Region 12 Public Schools

2012-2017

A descriptive vision of the critical challenges facing the Region 12 Public Schools.

EDUCATION CONNECTION

Strategic Planning Executive Summary

Regional School District #12

Strategic Planning Executive Summary

Table of Contents

Planning Process Overview

Regional School District # 12 includes the towns of Bridgewater, Roxbury and Washington, Connecticut. Experiencing the challenges that come with declining enrollment and a series of dynamic external changes, led by their respective town leaders, all three towns came together in the summer of 2011 to contribute the resources needed to undertake a comprehensive strategic planning process. An external planning facilitator was hired to manage and guide the work. The purpose of the process was to have a representative group from the three communities explore the current and anticipated conditions impacting the district and come together to identify a small number of data-based goals that could guide the future work of policy makers and educational professionals within Region 12. Specifically, the following outcomes for the final planning product were agreed upon by the sponsoring parties:

When completed, this plan should:

- Command respect and derive support from a broad cross-section of your public school 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.

Through the Regional Board of Education's Long-Range Planning Committee, a Core Planning Team of 31 individuals were identified as appropriate representatives.   As a result, the following members of the Bridgewater, Roxbury and Washington communities and professional staff from Region 12 all agreed to volunteer for this effort and contribute upwards of 75 hours of their own time to the process. Their affiliations/towns of origin (3 central office staff, 11 school staff, 8 Bridgewater citizens, 5 Roxbury citizens and 4 Washington citizens) follow their names in this listing:

Region 12 Strategic Planning Core Team

1. Kelly Boianghu – Middle School Guidance Counselor (staff)
2. Alan Brown – Bridgewater, Board of Education
3. Cathy Colella – Principal of Booth Free School (Roxbury) and Burnham (Bridgewater) Schools (staff)
4. Gregory J. Cava – Roxbury, Board of Education
5. Teresa DeBrito – Middle School Principal (staff)
6. Rosemary Ermini – Middle School Guidance Counselor (staff)
7. Gary Fitzherbert – Washington, Board of Finance

8. Kimberly Gallo – High School Principal (staff)
9. Robert Giesen – Region 12 Director of Finance and Operations (staff)
10. Michelle Gorra – Washington, Board of Education
11. Kristyn Greco – Kindergarten, Burnham School (staff)
12. Rita Gregory - teacher, Booth School (staff)
13. Bob Hacker – Bridgewater, resident
14. Nancy Hawley – Bridgewater, Board of Finance
15. Celeste Hawthorne - teacher, Washington Primary (staff)
16. Barbara Henry – Roxbury, First Selectman
17. Julie Ledbetter – Bridgewater, parent
18. Anne Marie Lindblom, Bridgewater, parent
19. Gary Lord – Roxbury, Board of Finance
20. Kelly Lott – Roxbury, Board of Education
21. Mark Lyon – Washington, First Selectman
22. Allyson O'Hara - Director of Pupil Services (staff)
23. Mary Anne Russell - teacher, Washington Primary School (staff)
24. Linda Schneider – Roxbury, parent
25. Julie Stewart - Bridgewater, PTO President
26. Dr. Bruce Storm – Superintendent (staff)
27. Dr. Anne Stuhlman – Director of Curriculum and Instruction (staff)
28. Susan Stumpf – Bridgewater, parent
29. Susan Ubaldi – teacher Washington Primary School (staff)
30. Ed Wainwright – Bridgewater, citizen
31. Anthony Weymouth – teacher, REACH Program (staff)

Once the team was formed, a summer orientation meeting was held and a three phase process plan was agreed upon. The work got under way in September of 2011. Phase One of the plan was an extensive internal and external data collection process. To accomplish this, Core Planning Team divided into six data collection groups and spent twelve weeks surveying the community, analyzing data, and gathering information from a variety of sources related to each of the following areas of current and future school system performance:

Internal Groups:

A. Existence and alignment of foundational systems. Data in this area sought to explore how systemic thinking and processes work to support the Mission and Beliefs of the organization.

B. Alignment, coherence and quality of leadership, curriculum, assessment, data, and instructional systems. Data in this area sought to determine how in-sync the key teaching and learning systems of the organization are with key organizational goals and priorities as well as best practices and current research.

C. Use of 21st Century content, skills, tools for learning, and digital literacy applications throughout the system. Data in this area sought to explore the state of the digital learning environment by identifying what phase of integration the district has achieved and how well it is positioned for the future.

External Groups:

D. Impact of demographics and economics. Data in this area sought to understand how changes in population and funding will have an impact on how we plan to do business in the future.

E. Impact of technology, globalism, culture, and legislation. Data in this area sought to gauge the changes that impact schools on a macro level; this is especially important as it relates to kinds of preparation we provide for students and the impact of mandates on our practice.

F. Special Cause considerations, local context, and other factors. Data in this area sought to understand the context of factors that may influence either goal development or implementation issues related to the plan. Special or unique circumstances, issues of dysfunction, or local histories find their home here.

In addition to the Core Planning Team, additional volunteers were recruited to help with this data collection work. These additional staff and community helpers were asked to join with a group that they found interesting or that needed help. Through this process an additional 20-40 community members were involved at one point or another in the data collection process.

For all internal data collection teams (A-C), there was a set of operational assumptions, essential research questions, and a scoring framework based on systemic frame of reference tied to similar NEASC and other school improvement standards. These groups were asked to report their findings as internal strengths and weaknesses. The external groups (D-F) had a set of operational assumptions and essential research questions as well, but instead of strengths and weaknesses, they were charged with identifying and prioritizing those external trends that would have a significant impact on the district's future performance. After a slow start due to a week of no power and the other impacts of a historic October snow storm, the teams regained their bearings and proceeded to complete the data collection process.

Data Collection Results Summary

With all of these data collected, the Core Strategic Planning Team convened for a full day retreat held in the Roxbury Town Hall on Wednesday, January 25th. During this session, the six data teams and the survey group presented and discussed their findings. The purpose of these reports generally is help the group identify long-term internal performance issues, to determine the most significant external trends and implications, and then to see where there is convergence between them. Among dozens that were identified, a few stood out as prominent:

Internal Groups:

A. Existence and alignment of foundational systems. Data in this area sought to explore how systemic thinking and processes work to support the Mission and Beliefs of the organization.

- While there was a history of this practice in the district, the data showed that the current mission had fallen out of focus and that it was in need of revitalization.
- Noted challenges of coordinating the work and focus of multiple boards in three communities.

B. Alignment, coherence and quality of leadership, curriculum, assessment, data, and instructional systems. Data in this area sought to determine how in-sync the key teaching and learning systems of the organization are with key organizational goals and priorities as well as best practices and current research.

- The impact of Connecticut's adoption of the Common Core State Standards and the required instructional shifts needed to align Region 12 processes with those standards.
- The phase out of CMT/CAPT as statewide assessments and the phase in of the adaptive and technology supported SMARTER Balance Assessments.
- The likelihood of a Connecticut legislative mandate that student performance data and teacher evaluation will eventually be explicitly connected.
- Student performance data indicates improvements in some areas, but looming changes in curriculum and assessment practices will put tremendous pressure on these systems.
- Adult learning for changed practice in multiple areas will become critical in the coming years.

C. Use of 21st Century content, skills, tools for learning, and digital literacy applications throughout the system. Data in this area sought to explore the state of the digital learning environment by identifying what phase of integration the district has achieved and how well it is positioned for the future.

- The need for appropriate digital learning environments to prepare students for modern learning and work conditions.
- The requirement for the identification, teaching and assessment of 21st century skills for both appropriate preparation for students and for the ongoing accreditation at Shepaug High School.
- The challenges of reorienting all of the major systems that support instruction in Region 12 to the implications of the previously identified issues.

External Groups:

D. Impact of demographics and economics. Data in this area sought to understand how changes in population and funding will have an impact on how we plan to do business in the future.

- Between all of the data collection groups, Group D on the external side *(Impact of demographics and economics)* was the group that consistently garnered the most attention. Data in this area sought to understand how changes in population and funding would have an impact on how the district plans to do its business in the future. Due to the history of this topic in the Region and the obvious implications of the results of this team's findings for future work, more than twice as many people volunteered to be on this group than did for any other data collection team. Additionally, the report back to the large group was closely scrutinized and vetted before being presented to Core Team at the Data Retreat.

- Their final report summary (all the external groups formatted work this way – a prioritized listing of categories listed by trends and implications) is listed in its entirety on the following page. What its findings show, quite clearly, are the challenges that in large part motivated the creation of this group have not abated since the last time the Region tried to deal with them. In fact, they have accelerated and are deepening. As will become clear in the discussion of Goal Three, these demographic and economic considerations will combine with educational quality concerns to create a sense of urgency around the configuration and facility use question.

Group D : Impact of Demographics and Economics Data Report		
TRENDS	**IMPLICATIONS**	**SOURCE**
1. Student Population Declining	**Fewer Students in our Schools** ✓ *Within 3 years, enrollment will drop from 886 students to 764, In 5 years, enrollment will drop to 691 students, By 2020, the enrollment will drop to 618* _School_ _Enrollment 2011-12_ _Projected 2014-15_ _Projected 2016-17_ _Projected 2020-21_ Reach 17 17 17 17 Burnham 83 65 52 49 Booth 107 77 77 82 Washington 160 125 119 130 MS 213 207 177 121 HS 306 273 249 219 TOTAL 886 764 691 618	**Enrollment Projection Report Provided by Peter M. Prowda, Ph.D., December 21, 2011**
2. Population is Aging	**Fewer Young Families in the Community** ✓ *Households of residents age 65 and over have increased; over 90% increase in Bridgewater; 80% increase in Roxbury and 32% increase in Washington* ✓ *Residents in the age group ranging from 25-44 have decreased in all three towns. From 1990 to 2010, in Bridgewater and Washington, nearly a 50% decrease and in Roxbury, a 34% decrease* ✓ *According to the 2010 Census, the number of children under the age of 5 is 260. According to the 1990 Census, the number of children under the age of 5 was 439.*	**Census Reports Provided by Wyne Hileman**
3. High Purchase Price for a Home	**Cost-Prohibitive for Young Families** ✓ *The median price of a home in Washington is $655,000; in Roxbury, $900,000; in Bridgewater, $400,000*	**CERC Town Profile 2011**
4. The Number of Second Homeowners is Increasing	**Tax Base Steady Without Increasing Student Population** ✓ *The number of homes bought by residents of other districts has doubled in each of the three towns* ✓ *Property taxes add to town funds without adding students to student population*	**Census Reports Provided by Wayne Hileman**
5. The Cost of Education Has Increased Almost 20% Over the Rate of Inflation	**Size of BOE Budget is Not Consistent With Other Costs** ✓ *From 2000-01 to 2010-11, BOE budget increased from $13,702,003 to $20,792,885. Allowing only for inflation, the 2000-01 budget would be $17,375,510 adjusted to June 2011 dollars. The budget rose about 19.5% higher than the rate of inflation*	**BOE Minutes, Budget Results & National Statistics (inflationdata.com)**
6. Budgets Losing Support from Townspeople	**Increasing Complaints About Use of Taxpayer Funds** ✓ *Duplication of resources; cost of maintaining duplicate facilities* ✓ *From 2000-01 to 2010-11, BOE budget expense per pupil increased from $12,115 to $22,334 due to shrinking student population*	**BOE Minutes & Budget Results**

E. Impact of technology, globalism, culture, and legislation. Data in this area sought to gauge the changes that impact schools on a macro level; this is especially important as it relates to kinds of preparation we provide for students and the impact of mandates on our practice.

- The future of learning and work is digital and the need to prepare students for this reality.
- Globally referenced standards and 21st century skills are the basic skills of this era.
- The impact of current reform legislation on every public school in Connecticut.

F. Special Cause considerations, local context, and other factors. Data in this area sought to understand the context of factors that may influence either goal development or implementation issues related to the plan. Special or unique circumstances, issues of dysfunction, or local histories find their home here.

- The history and implications of the failed consolidation effort.
- The importance of engagement and communications.

As for the community survey and public opinion, during the data collection period, 281 people responded to the Core Team's online survey.   Of those, 107 were parents of current students, 37 were active staff members, and 74 were residents of one the region's three towns. Because of the small sample size, the group considered the opinions expressed as context for decision making and not as a statistically reliable sample.

Among the interesting trends in the survey:

a) A great majority of respondents view the overall quality and performance of the Region 12 Public Schools and its staff as average (34%) or above average (46%).

b) There is a consensus opinion that the amount of money spent per-pupil is high – with over 70% rating this item as above average or very high. In fact, nearly 40% (39.9) rated this item as very high.

c) The perception of tax burden does not parallel the findings of the previous item – more than half of respondents (55.3%) rated the tax burden as average or below average

d) A solid super-majority believes that trends in technology and global competition will require educational approaches to change to adequately prepare students for life beyond school (93.1% either somewhat or strongly agree).

e) In the open-ended write-in section of the survey, elementary school consolidation was the most often raised concern – it appeared in the highest number of different posts. All (and it was balanced between parents and residents) thought it needed to be reconsidered and pursued anew. Costs of education (per pupil), aging facilities, and the challenges of extremely small scale as an impact on educational quality were all mentioned in these posts.

As all of the reports were presented, individual team members were encouraged to ask questions, challenge assumptions, and, if appropriate, explore the available supporting materials used by the groups to create their findings. While groups reported, each individual had a copy of the documentation and was encouraged to listen and consider all of the prioritized information. Core Team members independently took note of the most striking and impactful ideas that emerged through the various presentations and discussions. All of those individual ideas were captured on post-it notes (numbering in the hundreds) and then were randomly split into three separate groups for further analysis.

The primary purpose of this analysis phase of the retreat was to uncover patterns of responses that were present in all or most of the data collection areas. By sorting and prioritizing each of the group's products and then reviewing the work of the other groups as well, each identified trend was sorted and processed three times; essentially ensuring that every person in each group had a chance to validate the work of everyone else's results of this process.

This careful consideration dictated that only consistently identified critical trends that were confirmed by the vast majority of those who participated were deemed significant enough to demand the type of extraordinary efforts that accompany long-term systemic change. Through this process, a series of critical areas of concern and focus emerged. The actual results from that retreat day are listed on the page following this narrative. All of the group's most important findings appear above the middle line in the results table. This separation is based on the plateauing effect created by weighted voting.   All of the trends above the line generated enough support to dramatically separate them from the less important trends that fell away due to their lessened relative importance and potential impact.

Also listed in the results table are color notations. In the retreat, the facilitator color-coded themes across the groups to show participants a visual representation of where there was alignment between them. From this coding it was demonstrated that one area listed as a priority in all three groups with two other areas priorities rising to the top as they were identified in two out of the three others. In the end, these three areas (listed as red, yellow and blue) would be identified as the foundations for the plan's goal statements.

January 25th Data Retreat – Trend and Issue Analysis Activity Results

Group One Results	Group Two Results	Group Three Results
1. Plan, allocate, train and plan for technological infrastructure 47 *(yellow)* 2. Declining student population 34 *(blue)* 3. Consolidation 28 *(blue)* 4. Update, unify and align curriculum 23 *(red)*	1. Address declining enrollment in a long range plan 47 *(blue)* 2. Plan, invest, acquire the technology needed for 21st century skills 41 *(yellow)* 3. Define, embed and support 21st century skills in curriculum 29 *(red)* 4. Align curriculum with CCSS 24 *(red)*	1. Revisit consolidation 53 *(blue)* 2. Curricular revisions – national and state standards 35 *(red)* 3. Know, understand and embed 21st century skills 34 *(red)*
5. Define 21st skills and train – include in all curriculum 12 *(red)* 6. BOE Set goals and direction based on data 10 7. Communicate to the general public 10 8. All three towns work together toward common goals 3 9. Control costs 2 *(blue)*	5. Develop district goals 18 Communicate better with community 9	4. Update district mission, vision 18 5. Cost effectiveness 17 *(blue)* 6. Public relations 10 7. Update teacher evaluation 1

Taken as an aggregate, the three identified priority areas for planning became:

1. **Revise and upgrade (unify and align) the pre K-12 curriculum to embed 21st century skills and Common Core State Standards.** *(red)*

2. **Make the transition (infrastructure, policy, practice and culture) to a digital learning environment to better align the district with the world of learning and work Shepaug students will encounter.** *(yellow)*

3. **Effectively address the issues of educational quality connected with concerns associated with consolidation, rising costs and declining enrollment.** *(blue)*

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. This process is called Progress/Completion Mapping and these "maps" describe each indicator of success across a four-phase continuum of progress that go from "Present State" (essentially where the district was at the time they were written) to "Accomplishing" (what it would look like if the plan was successfully completed).

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. All five steps of this work for each goal are reflected in the following pages.

Region 12 Strategic Planning – Goal One

A. Goal Statement: Design and implement a curriculum embedding 21st century skills and aligned with Common Core Standards.

B. Indicators of Success:

1. The district will have identified, defined and articulated a unified set of focused 21st century skills.
2. A common format and template for curriculum construction is used across all content areas, courses and grade levels.
3. Each area will have a reasonable and achievable number of identified learning outcomes with associated measures of success.
4. Includes resources for varied and diverse student centered instructional methods
5. Curriculum resources are continually assessed, revised and improved
6. Professionals have the knowledge and skills needed to implement the curriculum and ensure student success.

C. Progress/Completion Maps:

Indicator 1: The district will have identified, defined and articulated a unified set of focused 21st century skills.

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
• A document has been created that identifies 21st Century Skills. • This document has been presented to the Middle School, High School and BOE. It has yet to be presented at the elementary level.	• Document definitions are reviewed and updated with best practice research • Document is shared among all levels to gain feedback and engagement.	• Developing consensus on meaning, focus and definitions of 21st century skills. • Feedback and focus from stakeholders incorporated and evident.	• A district consensus definition exists that identifies, defines and articulates 21st Century Skills for everyone • All members of the Region 12 Learning Community understand and are able to define 21st Century Skills • There is abundant modeling of critical skills

Indicator 2: A common format and template for curriculum construction is used across all content areas, courses and grade levels.

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
• Curriculum format is inconsistent. • Curriculum is not yet electronic accessible. • Region 12 has the software to warehouse and map our curriculum. • Insufficient time has been allowed for the task • Common Core Curriculum has not been written	• Formats are reviewed and discussion on Common Core begun. • Hosting plan is under consideration • Process for integration and development is designed • Common Core Curriculum transition is underway	• Common formats being used and timelines for conversion articulated and being followed. • Electronic resources being developed and hosted. • Process for transition being followed and on track.	• Every curriculum is being accessed and utilized by teachers • Every curriculum has the same format and is electronically accessible.

Indicator 3: Each area will have a reasonable and achievable number of identified learning outcomes with associated measures of success.

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
• CCSS benchmarks have not been established. • 21st Century Skill benchmarks have not been established. • Technology competencies do exist at the secondary level and have recently been revised. • A capstone project is required at the secondary level.	• Potential priority benchmarks for CCSS and 21st century skills are identified, prioritized and aligned by level. • Priority content area benchmarks are either identified or scheduled • Needed assessments are identified. • Associated performance tasks to demonstrate mastery are identified and aligned.	• Priority benchmarks are reviewed and prioritized. • Reasonable numbers of benchmarks for content areas are integrated with CCSS and 21st century skills to create an integrated pathway for success. • Assessment resources are gathered, created and piloted. • Performance tasks are gathered, created and piloted.	• Established benchmarks exist and are utilized in each content area, course, and grade level PK-12. • Assessments are available to monitor student growth and determine future instruction. • Performance tasks exist at each grade level, course and content area to measure identified 21st Century Skills.

Indicator 4: Includes resources for varied and diverse student centered instructional methods.

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
• We have provided training on differentiated instruction. • Teachers have resources for the current curriculum at the elementary level. • Intervention programs exist at the elementary level in both literacy and numeracy. • Embedded support for teachers to vary instructional methods is limited.	• Priority areas of focus for further implementation and training are identified. • Resources and implementation support for differentiated approaches are identified and accessed. • Models for improving embedded support for teachers to vary instructional methods are explored.	• Resources are gathered in each curriculum area • Teachers are beginning to systematically address diverse student needs and maximizing instructional opportunities in priority areas. • Teachers try resources to address diverse student learning needs across the curriculum.	• Resources are identified and embedded in each curriculum • Teachers are addressing diverse student needs and maximizing instructional opportunities in priority areas. • Teachers regularly access resources to address diverse student learning needs across the curriculum.

Indicator 5: The curriculum and its resources are continually assessed, revised and improved.

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
• There is no cycle or system in place for review, assessment or improvement. • Current practice is limited to curriculum writing in the summer when it is not cut in the budget	• Discussions are initiated to redefine what is meant by curriculum development, writing, revision and continuous improvement. • Past practice is reviewed, strengths and weaknesses identified.	• Critical elements of policy, practice, goals and requirements for continual curriculum renewal are identified. • Process and system redesign is underway.	• A system has been developed to monitor, evaluate and revise curriculum and its resources.

Indicator 6: Professionals have the knowledge and skills needed to implement the curriculum and ensure student success.

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
• Professionals have not yet had training to implement the Common Core or 21st century skills curriculum • The current calendar provides for four days of professional development. • There is no continuous and embedded cycle of professional development.	• Critical priority needs for professional development are identified. • Data points for evaluation and planning are considered. • Best practices of embedded professional development are explored. • A variety of models and processes for increasing professional learning capacity are explored and evaluated.	• Professional development is focused and new pathways for embedded learning are tried and evaluated. • The effectiveness of professional development is tracked according to identified data points. • Different PD models are evaluated in light of student growth data and teacher PD evaluations.	• Professional development is embedded and continuous. • The effectiveness of professional development is linked to changes in practice and student performance. • Student learning needs and performance data drives PD • Professional development design is continually reviewed in light of student growth data and teacher PD evaluations.

D. Identify Systems, Factors and Restraining Forces that may impact goal implementation.

Systems Impacted	Factors
• Curriculum is written in the summer and funded through the budget. • Resources are selected by teachers and administrators after significant review of all options. • Committees are ad-hoc. • Professional development is centrally driven	• New standards • New 21st Century Skills • New teacher evaluation guidelines
Restraining Forces	
• Funding for curriculum is limited • Professional development funding is limited • Curriculum is only written in the summer • Opportunities for teachers to collaborate are not frequent or easy due to geographic constraints.	

E. Implementation Strategies:

Due to the change in leadership at the district level and the complicated nature of trying to align the work of this goal with all of the systems identified below, it was determined by the Core Team that the strategy planning for this goal should be left to the new Superintendent and the professional staff on a timeline to be mutually agreed upon between her and the Board of Education.

Region 12 Strategic Planning – Goal Two

A. Goal Statement: Implement a digital learning environment.

B. Identify Indicators of Success

1. Digital resources are the primary text and media support materials.
2. Every student has a digital device with internet capability and the infrastructure to support it.
3. Board policies and practices have been aligned with the goals and focus of a digital learning environment.
4. Culture and communications are digital – there is adequate support and skills throughout the entire learning community to make the system work.

C. Progress/Completion Maps

Indicator 1: Digital resources are the primary text and media support materials.

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
• Most instructional material is paper based • Most district assessments are paper based	• Instructional and assessment resource acquisitions are reviewed through a digital lens. • Priorities are identified for transitions and plans made for migration when appropriate.	• Materials and resources are acquired and integrated according to plan. • Plans and priorities are reviewed with updated information and data.	• K-12 text materials are predominately digital and are acquired digitally through a variety of sources • The primary district text based assessments are digital

Indicator 2: Every student has a digital device with Internet capability and the infrastructure to support it.

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
• The infrastructure supports limited and controlled Internet capability for students • Every student has limited access to a digital device to support his or her learning • Devices are used to support teaching and learning in a limited way	• Infrastructure capacity review is undertaken – capacity and needs determined. • Options for movement to 1:1 access are reviewed. • Discussions and planning for migration to digital learning environments are begun at the staff level. • Existing device integration is practice explored, supported and extended	• Infrastructure capacity upgrades are underway. • 1:1 implementation is underway • Devices integration is becoming thoughtful, productive and is the topic and focus of professional learning over time.	• The infrastructure supports Internet capability for all students with a back up system to ensure uninterrupted service • Every student uses a digital device to support his or her learning • Devices are integrated in teaching and learning in a meaningful and productive way

Indicator 3: Board policies and practices have been aligned with the goals and focus of a digital learning environment.

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
• District budget maintains current infrastructure by purchasing hardware and purchasing site licenses; teachers receive limited professional learning opportunities in a digital environment • Board requires parent permission for student use of Internet at school; policies and procedures are in place to protect student users • Digital mindset is in place among some board members • Some board members understand the difference between common and special cause risk in digital environment	• Budget discussions and planning begins to focus on the requirements and resources of a digital learning environment. including professional learning and support. • Board reviews acceptable use and other policies to align them with a digital learning environment's opportunities and advantages • Digital mindset is developing among the Board of Education • Common cause and special cause risk in digital environment is part of the policy and governance discussion at the Board of Education level.	• District budget begins to shift allocations and resources from print to digital resources including appropriate professional learning and support. • Policy review is underway to align them with a digital learning environment's opportunities and advantages • Digital mindset is present among the Board of Education • Common cause and special cause risk decision making is evident.	• District budget allocations are aligned with what is required to sustain a productive digital learning environment including appropriate professional learning and support. • Board policies enable safe use of Internet and other digital resources • Progressive digital mindset is in place among board members • Board understands the difference between common and special cause risk in a digital environment and manages it appropriately

Indicator 4: Culture and communications are digital – there is adequate support and skills throughout the entire learning community to make the system work.

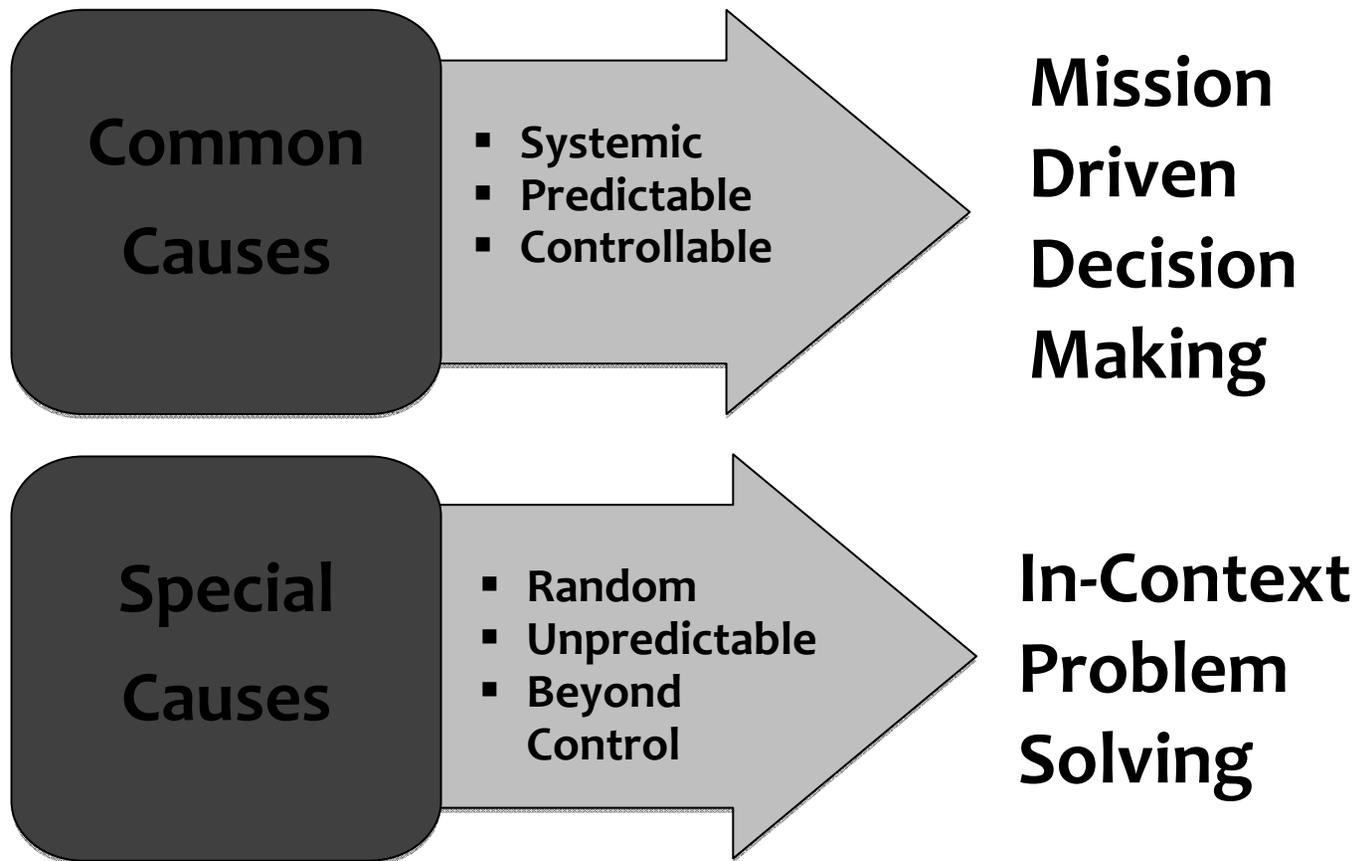| I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
• Majority of district families receive and communicate information digitally and emergency communications are electronic • Elementary schools have partial and limited wifi, secondary schools have full wifi, all schools have a hard wired system • Debate focused on barriers to implementation of digital environment	• Most district families receive and communicate information digitally and emergency communications are electronic. • K-12 capacity to support a digital learning environment is planned • A vision of a responsive digital learning environment is underway.	• Nearly all district families receive and communicate information digitally and emergency communications are electronic. • K-12 capacity to support a digital learning environment is being built and developed. • A vision of a responsive digital learning environment is in place.	• All communication between district and communities is digital • Systems are in place and continuously improved to build capacity of digital environment • Content of digital debate has shifted from implementing to improving the vision of digital learning.

D: Identify Systems, Factors and Restraining Forces

Systems	Factors
- District website - Email communication - Wifi system - Technology support personnel - Curriculum - Professional development - Every teaching and learning system - Filtering that prohibit adults from making professional choices.	- Public access to digital environment - Unease with the unknown
Restraining Forces	
- Limited cell service - Fear of transition to digital environment - Budget - Students who cannot bring their own devices causing district's cost to increase	

E. Implementation Strategies

Due to the change in leadership at the district level and the complicated nature of trying to align the work of this goal with all of the systems identified in Goal One and the imperative to follow the systems decision making guidelines on the following page, it was determined by the Core Team that the strategy planning for this goal should be left to the new Superintendent and the professional staff on a timeline to be mutually agreed upon between her and the Board of Education.

Systemic Decision Making For Digital Transitions

Common Causes
- Systemic
- Predictable
- Controllable

→ **Mission Driven Decision Making**

Special Causes
- Random
- Unpredictable
- Beyond Control

→ **In-Context Problem Solving**

Region 12 Strategic Planning – Goal Three

A. Goal Statement: Solve the problems of rising costs, declining enrollment and inefficient facilities.

B. Indicators of Success:

1. A configuration is in place that reduces annualized per pupil expenditure while enhancing educational quality.
2. Maintain well-balanced classroom populations and instructional arrangements to ensure student success.
3. Efficient, appropriate and cost effective facilities and space usage that support the educational goals of the district.
4. There is reliable and demonstrable data to support any strategy.

C: Progress/Completion Maps

Indicator 1: A configuration is in place that reduces annualized per pupil expenditure while enhancing educational quality.

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
• Annual increases in per pupil expenditure – trends are up not down • Four buildings operating at less capacity than what they were designed. • Goal 1 has not been fully implemented	• All of the factors that drive per pupil expenditures are understood and publicly shared. • Data is transparent and options discussed with cost/quality considerations in place. • Goal 1 planning is underway	• Options that lower per pupil expenditure while enhancing quality are identified, shared, and improved through community input. • Data supported new configurations are selected. • Planning for implementation is underway. • Goal 1 implementation begins.	• Lower per pupil expenditures have been realized • Parents believe the educational quality of the region has improved. • Goal 1 has been successfully implemented • New data points will be in place on Common Core standards and show improvement • New assessments (data points & measurements) in place on 21st Century Skills and show mastery

Indicator 2: Maintain well-balanced classroom populations and instructional arrangements to ensure student success.

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
• There is disparity between class sizes within the same grade. • Some class sizes are not within recommendations for best practices. • Some but not all instructional arrangements support student learning.	• Impact of class size and instructional arrangements become part of a community conversation. • General guidelines and goals for equity and effectiveness are developed to guide planning.	• Options that integrate with Indicator 1 and are aligned with appropriate data, are developed, shared and improved. • Data supported new configurations are selected. • Planning for implementation is underway.	• Class size within appropriate range (TBD) • Classes are equitable in size • Instructional arrangements support student learning

Indicator 3: Efficient, appropriate and cost effective facilities and space usage that support the educational goals of the district.

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
• Buildings are not efficient by modern construction standards. • Buildings are old, functionally obsolete, they are in need of constant repair, they are inflexible due to fixed designs and expensive to maintain. • All buildings are operating below capacity.	• True cost implications for facilities use are developed. • Efficient and effective operational data points are considered.	• Options that integrate with Indicator 1 & 2 and are aligned with appropriate data, are developed, shared and improved. • Data supported new configurations are selected. • Planning for implementation is underway.	• Buildings are run efficiently in comparison to other schools. • Percentage of per pupil cost that is taken up by facility costs are in line compared to other districts with comparable facilities.

Indicator 4: There is reliable and demonstrable data to support any strategy.

I – Present State	II – Beginning	III – Progressing	IV - Accomplishing
• CMT, CAPT scores, Per Pupil costs by region • LRP Survey data • Building efficiency data is either not present or not publicly known or not reported on a building by building basis that allow for appropriate comparisons.	• True cost implications for facilities use are developed. • Building efficiency data (broken out by each facility) is readily available and easily understood. • Efficient and effective operational data points are considered. • Educational quality considerations are considered in balance with fiscal responsibility	• Options that integrate with Indicator 1, 2, & 3 and are aligned with appropriate data, are developed, shared and improved. • Data supported new configurations are selected. • Planning for implementation is underway.	• Use data that is supported with evidence • New data points will be in place on Common Core standards • New data points in place on 21st Century Skills

D: Identify Systems, Factors and Restraining Forces

Systems	Factors
• Four buildings • Facilities Director and Committee • Three Municipalities – Three Boards of Selectman and Finance • Regional Board • Three PTO's • Parent Council • Administration/Staff	• Public perception of schools • Busy family schedules • Taxpayer concerns • Large voting population is not part of parent/school community • Aging population in towns • Varied opinions about keeping local school in each town and within towns. • Today's economic environment • Cost of housing high in region • Schools have drawn people to towns • History and tradition
Restraining Forces	
• Each town has to support outcome – 50% plus 1 • Knowledge of facts and issues have not been widely disseminated • Passion for local schools despite the cost	

E: Implementation Strategies

While goals one and two will be handled primarily by the professional staff with community support and involvement, goal three will be centered in the community with professional staff support and involvement. There is general agreement that due to the high-stakes nature of this process and the past history, that the following steps make the most sense for advancing goal three:

1. A representative group with leaders/citizens from all of the major boards in all three towns and appropriate educator participation should be formed to create an agreed upon baseline data set with current facility and configuration costs. These data should enable the analysis of per-pupil costs given the current assumptions around repair, maintenance, staffing and supporting the district for the next 10 years.

- While these numbers have been circulated and presented in many forms, the history of agenda driven use has created a level of skepticism about the numbers, what goes into them, and what they mean. Without good data, the rest of the process is doomed. Whether it starts with a community based (a volunteer made a start that was created for the consideration of this group) or a district based document, terms need to be defined and generalized cost estimates and projections for each of the cost centers need to be agreed upon.

- This work should be undertaken by a representative group willing to affix their names to the process. People are entitled to their own opinions, but facts need to be shared.   Given the current state of the data, this should not take long to accomplish, but it is a critical first step.

2. Agree on measures and indicators of educational quality as directed in the goal three documents.

- The same group, should create an agreed upon series of educational quality indicators that can be used to analyze/compare the impact of current and future configurations (class size, individual and community equity, programming potential, diversity of programming, ability to support the other goals of the Strategic Plan, etc.) on the basis of their impact on student learning.

3. Brainstorm, prioritize and select several potential configurations and solutions.

- Having identified the criteria, this group should then identify 2-5 new configuration options. Given a ten-year projection, what are the most practical options for moving forward – status quo, consolidation options, other?

4. Each potential solution should be then be analyzed by the group in light of a similar 10 year projection. Each option should be rated and ranked on a 1-10 scale based on the predicted costs and educational benefits of each proposed solution based on the financial and educational criteria set by the group.

	Per Pupil by Region	Per Pupil by Town	Building Costs & Efficiencies	Educational Equity/ Opportunity	Class size efficiencies	Support of Goals 1 & 2	Total	Rank
Status Quo								
Option 1								
Option 2								
Option 3								
Option 4								

5. The group should then bring the highest rated proposal(s) forward for consideration and voting by the three communities.

- The goal should be to bring the best options and thinking from a representative group to the three towns for their consideration.

Facilitator's Note to the Board of Education: *(The following represents the thinking and perceptions of Jonathan Costa, the Planning Team's facilitator, and have not been reviewed or endorsed by the Planning Committee)*

Back in September, the first activity I had the Planning Team complete was a change management exercise related to computer keyboards that I used to demonstrate how, without careful management, even the best new idea does not always win its way to implementation. Emotion, short-term barriers, and the fear of change can derail even the most powerful and appropriate innovations. This was a telling exercise.

As a neutral party and observer, I have witnessed first-hand the passions and emotions that are associated with the issues connected with Goal Three. The good news is that the residents of Region 12 care deeply about their schools and are protective of them as institutions and symbols of their community. The bad news is that the residents of Region 12 care deeply about their schools and are protective of them as institutions and symbols of their community. I saw this time and again; as soon as the Planning Team's work drifted toward even an inkling of what changes might be required to address a regional problem, it got translated to local impacts and then pressure and emotion would intrude on the process making rationale judgment difficult. I believe the only chance for success in Goal Three is to work diligently toward a community-wide realization that the starkness of the status-quo data and trends foretell an unsustainable future path.

Both economically and educationally, without some change in the course action on behalf of the students of Region 12, their future will certainly be one marked by stress and strife as the walls close in on an ever shrinking pool of resources and options. The intensity of educational quality issues will grow as extremely small class sizes, regardless of their affordability, inevitably fall prey to the boom-and-bust cycles that are part of tiny educational ecosystems. When they work great, they are intensely great. When they go bad, there is no place to hide and few alternatives for relief. These issues are now systemic and part of the economic and cultural future of this community; they demand and will require a community-wide response.

Beyond the clear mandate for the two major instructional systems changes needed to implement Goals One and Two, the most important contribution of the Planning Team was its demonstration that when presented with the pertinent facts in a structured process, Region 12 can define and agree on the looming sense of urgency related to the configuration discussion in the district. Additionally, this process has helped to highlight three additional factors that separate the current state of the district from where it was the last time it faced this issue:

1. There is now a broader sense of the critical nature of the need – no matter what the background, there was virtually unanimous agreement from the Planning Team that the status quo is simply not fiscally or educationally sustainable. This includes the realization that this is not just an economic issue – the implications of these numbers speak to educational quality issues as well.

2. Real potential for legislative incentives for change. While penalty provisions have been removed from Senate Bill 24, the Governor and Commissioner have made it clear that they have no sympathy for small districts and that they are willing to provide resources to help more efficient configurations take place so as to reduce the disparities created by them.

3. There is a unique community opportunity for a fresh start to the process with the addition of new district level leadership.

So, despite the past, you have a chance for success moving forward. To accomplish this, because of the delays caused by the October storm and the nature of the deferred action plans for Goals One and Two, there is still room in the original planning agreement between the Board and myself for three additional meeting facilitations. I believe that getting the proposed group identified in the plan for Goal Three started down the appropriate path would be a good use of this resource. If the Board feels that this would be helpful, I would be glad to assist in that process and apply these unused resources for that purpose.

On behalf of the EDUCATION CONNECTION, it has been my pleasure to serve the Region 12 Board.

Respectfully,

Jonathan P. Costa, Sr.