Steward School

Topsfield, Massachusetts
School Improvement Plan
2015-2016

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Table of Contents

Educational Mission Statement and Core Values............................................. 3

Strategic Goals................................................................................................. 4

Introduction........................................................................................................ 5

Action Plan/Specific Strategies.......................................................................... 9
**Introduction:**
Each public school in Massachusetts is required to submit a yearly School Improvement Plan since the Education Reform Act of 1993. The Steward+ School Council has prepared the following plan for the 2015-2016 school year. It is the goal for our School Improvement Plan to have one consistent message that becomes ingrained in the fabric of our schools and is easily articulated by all members of our community, including families, students and staff. Therefore, the goals and objectives will be succinct and have one focus. For the 2015-2016 school year, the Topsfield Public Schools will concentrate their efforts on identifying the unique needs of each student and tailoring instruction to enhance academic skills, support social development, while monitoring individual growth. The vehicles through which we will accomplish the identified objective include the differentiation of instruction, curriculum that continues to correlate with the Common Core Standards to meet the needs of all learners, using technology as a tool to engage 21st century learners, and providing a safe and positive environment for students to learn.

**Mission Statement**

The Mission of the Topsfield Elementary Schools is to provide the academic foundation and the social and emotional support for children to meet the challenges of citizenship expected of lifelong learners in an increasingly technological and interdependent world.

**Core Values**

- Respect for oneself, and other children and adults, promotes belonging and is essential to learning.
- The strongest possible instructional program for children and adults is based on quality research, world-class standards, and high expectations.
- All children can and will learn when provided equal access to educational opportunities appropriate to their individual needs and capabilities.
- Lifelong learning is achieved in partnership with the home, school and community.
- Our schools are a shared resource for the entire community.
Topsfield School Committee District Goals
The Topsfield Elementary Schools pursue educational excellence by creating and sustaining a learning community that challenges its members to reach their full intellectual, social, creative, emotional and physical potential. While our pursuit of excellence is an on-going mission, every four years, the Elementary School Committee identifies several measurable goals to direct and evaluate our progress. These District Goals are designed to guide our budgeting, planning and development, but in no way to limit our responsibility to pursue our mission.

1. Development of Higher Order Thinking Skills
2. Student Achievement and District Accountability
3. Technology (Digital Learning) Curriculum and Infrastructure
4. School Nutrition and Wellness
5. Strategic Planning and Financial Management

Steward School Strategic Goals
Steward School will pursue educational excellence and a sustained community of learners by aligning with the goals of the School Committee District identified above. The following goals will be focused on for Steward for this school year. These goals will be re-evaluated each year to ensure the school is on target with our objectives and that we continue to be aligned with the goals of the District.

1. Development and Preparation of 21st Century Learners

Steward School will engage in the practices of deep planning, engaging instruction and expansive assessment opportunities to prepare its 21st century learners to think critically, problem solve, collaborate, be agile and adaptive, take initiative, communicate effectively both orally and in writing and promote curiosity and imagination.

2. Provide a Safe Facility and a Positive Environment for Our Learners

Steward School will foster an environment where our learners are safe, healthy, positive and socially confident.
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<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>INVOLVED</th>
<th>TIMELINE</th>
<th>METHOD(S) OF IMPLEMENTATION</th>
<th>EVIDENCE/DOCUMENTATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain class size consistent with the 15-year history in order to ensure the optimal differentiation of instruction.</td>
<td>Principal, School Committee, Classroom Teachers, School Council</td>
<td>Completion during 2015-2016 school year</td>
<td>• School Committee recommendations and discussions with input from Superintendent and Principals</td>
<td>• October 1st and March 1st enrollment numbers</td>
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<td>• Topsfield Schools’ Budget</td>
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<td>• Enrollment reports</td>
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<td>Encourage self-assessment and teacher assessment opportunities that demonstrate a high level of student engagement and true understanding of their work aligned to the common core standards.</td>
<td>Director of Curriculum, Principals, Learning Specialists, Reading and Math Support Specialists, Grade Level Teams, Special Educators, Tri-Town Science Committee</td>
<td>Completion during 2015-2016 school year</td>
<td>• Professional Development Opportunities, such as the Reader’s Workshop, Genre Study, Pedagogy/Best Instructional Practices • Peer/Teacher Observations • IT Time and JAM discussions across grade levels • Use of Writing Curriculum Maps and common rubrics and Math Curriculum Maps and common math assessments and Reading Curriculum Maps with detailed genre units of study to monitor student growth • Use of curriculum review cycle</td>
<td>• Classroom and peer observation reflections • Plan books, examples of project based learning • Units of study that contain lessons and assessments that align to the Massachusetts Common Core Standards • Curriculum maps, pacing chart and rubrics that align to the units of study that contain lessons and assessments that align to the Massachusetts Common Core Standards • Course descriptions, objectives and assessment of professional development courses and workshop</td>
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<td>Members of our school community will use technology as a tool to excel as learners and develop as leaders as they skillfully use technology to access, retrieve and use information school-wide, community-wide, nationally and internationally.</td>
<td>Technology Curriculum Integration Specialist, Learning Specialists, IT Personnel, Teachers, Principal, Technology Committee</td>
<td>Completion during 2015-2016 school year</td>
<td>• Continuation of Tri-Town Technology Committee and the continuation of Tri-Town Tech Talks • Use of technology tools to monitor academic and social progress and growth • Peer observation and use of Technology Curriculum Integration Specialist’s</td>
<td>• Minutes from Technology Committee, JAM and IT meetings • Observations of technology use in building walk-throughs • Web page and blog activity • AIMS Web data • Tri-Town Tech Talk offerings and summaries of presentations • Principals’ Budget Narrative and Technology line items</td>
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<td>blog to share resources and technology tools</td>
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<td>- Acquisition of end-user products that allow educators to access tools and materials to enhance teaching and learning</td>
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<td>- Development of a five-year technology plan</td>
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<td>- Creation of an Acceptable Use Policy that supports a 1-to-1 learning environment</td>
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<td>- Introduction of scope and sequence for technology standards</td>
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<td>• Dissemination of Acceptable Use Policy</td>
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<td>• Five-year Technology Plan</td>
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Encourage deep planning around curriculum and instruction, which supports the most current research regarding the positive impact of hands-on and project-based learning and support efforts in this pedagogical practice to increase student engagement.

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<th>School Committee, Principal, Teachers and staff, TESPTO leadership, School Council, Director of Curriculum</th>
<th>June 2015-June 2016</th>
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<td>- Staff meetings</td>
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<td>- Teacher newsletters/blogs</td>
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<td>- Professional Development offerings (Workshop model, Best Instructional Practices)</td>
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<td>- Principal Coffees</td>
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<td>- School Committee student presentations</td>
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<td>- Whole School Assemblies</td>
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<td>- Rachel Simmons Talk 10/1</td>
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<td>- Foster student choice within curricular activities (Student Council, Foreign Language)</td>
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<td>- Pilot genius hour/20% time at Steward Elementary</td>
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<td>- Integrate with social-emotional curriculum to teach students to learn about their learning</td>
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- School Council survey
- WIN time
- 6th grade genius hour
- Workshop Model
- School assemblies that teach character development (ex: GRT, developmental assets, mindfulness and growth mindset)
Development and Preparation of our 21st Century Learners

2014-2015 School Year Highlights:
This year, The Topsfield School Councils engaged in discussions around the book, Inquiry and innovation in the Classroom, by A.J Juliani. This book prompted deep dialogue around the importance of engagement and innovation across curriculum areas. Students and staff will remain committed to employing the Common Core Standards, which provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to know and be able to do. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. However, this revised plan for the 2015-2016 school year will reflect a focus away from the “what” (curriculum) and towards the “how” (pedagogy/best instructional practices). The Topsfield staff will use the Common Core State Standards and district-wide curriculum as the foundation for deep and broad planning that concentrates on engaging and motivating students to be active participants in the learning process.

In regards to the curriculum that has served as our solid foundation for student success and achievement, we continued to identify specific areas that needed to be addressed, created committees to develop curriculum maps to target new standards and researched new curriculum tools that met the goals and objective set forth in these maps. Math in Focus remained our math program and provided rich and rigorous instruction and resources for building strong mathematicians. This past year we worked towards a math workshop model in several grade levels to ensure math is being differentiated for a broad range of learners. The workshop model continues to be a teaching framework in both reading and writing and teachers continue to be invested in continuing the work that was first started by those who partook in a genre study course in the summer of 2013.

As students engaged more deeply in their learning, new educator roles were created to facilitate the acquisition of these 21st century skills and to identify resources that promote differentiated instruction. The Math/Science and ELA/Social Studies Learning Specialist and the Technology Integration Specialist collaborated with educators to provide learning opportunities that focused on character development, citizenship, communication, critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, and creativity and imagination. In addition a new program was created within the Topsfield Schools. An extended studies program to support our most academically-able students was implemented during the 2014-2015 school year.

During the spring of 2015, our third through sixth grade students participated in the PARCC Performance Based Assessment in Mathematics and ELA and the End of the Year Assessment in Mathematics and ELA. We will remain communicative at the state level to remain current about discussions and decisions regarding state-wide assessments in the future by attending public forums and any other opportunities offered that will enable our voices to be heard so we can share our experiences after participating in PARCC this year.

Looking Forward to 2015-2016:
Based on the work of A.J Juliani, whose book Inquiry and innovation in the Classroom was a book study for our School Council during the 2014-2015 school year, we will teach our student the importance of GRIT through the phrase, “We’ve got G.R.I.T” as we move into this next school year. This acronym will highlight the following attributes:

- **Guts:** Children will be taught to be courageous, bold and risk-taking.
- Resilience: Children will be taught the importance of confidence and learning from experiences, both positive and negative.
- Innovation: Children will be taught the importance of creative thinking, problem solving, and delivering their own opinions with strength.
- Teamwork: Children will be taught the dimensions of teamwork, including how to work in both small and large groups, how to take leadership and “follower-ship” roles, and how outcomes change based on the strength of a team.

Steward School works tirelessly to prepare its 21st century learners to think critically, problem solve, apply learned skills and strategies to novel situations, collaborate, be agile and adaptive, take initiative, communicate effectively both orally and in writing, access and analyze information and promote curiosity and imagination. We continue to develop students’ digital literacy to acquire and manage knowledge to succeed in school and thrive in our ever-changing world. The members of our school community will use technology as a tool to excel as learners and develop as leaders as they skillfully use technology to access, retrieve and use information school-wide, community-wide, nationally and internationally.

The Next Generation Science standards have been released and we will continue to engage in the implementation process. The Framework outlines the three dimensions that are needed to provide students a high quality science education. The integration of these three dimensions, practice, cross-cutting concepts and disciplinary core ideas, provides students with a context for the content of science, how science knowledge is acquired and understood, and how the sciences are connected through concepts that have universal meaning across the disciplines. During the 2015-2016 school year, the science committee will begin to explore various program options that will encourage inquiry-based learning, hands-on opportunities and engaging experiences for all students.

Staff members are committing to several courses this summer and throughout the next school year, which support our school improvement goals and our commitment to strengthening the skills of our 21st century learners. A course will be offered in the summer and throughout the 2015-2016 school year that will focus on pedagogy and best instructional practices. The course will offer topics that align to this goal, including higher order thinking skills, project-based learning and authentic assessment practices. In addition, several courses will be offered to reinforce the importance of the workshop model in math, reading and writing. This model allows for differentiation practices to occur naturally within the classroom as teachers and students work collaboratively to refine skills and reinforce student strengths.
**GOAL #2: Provide a Safe Facility and a Positive Environment for our Learners**

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| Teach and reinforce the three Topsfield School focus areas of social wellness: respect, responsibility and safety. | Principal, School Counselor, School Psychologist, Safety Team, Wellness Committee, Teachers, Social Curriculum Committee, Families | Completion during 2015-2016 school year | • Provide opportunities to introduce and model the developmental asset(s) for students, staff, families and community members (ex: whole school assemblies, Principal Coffees, Kindergarten Orientation Social Frameworks Scope and Sequence)  
• Focused class meetings on respect for peers and adults  
• Integrate and market the catchphrase, “We’ve got GRIT.” | • Office referrals  
• Minutes from Wellness and Social Curriculum Committees  
• Learner quality assessment portion of report card  
• Whole School Assemblies  
• Tracker Data |
| Create a positive and safe digital environment for students to learn.     | Principal, School Counselor, School Psychologist, Teachers, Social Curriculum Committee, Tri-Town Technology Committee, School Committee, Families | Completion during 2015-2016 school year | • Support and contribute to the creation of a revised Acceptable Use Policy  
• Introduce and implement technology scope and sequence with digital citizenship frameworks | • Principals’ Coffees  
• Dissemination of Acceptable Use Policy/Agreement  
• Minutes from Tri-Town Technology Committee  
• Lesson plans created by the Technology Curriculum Integration Specialist and Library Media Specialist |
| Maintain school facility to ensure a safe facility and learning environment. | Facilities Director, Head Custodian, Parks and Cemetery Dept, Captain of Police and Fire, Nurse, Families | Completion during 2015-2016 school year | • Assess school campus and make recommendations to Principal, Superintendent, and School Committee  
• Continue to explore the improvement of school security to ensure student and staff safety. For example, additional video monitoring systems, keycard access,  
• Practice announced and | • Incident/Accident reports  
• Reports of the Facilities Director and Principal's Report  
• Reports from Police and Fire Departments following drills or emergencies  
• Minutes from Safety Committee  
• Capital plan recommendations |
| Establish clear and consistent communication with current and new families around school procedures and protocols. | Principal, TESPTO, School Council | Completion during 2015-2016 school year | • Create new family checklist/packet to support them as they transition to new roles and responsibilities.
• Disseminate forms of communication and how/when they are delivered (blogs, newsletters, etc.).
• New student mentorship |
| • School Council survey
• Principals’ Coffees and presentations
• Parent Seminar
• New Student orientation
• Kindergarten Orientation
• Teacher and Principal Blogs
• Student Interest Surveys |

**Provide a Safe Facility and a Positive Environment for our Learners**

**2014-2015 School Year Highlights:**
The Topsfield Schools work in harmony with community members and school personnel to ensure the wellness of our students while they are under our supervision. Through various vehicles of communication, we are able to educate our students and parents about the procedures that allow our students to be safe, healthy and socially confident individuals.

The nurses from the Tri-Town work collaboratively to develop and share both student and parent teaching tools and guidelines that are responsive to ongoing and any emerging health issues. In addition, we work closely and collaboratively with members of the police and fire departments to ensure that we have a common understanding of our safety protocols: fire drills, safe mode and evacuation. Through evacuation and safe mode drills, we monitor student and staff readiness in the event that an emergency occurs during the school day. After receiving community feedback, the administration and staff will better communicate the safety procedures and precautions we employ in order to instill greater confidence from our families that we are making great efforts to keep their children safe on a daily basis. In addition, The Code of Conduct provides a structure that defines behaviors and expectations which lead our students to make positive decisions and helps build a respectful community of learners. The Wellness Committee has worked diligently to research and educate students and families about current issues and preventative measures which allow our students to be healthier and more active.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and the bullying prevention guidelines have been implemented in our school community and are now understood by all. A strong system of recording and collecting data around negative behaviors has been established and the information collected is used to identify trends and guide our instruction during classroom meetings and school wide assemblies.
Looking Forward to 2015-2016:
Through the continued implementation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, character development awareness and social dynamic understanding, a culture of tolerance, appreciation and acceptance will be fostered in our classrooms, schools and community. Communication concerning safety, wellness and social success will be shared across all areas of the Topsfield community, so that we can support our children in various environments. We will continue to examine and revise our communication strategies streamlining with modern technology, while ensuring that our communication methods are most reliable and understood by our families. Realizing that our students spend more time interacting with a virtual world, it is imperative to teach children the skills necessary to use technology tools in a safe and responsible manner. Through the creation of a digital literacy curriculum and the implementation of an Acceptable Use Policy and Agreement, students will gain skills and strategies to navigate the digital world more responsibly.