

Region 14
Public
Schools

2013-2017

A descriptive vision of the critical challenges facing the Region 14 Public Schools.



Strategic
Planning
Report

Region 14 Public Schools
Strategic Planning Report
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Planning Process Overview

Regional School District # 14 includes the towns of Bethlehem and Woodbury, Connecticut. The region's 1,944 students are taught in four facilities (Bethlehem and Mitchell Elementary, Woodbury Middle School and Nonnewaug High School) and are represented through a regional board of education formed when the two towns officially created a regional identity for the purpose of public schooling by combining Bethlehem and Woodbury in 1970. In addition to the students from the two sending communities, roughly 200 of the district's students attend the highly regarded Vocational Agriculture Program at Nonnewaug High School from districts outside of the region.

Like most other public school districts in Connecticut and beyond, the last few years have brought an ever increasing number of challenges to the Regional 14 community on a larger scale and faster pace than have been experienced before. A new set of significantly more rigorous standards in language arts and math, deeper accountability for professional staff, new curriculum implementation challenges and testing protocols, the impact of technology, and a wave of additional Connecticut school reform legislation, have created a series of change imperatives that will impact every facet of public school education in Region 14. The combined weight of these factors compelled the district to create a direct and focused plan that would enable the district to meet these challenges. If the community fails in this effort, our students will find themselves far behind their peers from across the state and nation.

With this as his goal, Superintendent Goeler met with and hired a planning consultant to design a process to meet the needs of this two-town district. His requirements were clear; design an efficient process that recognizes the work that needs to be done by all schools, identifies the work we want to do specifically in our own district, and builds on the foundation of the efforts that the district has already started and currently does well. Additionally, the Superintendent wanted to be sure to recognize and incorporate the unique challenges of governance and coordination that are part of a regional school district. After a number of drafts were circulated and modified, a planning process outline with dates was agreed upon, and the Superintendent convened key staff members, Board

of Education members, and a diverse group of community representatives to help him launch this planning effort in the fall of 2012. The representatives of this Strategic Planning Team and their affiliations are listed on the following page:

Region 14 Public Schools Strategic Planning Core Team

Jody Goeler	<i>Superintendent</i>
George Bauer	<i>Board of Education, Chair</i>
Kim Culkin	<i>Director of Special Services</i>
John Turk	<i>Interim Director of Operations</i>
Andy O'Brien	<i>Nonnewaug High School Principal</i>
Alice Jones	<i>Woodbury Middle School Principal,</i>
MaryLou Torre	<i>Mitchell Elementary School, Principal</i>
Eric Bergeron	<i>Bethlehem Elementary School, Interim Principal</i>
Pam Sordi	<i>NHS School Counselor,</i>
Kathy Grillo	<i>Elementary teacher</i>
Amy Perras	<i>Music Teacher</i>
Judy Perrucci	<i>Elementary teacher</i>
Lucinda Hart	<i>Middle school teacher & community member</i>
Katie Yocis	<i>High school science teacher</i>
Mike Devine	<i>Bethlehem Board of Finance</i>
George Hale	<i>Woodbury, Selectman</i>
Alex DeSorbo	<i>Parent/community member</i>
Chris Matta	<i>Parent/community member</i>

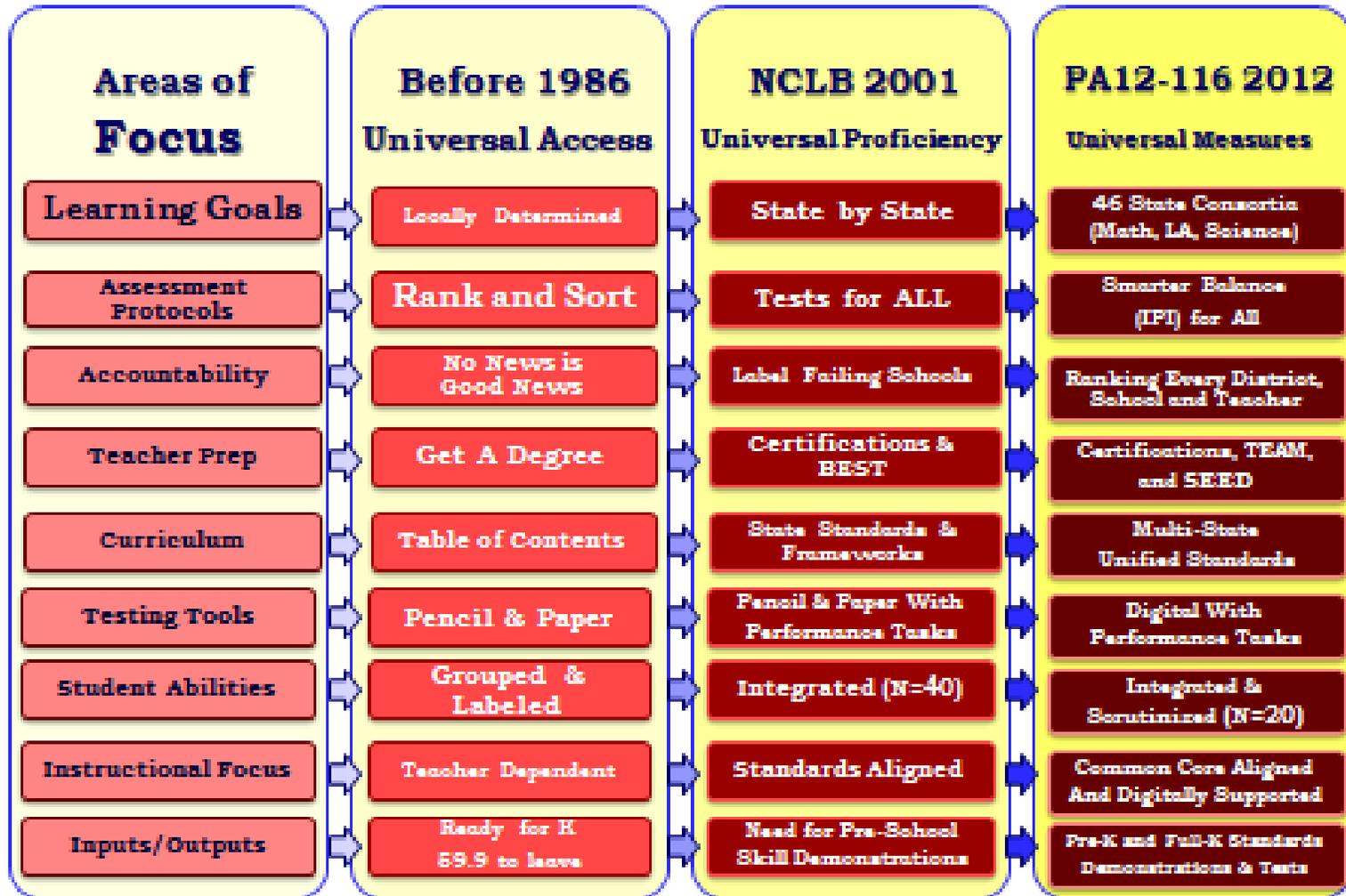
At the introductory sessions, held in September, 2012 the Core Planning Team was oriented to its custom designed three phase planning process: 1. Preparation for planning by reviewing all of the most important change forces and requirements in the public school arena 2. Revisiting the district Mission and Beliefs, organizing into productive content theme groups that connect all of the work that needs to be done and completing an assessment of the current efforts being undertaken in the district, and finally 3. Planning for how to bridge the gap between what is needed and what exists currently and how to measure the success of the plan long-term.

After a process orientation, it was agreed by the Core Planning Team that when their plan was completed, the product should:

- Command respect and derive support from a broad cross-section of the Region 14 Public Schools' community
- Articulate 2-4 *priority strategic goals* that will serve as key areas of developmental focus over the next several years
- Provide suggested *indicators of success, strategies* and *action plans* for continuously improving performance and/or building capacity in those areas of focus

With these pieces in place, the group engaged in presentations and readings on several hours of content related to the significant number of mandated reforms that have been designated for public schools as a result of recent changes in federal, state, and regional legislation and new national curriculum standards. This included the impact of Connecticut Public Act 12-116 as well as past Connecticut High School reform legislation (2010). A summary of the progression of these legislative directives over the past several years is summarized in the following graphic that the group discussed in its first retreat meeting.

The Evolution of Educational Reform



© 2012

2012

Additionally, the group addressed the new Regional Accreditation Standards from the New England Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and finally, the group spent some time discussing the ever changing world of digital information and global competition that students will be entering after they leave the Region 14 Public Schools. Through these interactions, it was recognized by the Core Planning Team that at a minimum, over the next few years the district would have to successfully address:

- *Language arts and math curriculum revisions including higher standards and expectations related to new Common Core State Standards*
- *Anticipated science curriculum revision including higher standards and expectations related to new Common Core State Standards*
- *Instructional changes and classroom challenges required for the delivery of each of the revised curricula mentioned above*
- *Transition from the current Mastery Test to a new generation of computer based adaptive assessments (the Smarter Balance assessments)*
- *Training and implementation of a new state mandated teacher evaluation model*
- *Training and implementation in new state mandated administrator evaluation model*
- *New models of professional development delivery*
- *New testing for elementary teachers and administrators on reading instruction*
- *A transition from a print to a digital learning environment*

This discussion focused on the district's responsibility to meet the state's expectations but also on how to help prepare students for their life and work beyond school in this environment. The result of this work was a full day worth of debate and deliberation around the wording and meaning of the district's previously stated Mission and Beliefs. Several changes were agreed upon to tighten and focus the district on these critical change priorities. The product of that work was the following consensus-based changes:

REGION 14 MISSION

The Region 14 community ensures an engaging and positive learning environment where every student is valued as a respected contributing member of society, who graduates prepared to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

REGION 14 CORE BELIEFS

We believe:

- **All students can learn, have unique gifts, and deserve the opportunity to pursue their individual learning potential.**
- **Our community benefits when all have a sense of ownership and responsibility in our schools.**
- **Learning and decision-making are built upon collaborative and supportive relationships.**
- **We must prepare students to utilize appropriate technologies and provide instruction that prepares students for a changing world.**
- **Adaptation and growth are critical attributes of 21st century success and are everyone's responsibility.**

Goal Work Organization Summary

After the Mission and Beliefs revision, the group spent time analyzing the required and desired work to be completed through the lens of eight different planning systems common to school practice. This frame of reference provided an organizing framework for directing the future work:



Based on all the tasks to be completed and the need for alignment between classroom, school and district change efforts, three main *study and work groups* were originally planned for the organization and implementation of the strategic work to be done. An additional group was formed to ensure effective communication and engagement within the community as a way to build the partnerships and understanding that will be necessary to successfully implement the provisions of the plan. As a result, four working groups were formed to plan for future actions. These groups were identified as follows:

- 1. Goals for learning – curricular and instructional support materials aligning with Common Core and 21st Century Skill Priorities**
- 2. Instructional practices – teaching practices, improvement mechanisms and evaluation systems aligning with our goals for learning**
- 3. Assessment practices – assessment and measurement systems aligning with our goals for learning, teaching practices, and the demands of data driven instruction**
- 4. Communication and engagement with the Region 14 Public School Community to create the partnerships that will be required for long-term success in the implementation of these critical systemic changes**

With these priority areas set, Goal Planning Teams that were balanced with staff and community representatives were then formed around each goal area. These Planning Teams set out first to *clarify and strengthen the goal statement language* and then to *identify indicators of success that could be used to measure progress* of the plan during the implementation period. Using those indicators of success, the Goal Planning Teams worked together to build a cohesive vision of what the achieved goals would look like. With this as a foundation, they then completed an exercise that had them *inventory the work that was already underway* or planned within the Region 14 Public Schools.

Strategic Planning Goal Setting Research Table: One

1. Revise and upgrade (unify and align) all curriculum to embed 21st century skills and Common Core State Standards.

Data Point – Research Question	Current State Answer
<p>A. Is there evidence of a coherent and aligned philosophy/approach among and between levels and buildings regarding the purpose and importance of Common Core State Standards and 21st century skills and the key learning outcomes associated with them?</p>	<p>Yes *Professional Development Documents *Journals *Departmental Goal sheets</p> <p>MES/BES: Staff members have had in service days during the 2011-2012 school year focusing on developing an individual and collective understanding of the CCSS (Math and ELA), identifying gaps between current and future practice, as well as reflective journaling and discussions regarding the importance of process over content delivery.</p> <p>WMS: English/Language Arts (ELA) social studies, math units are being developed and aligned</p> <p>Common planning time is used to assure that students in each grade level and content area have the same experience</p> <p>ELA is the subject most aligned with CCSS</p> <p>Common assessments aligned to the CCSS are currently being developed</p> <p>Social studies teachers are incorporating literacy content standards into content reading</p> <p>Increased informational reading is occurring in content areas</p> <p>PD is provided that addresses the CCSS; these including Depth of Knowledge (DOK)</p> <p>NHS: Has established seven Learner Expectations and corresponding rubrics to be used in assessing the development of those 21st Century Skills. Departments have assumed ownership of specific LE's and are responsible for assessing and reporting student progress towards achieving those skills. Many departments offer multiple opportunities for learning experiences in multiple areas. Student progress is reported on our reports cards for each LE as a Yes or No, and these are additional graduation requirements for our students.</p> <p>Our staff members are exploring the Common Core State Standards through their departmental Common Planning Time groups. Three PD days for English, Math, and a select group from World Language, Agriscience, Technology, Social Studies, and Special Ed. have been scheduled with Dr. Tony RD. Each department has developed a specific area to explore for the year to become better acquainted with the standards and the necessary changes in assessment and instruction.</p>

Data Point – Research Question	Current State Answer
<p>B. What has the district done to create/align curriculum structures (common language, unit or lesson design templates) to align with new Common Core State Standards in all content areas?</p>	<p>A common language has been promoted through the Professional Development focused on the 5 Lesson Plan Components.</p> <p>There is some evidence of unit planning templates at some grade levels. Lesson Plan templates are being utilized at all levels but they differ in their format.</p> <p>The elementary schools are working with <i>Columbia University Teacher's College</i> to align CCSS in writing via unit maps and resources to develop a more formal elementary curriculum structure in that area.</p> <p>WMS 6th grade is exploring the Columbia and other writing units in an effort to move writers workshop into 6th grade</p>
<p>C. What has the district done to create/align curriculum content to align with new Common Core State Standards in mathematics and language arts: K-12.</p>	<p>BES/MES: Teachers are implementing units of study in the area of writing K-5 with a focus on narrative, information writing, and opinion argument.</p> <p>The elementary schools are beginning to investigate curricula from other states.</p> <p>WMS Math teachers aligned CCSS to the Connected Math 2 topics where appropriate; these topics are now being taught at different grade levels</p> <p>Elementary and Middle schools are looking at curriculum from other states, particularly Georgia</p> <p>Some staff has been assigned to begin the development of model units in the area of MES mathematics.</p>
<p>D. Are there a small and manageable number of priority 21st century skills that have been defined by learning community?</p>	<p>7 NHS Learner Expectations</p> <p>While we have identified the expectations, the infrastructure and technology plan to implement and support them does not currently exist.</p>
<p>E. Is there a framework for integrating priority 21st century skills throughout the K-12 Curriculum?</p>	<p>NHS Learner Expectations Coverage Map</p> <p>WMS Programs: Advisory program integrates elements of student success planning in its curriculum.</p>
<p>F. Are curriculum resources for all disciplines current, digital, and electronically accessible to everyone?</p>	<p>NHS: In preparation for NEASC most areas have had their curriculum updated in the UBD format, however not all of these materials are digital or easily accessible by all at this time.</p> <p>MES/BES: Writing curriculum is the most up to date, and the other areas; reading, math, science, social</p>

	studies are in research and development.
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Strategic Planning Goal Setting Research Table: Two

Create the capacity to align instructional practice and accountability systems with Common Core and 21st century skills.

Data Point – Research Question	Current State Answer
A. Has there been a dialogue, exploration, or consensus built around an instructional vision (specific to teaching behaviors) that places student engagement, rigorous student work, and the challenges of 21 st century learning?	5 lesson plan components addresses all but 21 st century learning.
B. Does the current teacher evaluation system align with the new Connecticut Framework and the new Guidelines for Teacher Evaluation?	No – Teacher Evaluation Committee completed draft and sent it to the SDE for review by the April 15 deadline.
C. If not (question B), what are the most important areas of non-alignment and what is the plan for addressing them?	Incorporate 5 lesson plan components into teacher evaluation document All classrooms are open to observation by administrators and peers developing a cultural shift that is supported in the document.
D. Does teacher evaluation/observation enable the district to measure the quality and frequency of student engagement in rigorous and meaningful work?	No, via teacher observations but walkthrough data provides a lens to look at learner behaviors
E. Are there coherent and aligned mechanisms that connect the major instructional improvement processes to the results of professional evaluation and development data and there is an appropriate – new state guideline aligned – professional development process to deliver on this promise?	Teacher and admin goals are set based on, and measured by data. Professional development to meet these goals is developed to move in that direction and reflects the work done around 5 lesson plan components
F. Is there a coherent philosophy, plan, or strategy for migrating the center of instructional gravity from print to digital resources for learning?	3 year technology plan in place approved by the BOE Some technology is being brought in to schools but not in a coherent organized fashion
G. Have Board of Education policies been reviewed and revised in light of digital age teaching and learning considerations?	Policies have been reviewed and approved by the Board. Policy drafts submitted to the Superintendent by the Technology Team for his review.

Strategic Planning Goal Setting Research Table: Three

Align and integrate assessment practices with priority goals for learning and use the resulting data to continuously improve practice.

Data Point – Research Question	Current State Answer
A. Are reliable assessments in place that can determine the impact of instruction on student learning at the classroom level and track student performance in key areas (Common Core/21st century skills) over time?	DRP grade 3-5 (3 x yearly); DRP grades 6-9 (2x yearly fall and spring); Spring DRP 2nd grade; CMT gr 3-8 and CAPT gr 10; rubrics for learning expectations at NHS assessed within individual Disciplines through performance based assessments; WMS reading, math and non-fiction writing and social studies benchmark assessments 2 x yearly gr 6-8; District Assessment Calendar; Advanced Placement scores; NHS Learner Expectation rubrics. ACT Scores via Naviance. Science and Math benchmarks at WMS. Fontas and Pennel, and DRA2 assignments are used
B. Are there minimum standards related to key skill and content expectations which are reliably measured locally and reported to parents and students at regular intervals?	<p>DRP are reported by letter to parents at Elementary and middle school; CMT and CAPT sent home; AP scores. Learner expectations are reported on report cards quarterly, teachers are giving 2 assessments to match a learner expectation at NHS.</p> <p>NHS: Learner expectations reported quarterly on report cards using specific assessments and rubrics</p> <p>Formal assessment reporting twice per year</p> <p>WMS: Science Benchmark is shared with students. DRP scores in the fall and spring are reported to parents</p>
C. Does the district, at all levels, regularly use this local data to focus improvement goals for the system, building, and individuals?	<p>Yes, to assist student placement (for heterogeneous class); analyze the data to determine individual students' literacy interventions; AP scores</p> <p>WMS: Transition to high school data is analyzed for placement Use data at WMS to determine heterogeneous grouping</p>
D. Are there district wide data systems that allow for vertical and horizontal integration of improvement data?	There is a digital structure in place (PowerSchool) that can collect and communicate data (vertically and horizontally). Individual teachers can currently view the students' achievements of Learning Expectations at NHS; DRP and DAW are entered into PowerSchool k-8; demographic information captured and communicated through PowerSchool; CMT results are entered into PowerSchool; attendance data in PowerSchool; SWIS School Wide Information System-behavior data collection is used at WMS
E. Are there district wide improvement systems that allow for vertical and horizontal integration of improvement data so that it can be meaningfully used to drive changes in goal setting, professional learning, and practice?	Professional Development; k-12 math curriculum development; participation rate in Advanced Placement

After this primary work was completed by the subgroups, each one shared its work and received information for improvements and edits. Members of the Core Planning Team were then given an opportunity to realign themselves with another group for the final planning phase.

The planning phase had four steps. At first, the goal language was refined (if needed) to create a declarative and measurable goal statement and then to take each of the “Data Point” statements and *convert them into measurable indicators of success* that could be used in the future to evaluate the success of the district’s implementation for each goal.

Each group was then asked to consider the planning environment and to think about the context in which any strategies for moving forward would have to work in. To guide this, representatives were given three areas to consider; systems (current structures in place dealing with that issue), factors (environmental concerns that may impact the goal but are beyond the group’s control), and restraining forces (pressures that might inhibit the needed changes) that might influence outcomes in each of the goal areas. The purpose of this work is to ensure that before any strategies were selected, everyone understood what the conditions influencing success might be.

Finally, with all of that work complete, the groups came together as one to consider strategies for moving each goal forward over the first phase of plan implementation.

Region 14 Strategic Planning Goal One

Region 14 will develop/acquire, unify and align all curricula to embed 21st century skills and Common Core State Standards.

Indicators of Success:

- There is coherence and aligned philosophy throughout the Region regarding key learning outcomes associated with the Common Core State Standards and 21st century skills.
- Region 14 curricula align with Common Core State Standards using a common format for curriculum construction across all content areas, courses and grade levels.
- All Region 14 schools have identified critical 21st century skills and a framework for integrating these skills throughout the K-12 Curriculum.
- Region 14 will have curricula resources for all disciplines that are current, digital, and electronically accessible to everyone.

Systems, Factors and Restraining Forces:

Systems/Current Action	Factors	Restraining Forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current systems for planning PD • NHS NEASC • Common Planning Time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community perception of district • Budget limitations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward movement of technology • Resources/personnel to support and support Administrative initiatives

Strategies for moving forward in Year One:

Step #	Action	Outcome	Who	When
1	Create a structure and position to consistently coordinate, align and evaluate all K-12 curriculum on an on-going basis for the key features of 21 st century skills and Common Core.	Structure for curriculum development in all disciplines K-12	Administrator dedicated to ensuring this outcome (DI)	With appropriate resources, start within 12 months
2	Identify essential 21 st century skills that can serve as a foundation for district wide dialogue, instruction and assessment k-12.	Identified and aligned 21 st century skills district wide	Faculty/Curriculum Professional Development Council (CPDC)	With appropriate resources, start 2 months
3	Create a timeline to scale the implementation of curriculum revision over the next 5 years	Timeline developed	Leadership Team/CPDC	With appropriate resources, start within 6 months
4	A team formed to further our digital learning environment.	A representative group is formed to identify key change leverage points that will improve the state of digital learning	CPDC/Technology Council	With appropriate resources, start within 3 months
5	Professional Development around the Common Core State Standards and 21 st century skills	Increased understanding of the Common Core requirements and 21 st century skills	Leadership Team/CPDC	With appropriate resources, start within 3 months

Region 14 Strategic Planning Goal Two

Region 14 will align instructional practice and accountability systems with Common Core and 21st Century Skills

Indicators of Success:

- There is consensus built around an instructional vision, specific to teaching and learning behaviors that assures student engagement, challenging student work, and meets the demands of 21st Century learning.
- The current teacher evaluation aligns with the new Connecticut Framework and the new Guidelines for Teacher Evaluation and includes Region 14 instructional practices.
- Teacher evaluation/observation enables the district to measure the quality and frequency of student engagement in challenging and meaningful work and fidelity in instructional practices.
- There are coherent and aligned mechanisms that connect the major instructional improvement processes to the results of professional evaluation and development data aligned with state guidelines for professional development process.
- There is a coherent plan for migrating the center of instructional resources from print to digital resources for learning.
- The Board of Education policies adequately address digital age teaching and learning.

Identify Systems, Factors and Restraining Forces:

Systems/Current Action	Factors	Restraining Forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five Lesson components • Observations by leadership teams • Consultant Tony Rigazzio Digilio • 3 year tech plan • Common planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Resources • Time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations in excellence of teaching and learning by parents and teachers • Shift in paradigm for students, ownership of learning and persistence • Time for planning PD and common planning time • Central focus for coherence and accountability for outcomes

Strategies for moving forward in Year One:

Step #	Action	Outcome	Who	When
1	*Communicate paradigm shift in teaching and learning to staff, parents, students, and community at large.	Staff, parents and community at large will understand the paradigm shift in teaching and learning	Leadership Team/CPDC/DI	BOE Meetings/ School Meetings
2	*Determine alignment between RSD14 Instructional practice and CCSS.	RSD14 Instructional practice aligned with the CCSS	Leadership Team/DI	Summer 2013
3	*Adopt variation of CT State Teacher Evaluation Plan (SEED) to include RSD14 instructional practices.	SEED Teacher evaluation document adopted and includes RSD14 instructional practices	Teacher Evaluation Committee/Leadership Team DI	June 30, 2013
4	*Assure common planning time for staff to improve RSD14 instructional practices.	Common planning time for all staff members	Building Leadership/ DI	Weekly Calendar
5	*Systemically, organize, document, and analyze instructional data to improve instructional practices.	Data to improve instructional practices is systemically organized, documented and analyzed	Leadership Team/DI	
6	*Allot money for professional development related to instructional practice and new evaluation process.	Sufficient funds available for professional development related to instructional practice and the new evaluation process.	BOE/Supt Dir. of Fin/Op	Budget Dev.
7	*Create a curriculum document that includes RSD14 instructional practices where appropriate.	Curriculum template includes instructional practices	TBD/DI	ongoing
8	*Align curriculum K-12 to include RSD14 instruction practice components.	Aligned K-12 curriculum with embedded RSD14 instructional practice components	DI	

Region 14 Strategic Planning Goal Three

To continuously improve student learning through the application of Common Core State Standards/21st Century Skills aligned common assessments that inform and support professional practice.

Indicators of Success:

- The district will have reliable assessments in place that can determine in a timely fashion the impact of instruction on student learning at the classroom level and track student performance and its improvement in key areas over time (Common Core/21st century skills).
- The district will have performance standards related to key skill and content expectations, which are reliably measured locally and reported to parents and students at regular intervals.
- The district, at all levels, will regularly use this local data to focus improvement goals for the system, building, and individuals.
- The district wide data systems that allow for vertical and horizontal integration of improvement data.
- There are district wide improvement systems that allow for vertical and horizontal integration of improvement data so that it can be meaningfully used to drive changes in goal setting, professional learning, and practice.

Step Three: *Identify Systems, Factors and Restraining Forces*

Systems/Current Action	Factors	Restraining Forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent and common assessment practices • Benchmark skill, performance based assessments, standardized based assessments, summative assessment-not all aligned to CCSS nor are all used to inform instruction and Prof Development • PD in place within the district, addressing CCSS and instructional practices but it is not systemic enough to complete the alignment • Data system technology use of PowerSchool • Report cards, PowerSchool and parent/teacher, conferences, staffing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and Federal mandates • NEASC requirements • Lack of CCSS in all areas of instruction • Smarter Balance • Financial resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS PD has been focused on NEASC • Administrative transience • Differing instructional philosophy and practices over the years as a result of administrative transience • Technology resources within the buildings • Community and institutional understanding of CCSS and 21st Century Skill expectations

Strategies for moving forward in Year One:

Step #	Action	Outcome	Who	When
1	Develop CCSS aligned benchmarks assessments	Benchmarks and assessments at each grade level directly linked to CCSS	Teachers/DI	June 2013
2	Develop similar assessments in non CCSS areas of learning and instruction	Content area assessments	Teachers/DI	
3	Develop effective system for evaluating data regarding individual student performance on assessments at departmental, grade level, building and district levels-data team training	District administrators incorporate process for DW data review into leadership meetings; department chairpersons	Administrators, department chairpersons, teachers/DI	
4	Professional development regarding developing digitally based CCSS aligned assessments		Technology Council/CPDC/DI	
5	Professional development for Data Teams		CPDC/Technology Council/DI	
6	Identifying technology resources and infrastructure needed in classrooms, develop a plan for implementation	Plan and schedule for acquiring and implementing technology DW	Technology Staff Technology Council/Leadership Team	March 2013

Add:

Transition to a standards based report card aligned with CCSS and 21st Century Skills K-8

Region 14 Strategic Planning Goal Four

Communicate and engage with the Region 14 Public School Community to create the partnerships that will be necessary for long-term success in the implementation of these critical systemic changes.

Indicators of Success:

- There is a deep understanding of existing partnerships and partners
- There is a common goal and understanding of the district’s Mission and purpose among the critical community partnerships involved in the education of the Region’s students.
- The district creates, nurtures and maintains community partnerships
- The district effectively communicates the Mission and purpose of the district to the entire Region 14 community

Systems, Factors and Restraining Forces

Systems/Current Action	Factors	Restraining Forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District web page • School newsletters • BOE meetings • NEAT TV • Alert Now 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public perception of schools • Busy family schedules • Influential, vocal adversaries • Political polarization of community • Community centric perspectives in contrast to ‘region’ design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutual commitment needed for effective and ongoing communication • General negativity • Lack of technology infrastructure • A need for great focus and the development of a sense of urgency among all members of the educational community • Lack of localized media.

Strategies for Moving Forward in Year One:

Step #	Action	Outcome	Who	When
	Implement network infrastructure in all facilities	A wireless environment in all facilities for greater access and delivery of communication	Technology Team/Leadership Team	Summer 2013
	Identify the partnerships currently in place to implement the critical systemic changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOE Public Relations Subcommittee • District Web Site • PTO (elementary schools) PIM (Parents in the Middle) • Monthly Reports from school administrators To BOE To Parents • Superintendent Advisory Council • Superintendent/Selectman Meetings • Superintendent’s Roundtable 	Support communication opportunities between Schools and Home through membership and outreach Arrange regular exchanges among members of the community	Leadership Team Parent Groups Supt	June, 2013 Current/ Ongoing
	Identify who should be part of these partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parents ○ Local elected officials ○ Educators ○ Students (High School) ○ Community members ○ State legislative officials ○ Administrators ○ Local Community Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lions Clubs 	Planned regular dialogue and communication on a mutually determined schedule	Supt LT Community Leaders	Summer 2013

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rotary Club ▪ Woodbury Business Association ▪ Junior Women’s Club ▪ Senior Center Groups ▪ Local law enforcement ▪ Church Organizations ▪ Local Volunteer Groups (i.e. Fire Departments, Ambulance Associations, FFA, 4-H) 			
	<p>Identify the methodologies used to communicate these messages to the communities at large?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Web ○ Region 14 News Alert ○ Newsletters ○ Board reports/correspondence ○ Increased participation in community/school events ○ Receptiveness to new concepts from constituents ○ Increased activity in parent and school groups ○ Increased student achievement ○ Increased community involvement ○ Budget passed on first ballot ○ Educational goals/targets are being met 	<p>Data Admin Supt Leadership Team Community Leaders Parent Leaders Student Leaders</p>	<p>Regular Com- munication</p>	<p>School Year 2013- 2104</p>
	<p>Glossary Terms</p>			
	<p>(Examples of) Strategies in Disciplines: The following strategies (tools for learning and understanding) can be applied to all content areas: <i>*Vocabulary’s CODE helps students master crucial concepts and retain new vocabulary</i></p>			

<p><i>works *SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review* *Summarizing * Activating Prior Knowledge</i></p> <p>21st Century Skills: Core competencies which include, but are not limited to: collaboration, digital literacy, global perspective, and creativity.</p> <p>504: “A federal civil rights statute that protects the rights of persons with disabilities...” In education, it is a plan that assures accommodations needed for learning.</p> <p>Advisory: A program that typically exists in middle and high schools where the same adults work with the same students in areas outside of the regular curriculum, for example: student success planning, and individual goal setting. Inherent in Advisory is the belief that relationships between students and adult staff are a vital part of student success.</p> <p>APK: APK stands for <i>Activating Prior Knowledge</i>. The best teachers prepare students for learning by asking questions or providing activities that help students connect the new learning with their past experiences or understandings.</p> <p>Benchmarks: Benchmarks are tests that are given throughout the school year to track students' progress as they work toward completing grade level expectations.</p> <p>CCSS: The Common Core State Standards are globally benchmarked academic standards in language arts and math that the Connecticut State Board of Education endorsed as Connecticut’s official academic standards in July of 2010 (joining 43 other states that had done the same). These standards are more rigorous than Connecticut’s previous standards and will require extensive curriculum and instruction adjustments to help students achieve proficiency.</p> <p>CMP2 (Connected Math 2): <i>Connected Mathematics 2 (CMP2)</i>: is a program that provides students with an investigative</p>			
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<p>approach to learning mathematics. It is a complete mathematics curriculum for grades 6–8 that helps students utilize engaging interactive problems and motivating everyday situations to learn math concepts.</p> <p>Curriculum: a map for learning at each grade level with specific skills and understandings.</p> <p>Curriculum alignment: the complex web that connects what is outlined in the written curriculum, to what is taught in the classroom, to what students are assessed on. In order to assure learning for all students, this alignment must be coherent and consistent within and across grade levels for each discipline. The degree to which the materials and teaching used to educate students are focused on the same things from year to year and school to school. With both communities mostly sending students to the same middle and high school, this alignment has an impact on the preparation of students for academics beyond elementary school.</p> <p>Data Teams: a group of professionals at the district, school, grade and/or content level that collaboratively analyze data from multiple data sources to identify strengths in student learning, as well as focus areas for improvement and determine instructional research-based interventions that will address both students’ needs and learning objectives.</p> <p>Digital Learning: the integration of new technologies into everyday teaching and learning.</p> <p>Digital Resources/Structure: a way to make teaching and learning authentic, relative, and engaging through the use of innovative technology (i.e. shared workspace, digital libraries, Wi-Fi access, iPads, iPods, smart devices, tablets, and various educational applications and programs that can be downloaded or purchased to use with such devices to support teaching and learning).</p>			
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	<p>Digital World: information in a digital form – a shift from paper/pencil to keyboard/clicking.</p> <p>DOK (Depth of Knowledge): Different and deeper ways a student interacts with content being learned.</p> <p>DRA2 (Developmental Reading Assessment): A diagnostic reading assessment that establishes the reading level of a student as well as providing a teacher with a focus for individual instruction that will move the student to the next level.</p> <p>DRP (Degrees of Reading Power): The Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) tests are holistic measures of how well students understand the meaning of text. The tests are criterion-referenced (meaning they compare students' performance to achievement criteria) and allow precise tracking of a student's reading development over time. They do not measure products of reading (such as main idea and author's purpose) but rather the process of reading.</p> <p>ELA (English Language Arts): A content area that focuses on English language skills: reading, writing, spelling and oral communication.</p> <p>Embedded Instructional Practices: Teaching strategies that are seamlessly incorporated throughout lessons and/or activities.</p> <p>Enduring Understandings: Enduring understandings are statements summarizing important ideas and core processes that are central to a discipline and have lasting value beyond the classroom. They synthesize what students should understand—not just know or do—as a result of studying a particular content area. Moreover, they articulate what students should “revisit” over the course of their lifetimes in relationship to the content area.</p>			
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	<p>Essential Question: Essential Question are questions that probe for deeper meaning and promote inquiry:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. causes genuine and relevant inquiry into the big ideas and core content; 2. provokes deep thought, lively discussion, sustained inquiry, and new understanding as well as more questions; 3. requires students to consider alternatives, weigh evidence, support their ideas, and justify their answers; 4. stimulates vital, on-going rethinking of big ideas, assumptions, and prior lessons; 5. sparks meaningful connections with prior learning and personal experiences; 6. naturally recurs, creating opportunities for transfer to other situations and subjects. <p>Fontas and Pinnell: Fountas & Pinnell reading levels are a system of reading levels developed by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell to support their guided reading method, commonly referred to as Fountas & Pinnell.</p> <p>Formative (Common) Assessments: Formative assessment or <i>diagnostic testing</i>: is a range of formal and informal assessment procedures employed by teachers during the learning process in order to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment.[1] It typically involves qualitative feedback (rather than scores) for both student and teacher that focuses on the details of content and performance.</p> <p>IEP: An Individualized Education Program (IEP) describes the educational program that has been designed to meet that child's unique needs. Each child who receives special education and related services must have an IEP. Each IEP must be</p>			
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<p>designed for one student and must be a truly individualized document. The IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students (when age appropriate) to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities. The IEP is the cornerstone of a quality education for each child with a disability.</p> <p>The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a legally binding document.</p> <p>Learning Outcomes: Student learning outcomes are statements that specify what students will know, be able to do, or be able to demonstrate when they have completed an activity or unit of study. Student learning outcomes must be observable, measurable and able to be demonstrated</p> <p>NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges): NEASC ensures, through an ongoing accreditation process, that all students experience an equitable, quality education vital to the success of a democratic society. This is done by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining relevant and dynamic Standards of Accreditation which define a quality education; • supporting member schools through self- evaluation, peer review, and ongoing monitoring; and • supporting research-based practices critical to continuous school improvement <p>PBA (Performance Based Assessment): Performance based assessment requires students to demonstrate knowledge and skills, including the process by which they solve problems. Performance assessments measure skills such as the ability to integrate knowledge across disciplines, contribute to the work of a group, and develop a plan of action when confronted with a new situation.</p> <p>Some examples of PBA's are: conducting and reporting the results of an experiment, answering open-response questions,</p>			
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	<p>computing mathematics equations, presenting an oral argument, writing an essay, or researching and writing a research paper.</p> <p>PD: Professional Development (PD) is the continuing education of professional staff.</p> <p>PowerSchool: PowerSchool is a web-based student information system (a database) that enables educators to make timely decisions that impact student performance while creating a collaborative environment for parents, teachers and students. PowerSchool supports the management of demographic information, scheduling, teacher grade books, attendance, and the reporting of student progress (report cards).</p> <p>http://www.pearsonschools.com/products/powerschool/</p> <p>Progress Monitoring: Regularly assessing students in specific academic and behavioral areas in order to determine the efficacy of and inform instruction/intervention and to make effective decisions regarding the instructional/intervention needs of a class, small group or individual student. The group's or student's current level of performance is determined and a goal that is aligned to the relevant standard(s) is set. Progress is measured regularly (the frequency depends on the intensity of instruction/intervention) to see if the actual rate of learning matches the expected rate. Based on the results, changes in curriculum, instruction and/or environment are made to match the student's needs. Progress monitoring helps schools establish more effective programs for children who have not benefited from previous programming, as well as students who are already proficient.</p> <p>Reform Bill 458 (PA12-116): the educational reform legislation passed in Connecticut in May of 2012 that creates new expectations for testing, teacher evaluation, professional learning, supervisory practices, certification, and a variety of</p>			
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<p>other new educational mandates.</p> <p>Running Records: One method of assessing a child's reading level by examining both accuracy and the types of errors made. A running record gives the teacher an indication of whether material currently being read is too easy or too difficult for the child, and it serves as an indicator of the areas where a child's reading can improve—for example, if a child frequently makes word substitutions that begin with the same letter as the printed word, the teacher will know to focus on getting the child to look beyond the first letter of a word.</p> <p>SBAC: The SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) is one of two multistate consortia awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Education to develop an assessment system based on the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS). To achieve the goal that all students leave high school ready for college and career, SBAC is committed to ensuring that assessment and instruction embody the CCSS and that all students, regardless of disability, language, or subgroup status, have the opportunity to learn this valued content and show what they know and can do.</p> <p>SEED: System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED), applies to both teachers and administrators. Is a specific example of the guidelines for CT districts to adopt.</p> <p>SPI: A School Performance Index (SPI) is calculated by averaging all of a given school's valid and non-excluded Student IPis.. The SPI is a criterion referenced measurement, not a norm referenced one. In the new accountability system, a school's annual SPI performance targets are set based on that specific school's performance and the improvements that school needs to make to reach the ultimate State target of 88 SPI points. The target is not based on the performance of other schools; therefore, SPI should be interpreted not relative to the performance of other schools but relative to that particular school's ability to make its annual performance improvement</p>			
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	<p>targets. A similar customized target-setting approach is also used for graduation rates.</p> <p>Scientifically Researched Based Interventions (Response To Intervention) are a way to provide support and instruction to children who are struggling to learn. A child’s progress is studied and findings are used to make decisions about teaching and other learning supports. SRBI are most commonly used in addressing needs in the areas of reading, math, and behavior. A “continuum of support” is developed by school districts and programs to meet the needs of the children they serve.</p> <p>SRBI or Scientifically Research Based Instruction is a way to provide support and instruction to children who are struggling to learn. The child’s progress is studied and findings are used to make decisions about teaching and other learning supports. It is most commonly used in addressing needs in the areas of reading, math, and behavior. A continuum of support is developed by school districts to meet the needs of the children they serve. The SRBI framework or continuum of support has three “tiers.” The key component to SRBI is that all children receive high quality curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom, which is considered Tier 1. Some students require assistance in addition to high quality instruction. The Tier 2 interventions are teaching strategies or methods that have proven to be effective in helping children learn. When a higher level of support is needed, Tier 3, children are provided with individualized instruction in order to help them be successful learners.</p> <p>SRBI/RTI provides an improved process and structure for school teams to design, implement, and evaluate educational interventions. The essential components of RTI include the belief that all students can be taught effectively; the importance of intervening with students early; the use of a multi-tier model of service delivery; the use of a problem-solving method to make decisions within a multi-tiered model; the use of high quality, research-based and scientifically validated</p>			
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	<p>instruction/interventions; the monitoring of student progress to inform instruction; and the use of data to make decisions.</p> <p>Standardized Assessments: Standardized assessments are secure tests administered to large groups of students for the purpose of measuring academic ability or achievement and/or comparing members of a cohort.</p> <p>Standardized Assessments are used to evaluate students and schools, to help improve teaching and learning, and to generate important data from which policy decisions can be made. Standardized test results often play a role in shaping public perceptions about the performance of our students and the quality of our schools. However, they are only one of the tools needed to measure student progress.</p> <p>Student Success Plans (SSP): A Student Success Plans is an individualized student-centered plan that engages every student based on their unique interests and strengths helping them to understand the relevancy of education to achieve postsecondary educational and career goals. In Connecticut, it begins in grade six and continues throughout high school.</p> <p>An effective SSP is built around three core components: Academic Development, Career Development, and Social, Emotional and Physical Development.</p> <p>Summative Assessments: Summative assessments are cumulative evaluations used to measure student growth after instruction and are generally given at the end of a course or unit in order to determine whether long term learning goals have been met. Examples include: state mandated assessments, district benchmarks, end-of-unit or chapter tests, and end-of-term or semester exams.</p>			
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	<p>TEAM: TEAM is the Teacher Education and Mentoring Program in Connecticut. The mission of the TEAM program is to promote excellence, equity, and high achievement for Connecticut students by engaging teachers in purposeful exploration of professional practice through guided support and personal reflection.</p> <p>Tiered Intervention: The instruction delivered to students varies on several dimensions that are related to the nature and severity of a student's difficulties. Tiered interventions provide high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, using frequent monitoring of student progress, which drives decisions regarding changes in instruction and interventions and focuses on the application of student response data to inform educational decisions.</p> <p>UDL: UDL is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone--not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs.</p> <p>Universal Measures: Universal screening assessments are characterized by the administration of quick, low-cost, repeatable testing of age-appropriate skills to all students. Schools typically administer screenings to all students three times a year. These assessments yield two important pieces of information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, they provide evidence to help assess how functional the core curriculum, environment, and instruction are in the school. At least 80% of all students in the school should be showing adequate progress in a particular curricular element or program. If more than 20% of the students are not making 			
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	<p>acceptable gains in an area, the school must focus on improving the core curriculum and/or instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondly, universal screening identifies those students who may not be making expected progress and who may need additional diagnostic assessment and/or intervention, either in small groups or on an individual basis. <p>Vertical Alignment: Vertical Alignment refers to how well our learning progression builds from one grade to the next and how well the skills and understandings taught in each grade line up with state standards, standardized tests, and our own in district tests.</p> <p>Walkthroughs: Walkthroughs are a powerful tool to inform improvement planning, professional development needs, curriculum revision and instructional practice. Walkthroughs should not be viewed as an evaluative exercise.</p>			
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