's. In standard classes, there were 4A's and 4 B's.
- 76% of the students enrolled in Honors Social Studies. 32 students earned A's and B's. In standard classes, there were 3's and 6B's.

World language was a little more difficult to tabulate because of the different courses offered. However, of 36 students enrolled, seven students took an advanced language course, 22 took honors and 9 took standard. In advanced and honors French and Spanish classes, there were there 25 A's and B's; in standard classes, 3 A's and B's.

In reviewing the data for the past several years, the numbers show that our students are increasingly taking honors and advanced courses, are well prepared and are achieving at high levels. This past year, we modified the course selection process so there was greater input from students and parents as well as strong encouragement from teachers for students to challenge themselves appropriately. Teachers gave students a great deal of information about the expectations for the different courses and made themselves available to parents to answer questions and offer advice. It was so successful that we continued the model this year.

We continually strive to help all children achieve at high levels. Thus, we have begun several new initiatives to further improve student achievement. Several examples follow.

- Eleanor Demont, who moved from teaching 5th grade to the math specialist position, took on the role of math coach. At the beginning of the year, Eleanor focused on assessments, such as the Kathy Richardson math assessments for younger children whom teachers identified as struggling. This assessment is particularly helpful for teachers in that the results provide in-depth information about an individual student's understanding of math concepts and computation fluency. Eleanor continues to use this assessment on an as needed basis. Eleanor has provided a great deal of support for the teachers using *Think Math!* as well as help in differentiated instruction.

- On their own initiative, Learning Center teachers requested and received *Think Math!* teacher manuals and manipulatives to provide students with special needs full access to the *Think Math!* program. They also attended all of the professional development sessions for special education teachers.
- The Heath Literacy Leadership team, led by literacy specialists Alex Borns-Weil and Christin Wheeler, concentrated professional development for teachers in improving writing and spelling. These are two areas that were identified in Phase I Program Review, and the literacy specialists consulted with ELA Curriculum Coordinator Mary Matthews. As noted above, teachers in several grade levels implemented *Words Their Way*, and some teachers are trying *Six Traits of Writing*. A group of 5th and 6th grade teachers, along with one of the literacy specialists, attended a conference on the writing workshop given by Nancie Atwell. Since last summer, Heath's Literacy Leadership team has worked on developing a well articulated, sequential writing curriculum across all grade levels. Students will have experience with a variety of writing genres, common language and graphic organizers. This work has continued throughout the year, and a group will meet for curriculum work this summer.
- Alex Borns Weil, literacy specialist for the intermediate grades, is doing more push-in in grades 4-6 than in previous years when a pull out model was sometimes used. She has also done a great deal of coaching and professional development with intermediate grade teachers.

At this point, we do not have final assessment data for the year that would give us clearer information about the success of these initiatives. We will use the data as soon as it is available to inform curriculum and instruction decisions.

II. Foster and promote the work of the Equity Team and the PTO Diversity Committee by

- ***Continuing efforts to hire faculty and staff that are more representative of the student population.***
- ***Encouraging greater participation at Diversity Committee events.***
- ***Facilitating professional development to support the "In Our Family" photography exhibit.***
- ***Setting individual active anti-racist goals directly related to classroom curriculum, instruction and student/family relationships.***

We have met with many successes in working towards this goal. One of the most significant accomplishments was the school wide photography exhibit, "In Our Family," that members of the Diversity Team organized in the fall. (This was one of our indicators of success.) Each class visited the exhibit at least one time. Prior to the visits, the Equity Team planned professional development for teachers so everyone could feel comfortable talking with children about the exhibit and plan grade level activities that were curriculum related. In addition, the Diversity Team planned a family night for parents and children to view the exhibit together. Many teachers attended the evening event. To sum up the very positive reviews about this exhibit, I am including a clip from the "Principal's Perspective" in the November PTO Newsletter.

The exhibit touched many of us in different ways. For [Milly Katzman], having such an exhibit at Heath was a validation of [Heath's] core values and beliefs. The photos and stories could have been Heath families or Brookline

families. It all felt so familiar. Some children, viewing the exhibit with their teachers, commented that their story and their family were just like one of the photographs. Many expressed great pride when they saw glimpses of themselves in this display. For some children, the exhibit gave them an opening to share with classmates or a teacher. The overwhelming response from youngsters was that these are just families like we have at the Heath School. They have similarities and differences and families are about love, tolerance and respect.

Another indicator of success was greater teacher participation at Diversity Committee events. We have been very successful at increasing teacher participation at the evening events this year, with at least 8 to 10 teachers at the METCO-Heath Family Partnership Potluck, the Black History Month Celebration and International Night. Furthermore, the Equity Team membership has continued to increase significantly this year. We now have twelve members, including three teachers new to the school and Margaret Credle Thomas, one of the METCO social workers. Team members have been attendees at lectures such as the Gloria-Ladson Billings lecture at Wheelock College and have participated in a number of workshops and conferences related to issues of equity and diversity.

An additional indicator of success was related to recruitment and hiring of faculty and staff that reflect the diversity of the student body. We made a commitment that we would interview at least one candidate of color for all faculty positions which we did, and Mrs. Katzman attended the AARC conference on recruiting faculty of color. While we did not hire any black or Latino teachers this year, this continues to remain a long term goal for us. We did have more success hiring instructional aides of color.

Two more indicators of success were “documented changes in practice and/or student achievement in CFG work and in self reflection for annual reviews.” While we do not have the documentation from the CFGs yet, teachers who completed self reflections did comment directly on student achievement. The following are some clips from teacher’s reflections:

I am focused on making sure that I give the students from minority background and those with other risk factors (low SES, difficult family situations, etc.) the attention and instruction that they need to close the achievement gap. I have made a greater effort with their parents than with other parents to stay in touch, to make sure they have access to summer programs, and to regularly discuss their progress with their teachers. In the case of one [student], I have created extra opportunities for 1:1 instruction to develop her vocabulary and reading strategies and comprehension, since she wasn’t making adequate progress in the small group instruction. I have made arrangements to provide another [student] with a summer reading list to preview the content area curriculum for 6th grade, and I’ll meet with him a few times over the summer to check on his progress. I’ve created a 4th grade writers’ lunch group to build engagement and a sense of purpose and motivation for writing, by providing them an audience for which to write. Five of the six students in this group are either second language learners or African American. In general, I’m just trying to meet these kids where they are and to do whatever.

I continue to look for ways to integrate multiple cultures and perspectives so that children have the opportunity to build awareness and tolerance of similarities and differences, and can celebrate diversity. The photo exhibit of diverse families was an awesome entry point for us to discuss our own similarities and differences, but I want this kind of inquiry to be ongoing in the room. I need to think about how to make our learning about tolerance and cultural inquiry visible through photographs and documentation.

Goal 3: {Student X} and [Student Y] will be able to access the math material and complete assignments at a fifth grade level

Progress

- *Both are successful on informal assessments and chapter tests.*
- *Our flexible grouping model helps students get practice when they need it.*
- *In-class LLC support for [Student X] has been helpful.*

Areas to work on

- *Although [Students X and Y] are doing well, I have continuing concerns about other [Students A, B, C] and am offering extra help to them after school so that they can continue to develop test-prep skills and new math concepts.*
- *[Student X] is accessing math on grade level, but I think he can do even better with extra support. He meets with me weekly after school and I make sure to continue checking in with him as needed during math blocks.*

At the beginning of the year, each teacher set an explicit equity goal with indicators of success. The above comments are reflective of their goals and the progress students have made. We will continue to have teachers set an equity goal each year as a way to focus on closing the achievement gap and having all children succeed at high levels of achievement.

We were recently informed that the Equity Team is a recipient of a Brookline Education Foundation collaborative grant for a summer retreat for planning purposes for 08-09.

III. Plan and implement a more cohesive school wide community service effort to “Support William and His Platoon.”

We originally set this community service goal to support William Fishkin, a former Heath graduate who is in the Marines and stationed in Iraq. William safely arrived back in the United States early in the fall, so the Council decided to take the time this year to review community service that was currently in place and focus on a new school wide initiative.

The review showed that there were a number of very successful school wide and class based community service efforts. Student Council members organized the annual Holiday Toy Drive for Second Step and Charles River Early Intervention Program at Deaconess Waltham Hospital and a food drive for the Brookline Food Pantry in February. We also had a mitten and glove drive with collected items donated to families through DSS. A few examples of class projects include kindergartens’ and first grades’

collecting cans of soups and donating them to the Brookline Food Pantry; second grades' participating in the Jolly Jaunt, a fundraiser for the Special Olympics; 3F's taking charge of the Lost and Found; and 4th and 8th graders' being responsible for recycling efforts in the school.

As one of our goals for next year (see Part II of this report), we will undertake a community service project related to the environment.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 08-09

The Heath School Council presents the following goals for the school year 08-09.

I. Increase educational equity among all students with particular attention to closing the achievement gaps for underperforming students so that:

- *All students entering kindergarten or first grade in September 2006 will read on grade level by the end grade 3.*
- *All students in grades 3-8 will pass the ELA and Math MCAS tests.*
- *All students entering 7th grade will take world language by the year 2011.*
- *All black and Latino 8th grade students from Heath School will enroll in at least one Honors course in grade 9.*
- *All students will have the opportunity to achieve at high levels with the increasing use of differentiated instruction.*

Indicators of success:

- Fall and spring literacy assessments to track student progress.
- Grades 3-8 ELA/Reading and Math MCAS scores.
- Percentage of 7th graders enrolled in a world language.
- Percentage of black and Latino students who enroll in an honors course in 9th grade and maintain a passing grade for the year.
- Documented evidence of differentiated instruction through teacher evaluation process.
- Use of assessment data to inform decisions related to differentiated instruction.

Benchmarks:

- *All students entering kindergarten or first grade in September 2006 will read on grade level by the end grade 3.*
 - June 2009 - We will have data in June 2009 for third graders who entered first grade in September 2006. We will be able to track which students received early literacy intervention and for how long; the percentage of children who entered Brookline in kindergarten or later; children who were referred to the Child Study Team along with the recommendations from the team; and the percentage of children with special needs and when they were first identified. Hopefully, as we continue to track this data, we will gain information about

successful practices in helping struggling learners and look at individual case studies (anonymous) for possible missed opportunities.

- ***All students in grades 3-8 will pass the ELA and Math MCAS tests***
 - May and June 2008 – Literacy specialists will continue the second year of the pilot of *Words Their Way*. Math specialist will report on assessment data from classes that piloted *Think Math!* (Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2 and 5). Math specialist received a PTO grant to purchase math games to enhance K-6 math centers in classrooms.
 - July and August 2008 – Recommended students will attend Project Launch and Project Discovery. The Literacy Leadership Team will meet during the summer to continue work on a K-8 well articulated writing curriculum based on the Brookline Learning Expectations.
 - September 2008 – With the help of the literacy specialists, teachers will administer system literacy assessments. Assessment data will be used to form guided reading groups and to determine children's independent reading levels. Math specialist will administer Kathy Richardson and/or TEMA assessments to specific children as recommended by classroom teachers.
 - September/October 2008 – Teams of teachers and math and literacy specialists will review 2008 MCAS data. Data will be used to inform curriculum and instruction as well as ISSPs.
 - October 2008 – Math Specialist will organize parent breakfasts about *Think Math!*
 - Fall 2008 – Family Math Nights for grades PreK-3 and 4-6; Kickoff – Heath Family Book Club.
 - Fall 2008 – Math specialist will begin a Numeracy Team of teachers to focus on math instruction and learning. The goal will be to improve student achievement and close the achievement gap. We will organize a Math Center in what is currently the office of the Math Specialist. Math Specialist will establish a math bulletin board in a prominent location in the school. Problems of the weeks will be offered as well as visuals that demonstrate themes of mathematics in art, nature and the world around us.
 - April and May 2009 – Spring administration of DRA and QRI.
 - May 2009 – Review of *Think Math!* assessment data. Review of *Words Their Way* pilot data.
 - Monthly - Review of Child Study Team data by principal and guidance counselor.

- ***All students entering 7th grade will take world language by the year 2011.***
 - January or February 2009 – Breakfast for 6th grade parents about world language program in grades 7 and 8 and at BHS.

- ***All black and Latino 8th grade students from Heath School will enroll in at least one Honors course in grade 9.***

- November 2008 – Review 9th grade first quarter grades.
 - At advisory meetings with 8th graders, advisors will explicitly encourage black and Latino students to consider taking at least one Honors course.
 - February and March 2009 – Grades 8 teachers and guidance counselor will communicate with parents about course selection using the same model we began this year.
 - March 2009 – Guidance Counselor will review course selection with teachers.
- ***All students will have the opportunity to achieve at high levels with the increasing use of differentiated instruction.***
 - Fall 2008 – All teachers will set an individual goal related to the use of differentiated instruction in their curriculum and instruction.
 - Ongoing – Math and literacy specialists and the ECS teacher will continue to coach teachers on differentiated instruction.
 - Ongoing – Continued integration of technology to enhance student learning and differentiated instruction.

II. Foster and promote the work of the Equity Team and the PTO Diversity Committee by

- ***Continuing efforts to hire faculty and staff that are more representative of the student population.***
- ***Encouraging greater participation at Diversity Committee events.***
- ***Setting individual active anti-racist goals directly related to classroom curriculum, instruction and student/family relationships.***

Because the Council felt this goal was so important, we decided to include it as one of our school goals again this year with some revisions. We recently were informed that the Equity Team was awarded a Brookline Education Foundation Collaborative Retreat for planning for the school year 08-09.

Indicators of Success

- Faculty and staff new hires will increasingly reflect diversity of student body.
- Candidates to be interviewed for a faculty position will include candidates of color.
- Greater percentage of faculty and staff participation at Diversity Committee events.
- A plan for professional development related to equity and diversity work for the school year 08-09
- Documented changes in practice and/or student achievement in CFG work and in self reflections for annual reviews.

Benchmarks

- May and June 2009 – Interview at least one candidate of color for all vacant teaching positions for school year 08-09.
- Spring and Fall 2008 – Actively recruit instructional aides of color.

- Summer 2008 – Equity Team Retreat to plan for the school year 08-09 and to deepen our own understanding of issues related to equity and diversity.

II. Promote community service for each class or grade level to support “Heath Is Green.”

Indicators of success

- Each class will commit to and carry out a community service project related to the environment.

Benchmarks

- Fall 2008 – Each class will receive a list of possible ideas for the project generated by a sub-committee of the School Council. By the end of the second week in October, each class will make a decision about their class project.
- December 2008, March and June 2009 – Classes will submit updates on the progress of their initiatives.

III. Review how to optimize facilities with the increasing number of sections and total student population.

Indicators of success

- With the assistance of School Council and general faculty input, the Principal will have a report for the School Council.

Benchmarks

- October 2008 – Preliminary report for School Council.
- December 2008 – Present recommendations if there are budget implications to Dr. Bill Lupini and Mr. Peter Rowe