

**Coventry Board of Education  
Superintendent's Goal Achievement Update  
February 9, 2006 –February 8, 2007**

**Submitted to:**

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**By:**

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This Goal Achievement Update addresses the Long-term Goals and Annual Objectives as publicly presented by the Superintendent at the September 14, 2006 Board of Education meeting. This report is an interim summary of systemic improvements of educational and support service delivery systems. Improving efficiencies and effectiveness in an organization requires continuous change and organizational modification. The progress we are making on our initiatives is summarized as follows:

**1. Improve outside resources, partnerships, and revenues, consistent with district goals.**

- 1.1. Increase collaboration with *local and regional agencies* in order to further develop and enhance options for students needing alternative educational services.

Our work with the Coventry Human Services, the Youth Services, and the Park and Recreation Department in this town is broad based and significant. In addition, our coordination with the Police, Town, and Business Service departments continues to benefit our organization. Our Social Workers and our teaching and Administrative staffs work diligently to maintain and enhance relationships and develop new and cooperative programs. Our schools' Assistant Principals work with the Juvenile Review Board as a resource, and our staff is well engaged in regional activities from FCCLA to CAS, to interdistrict diversity projects.

- 1.2. Increase partnerships with area *colleges and universities as well as with Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs)* in support of student instructional opportunities and staff development.

Our work with outside agencies continues to relate to student and staff learning needs in order to provide better educational support systems. Our relationship with EASTCONN, in particular, enhances our practice. Enclosed in a recent *Board Bulletin* was the schedule of our para-educator in-service, an example of this collaboration. Independent study alternatives and the work of the staff to expand course offerings at the high school have been part of our Virtual High School cooperative efforts. The further development and specialization of special education services in conjunction with outside agencies is reflected at all schools. Our exceptional work as a Renzulli Learning demonstration site, is but one of our many university projects. We host student teachers from UCONN, ECSU, and St. Joseph. In addition, we are involved with Sacred Heart University's intern program. Coventry Public Schools coordinates educational programs with an ever expanding array of educational agencies. Our interdistrict grants continue to serve our students well.

- 1.3. Implement second year grant resources and increase reading proficiency through the new *Project Expanding Horizons*.

We are in our second year of collaboration with UCONN for Project Expanding Horizons. This reading expansion program is targeted at grades 3-6 and is facilitated by Coventry staff and UCONN students. The program is fully implemented and a Program Highlight was presented to the Board of Education on November 9, 2006. The assessments related to improving reading proficiency are extensive and supervised by the university. We are hoping for extended funding to continue this most beneficial program for 2007-2008.

- 1.4. Continue to strengthen *preschool literacy efforts* through the School Readiness Council to include early childhood experiences, school readiness, and transition to kindergarten.

We are in the second of a five year program with the goal of further development and expansion of preschool services. We continue to collaborate with the Coventry Cooperative Nursery School program, and house our combined efforts at the First Congregational Church. The second year implementation is certainly smoother than the first, as would be expected. We are working with EASTCONN and the newly formed School Readiness Council to increase services to youngsters prior to their kindergarten experience. This year will also see the continued expansion of kindergarten readiness presentations.

- 1.5. Further develop Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) practices that *support new teacher induction* and mentor programs.

In support of our BEST efforts, all district administrators received BEST training this year, including the Superintendent. Our systemic support of our newer teachers is exhibited in many different ways, from large group meetings to small one-on-one coaching sessions. The district has designated a BEST coordinator who serves as an additional resource to new teachers. In addition, the grade level team leaders, local teacher mentors, and department chairs work with our new teachers to assimilate them into our education environment.

- 1.6. Continue to develop *international programs* with a focus on valuing diversity, including furthering the Shandong/Coventry partnership.

Our international awareness and understanding is ever developing and growing. The Board recently met a visiting administrator from Nottingham, England. This visit was a result of our participation in this year's Fulbright Exchange. Grade 5 teacher Joe Carlson has been in Nottingham since this past summer. In addition to our student travel to London in February and our continued hosting of various exchange students, we are seeking funding to enhance our Coventry/Shandong Partnership. Our Board member's visit to Qingdao Zhicheng Experimental Middle School and the visit of Xiuying Chen from that school to Coventry last fall made this a special international year.

- 1.7. Apply for funding to increase programs in the *sciences, mathematics, and/or engineering* areas.

Through the collaboration of the staff at Coventry High School's Vocational Tech Department, funding from a Perkins Grant was sought to further expand our Vo Tech High School programs. Although funding for the 2006-2007 school year was not received, it is our intent to continue this focus for further development.

## **2. Promote efficient functioning and consistent refinement of subsystems within the larger organization.**

- 2.1. Support ongoing *Differentiated Instruction* staff development efforts with particular focus on curriculum alignment and development.

Teachers within departments and across grade levels have been meeting to address the wide ranging levels of student abilities and the necessary modifications of curriculum and programs. Ongoing discussions with principals and staff, using the teacher evaluation system, integrates this systemic effort to know and serve students better. Continuous efforts will carry on in this area as staff changes and curriculum are further aligned.

- 2.2. Implement modified practices using the data developed from Effective Schools, Alumni, and New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) *Surveys*.

There are many examples of modified practices that relate to the data collected in the school district. Our significant improvements in high school guidance programs were a result of data derived from surveys. This year in particular, the NEASC report is driving much of the program modifications, especially at the high school. Some of these changes are addressed elsewhere in this document. The school-wide rubrics recently developed at the high school are but one example. In addition, the Alumni Survey is again being conducted and the Effective School Surveys are planned for later this spring.

- 2.3. Implement processes and practices that further *enhance* the use of *instructional time*.

The Superintendent's meetings with building principals consistently address issues of efficiency, time on task by students, and the use of instructional time. Field experiences and video usage are more closely scrutinized, and the system is more responsive than ever in relating classroom to state standards. Teachers are individually and collectively addressing program changes and adjustments made necessary by the annual administration of the Connecticut Mastery Tests. The extensive work executed on behalf of the ABC Curriculum project is a large part of increasing instructional efficiencies.

- 2.4. Implement refinements in the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) of 2004, with particular emphasis on Response to Intervention (RTI).

There continue to be changes in the mandates of special education and in the complexities of our special education population. Issues of medically fragile, behaviorally disordered, and autistic students impact all aspects of our organization. Increased definitions within the special education arena, including the autism spectrum, are requiring program changes and modifications on a regular basis. The mandates for providing additional specialized educational services in a least restrictive environment for special needs students require exceptional levels of staff commitment and focus. The state of Connecticut and the Federal Government mandates continue to result in a need for deliberate attention by staff and administrators.

- 2.5. Continue to develop *awards systems* to reinforce District and Superintendent goals.

Coventry students are exceptionally high-achieving in many areas and outstanding performers of note. Essay, art, music, athletic, and poster contests regularly result in Coventry student successes. Students are frequently awarded by local, regional and state level organizations. At the school opening ceremony in August 2006, staff members nominated by their peers were presented with pins in honor of being named as mentors. In addition to the Mentor Awards, staff members are recognized at school and department faculty meetings attended by the Superintendent. This was the first year longevity awards were presented to staff in recognition of their years of service.

- 2.6. Continue efforts regarding the *Wellness* policy and procedures, including the Walking In Schools for Health (WISH) program.

This is the first full year implementation of the district wellness policy based on the new legislative requirements. Thanks to the cooperation of the Food Service Department and the Wellness Committee, the district has been very efficient in designing its wellness policies and procedures. Site-based wellness committees are developing school guidelines this spring. Despite the large scope of the necessary changes, Coventry has incorporated the necessary requirements in a very smooth fashion. There is participation in the WISH program, especially with inclement weather.

- 2.7. Develop and increase specialized programs for *students with special needs*.

The increased understanding and identification of students with special needs have resulted in a continual requirement to upgrade and coordinate services. Coventry's least restrictive environment practices are, in many instances, model practices. Specialized after school programs have been further developed at all schools this year. From the middle school's after-school program to the science programs at the elementary level, this school system continues to respond to additional student needs and parent requirements within its budget limitations.

- 2.8. Develop and implement a *special education* program improvement plan for George H. Robertson School to ensure Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

The staff at GHR has worked diligently with the Pupil and Staff Support Services Director to develop a program improvement plan related to their subgroup performance on the CMT. The staff and administration have reviewed this plan with the Superintendent. The complications of No Child Left Behind are affecting all schools, not only across Connecticut, but also across the country. It is our expectation that this focus at Robertson will serve as a model for our other schools.

- 2.9. Continue asbestos abatement and water *compliance projects*.

As a result of an extensive collaborative effort, this report is pleased to relay the absolute success of the Phase I asbestos project. We were able to open school without an “asbestos removal hitch,” much to the credit of exceptional planning, preparation, and oversight of the project. We are now in the implementation stages of asbestos removal/Phase II. It is our expectation that this second phase will intensify in its schedule this spring and summer, and have us in “ready condition” for school opening in the fall. Thanks to the efforts of our School Building Committee, our water project is moving forward with its schedule and design work. The Board has continued to be regularly updated.

### **3. Provide clear and regular communication to all constituencies, building a support base for school programs.**

- 3.1. Continue to use a variety of formats for *providing information* to both parents and other Coventry residents.

We continue to develop and implement new formats for information for our parents and residents. School news is provided via parent newsletters of all sorts, press releases, *Donna's Dispatch*, and informational bulletins of various kinds. Group meetings continue to serve as a main source of dialogue and program explanation. This school year saw the first of our “Community Conversations.” This first conversation focused on the complications related to the development of teenage girls. Parents and community members were invited to the conversation through the Coventry Monthly publication. The administration is pleased with this first implementation success.

- 3.2. Continue development of our more informative and user-friendly *district website*, including a focus on awards and recognition.

The district website continues to be upgraded, and is much improved over the previous website. The collaborative efforts of many parties came into play in order to enable such a significant and rapid improvement. There are now “Web Masters” at all school sites and at the district level to assist with this development. Teachers are becoming more involved in the development of the school website as well as integrating the websites into their curricular practice. The district website is much more up-to-date than in years past, including awards, agendas, budget information, school activities, and team schedules. The feedback from parents has been quite positive.

- 3.3. Keep the public informed as we respond to the mandates related to the *NEASC reaccreditation* of Coventry High School.

Staff and committee reports related to the NEASC efforts can be found on our website. These reports reflect extensive time and effort on behalf of these working teams. The staff continues to keep the public updated via newsletters and meetings. The Parent Organizations and the Board of Education have been consistently informed regarding progress.

- 3.4. Continue *Budget Seminars* and *BOE Program Highlights* for use on Munivision Channel 13 and educational access Channel 17.

The fall Budget Seminar was prepared by the Superintendent, the Fiscal Services Director, and the Director of Pupil and Staff Support Services for viewing on Munivision (channel 13). The focus of the Seminar was Special Education Services and the funding mechanisms related to that service. In addition, many Program Highlight sessions have been videotaped and provided as information to our public. We are pleased to continue developing our technological capabilities to provide much more extensive information for educational access television, Channel 17. Other Seminars are planned for the near future including a topic of great community interest; i.e., our maintenance services and school building care. The object is to ensure that those wishing for more detailed information have it available.

- 3.5. Continue to develop initiatives to further enhance customer service and to ensure *welcoming school environments*.

After attendance at relevant workshops and seminars, the administration is continuing its focus on developing more welcoming school environments. Staff is studying the welcoming aspects of other schools both within Coventry and outside of Coventry to further design plans and make changes in our environments. Already this year, one can see visible changes in signage, décor and staff procedures. Each school is planning continuous progress in this area.

- 3.6. Continue to develop *school/town collaborations* in the interest of educational services.

The district and the schools are coordinating efforts in a number of notable areas. The School Readiness Council is a direct example of such collaboration. The town Youth Services Director serves on the Council and has been instrumental in the preschool program's goal achievement. School Social Workers and administration regularly attend the town's Human Services meetings, and keep well informed of cooperative projects and possibilities. In addition, the Administrative Council has already been in conversation with the new Police Chief, and has agreed to continue this open dialogue.

**4. Implement programs and practices that improve student educational performance, ensuring that such practices align with state standards.**

- 4.1. Continue to improve *curriculum alignment* between classroom offerings and state standards, especially the new math and science standards through A Balanced Curriculum (ABC) program.

Extensive curriculum work is being accomplished at the high school as we work to improve the rigor and state standards alignment. The NEASC study is assisting the Superintendent's goal efforts in streamlining curriculum and instruction. Grade level teams and departments across the district are making modifications to further attend to state standards utilizing the ABC template as the district's adopted technology-based alignment initiative. This continues to be an area challenged by the lack of district resources for curriculum staff. However, grant monies are assisting with these efforts. The staff is to be commended for their diligent and focused efforts thus far. This is the beginning of a complex and demanding project.

- 4.2. Implement fourth year *Mini-Grant programs*, promoting innovative initiatives with a focus on increasing student use of complex language.

Eight Mini-Grants were awarded this year to teachers wishing to advance in their classrooms. Mini-Grants continue to provide opportunities for innovation and specialized programs. With no impact to the local budget, they create opportunities for teachers to explore a variety of new strategies for improving student achievement. The Board is regularly provided information regarding these program initiatives.

- 4.3. Refine the assessment and servicing of *Challenge and Enrichment students*.

The PSSS Department has taken on the task of developing clearer identification criteria for students potentially able to receive Challenge and Enrichment services. The SDE requires that districts identify students, but it does not require that they be served. However, our significant knowledge about student development and our dedication to Differentiated Instruction give us focus on appropriately addressing the needs of our more able students. The Challenge and Enrichment Committee has developed the standards for student identification, and is in the process of finalizing information for public use.

- 4.4. *Diagnose results* of the Connecticut Mastery Tests and Connecticut Academic Performance Tests, and continue to use results to modify classroom practices.

The Administrative Council continues to address both CAPT and CMT results and to structure programs that will better result in student achievement on these exams. While longer assessment trends are positive in Coventry, curriculum alignment will be necessary to continue an upward achievement trend. Our professional learning community is assessing student progress and making curricular decisions as teams rather than as individuals. The ABC Curriculum effort is requiring that teams and departments make decisions with coordination rather than independence. The NEASC report reinforces the need to further the work on student assessments in teams.

- 4.5. Continue to identify and develop programs for *top quartile and bottom quartile students*.

The Academic Assistance programs and the Challenge and Enrichment programs are continuing their efforts in the areas of data collection, assessment, case management, service delivery, K-12 coordination, and staffing allocations. The attention to the needs of top quartile and bottom quartile students is being assisted by the study of assessment data by teams of teachers. Complex integrated projects are being developed by teachers that allow for “open entrance” and “open exit” points. These thematic units encourage and allow academic engagement of students with various learning capabilities to participate at their own levels.

- 4.6. Continue expansion of staff development efforts and program implementation related to *Responsive Classroom strategies*.

Coventry Grammar School continues its efforts in expanding Responsive Classroom strategies, and the staff is to be commended for its commitment. Leadership commitment is evident and beneficial. The Grammar School staff has been in conversation with the Robertson staff regarding these strategies, with the Robertson staff being trained this spring. Although the terms may vary, all schools are focusing on the development of a warm and supportive school climate. It is the intention of the staff to ensure that students feel safe and cared for in a school environment free from ridicule and bullying.

- 4.7. Implement new *online coursework and distance learning* opportunities at the high school.

As reviewed at the January 11, 2007 Board meeting, the high school continues to develop its distance learning opportunities for students. This is an area that is supported for greater expansion by the building principal. This alternative course strategy is very consistent with the district’s focus on Differentiated Instruction. This year we have had a total of ten students participate in the Virtual High School Program. It is our intention to be a Virtual High School provider site for the 2007-2008 school year. Coventry High School belongs to the EASTCONN Virtual High School Connecticut Consortium.

- 4.8. Continue implementation of the *Renzulli Learning System* as a pilot program at the Capt. Nathan Hale School.

We continue to function as a Renzulli Learning System demonstration site. A variety of visitors have been provided demonstration lessons of students using this amazing online capacity. Parents have also had an opportunity to preview this web-based student study and interest exploration program. The Renzulli Learning System has very consistent alignment with the district’s three-to-five year Differentiated Instruction goals. At the present time, the high school staff is exploring the potential expansion of the Renzulli Learning System to support its student project development goals.

- 4.9. Increase *collaboration and transition between schools* (Pre-K to K, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>) in order to enhance resource utilization and student achievement.

This increased collaboration goal continues to be a focus for this district's administration. There are improving communication and coordination efforts happening on behalf of our staffs. The design and development of the ABC Curriculum project will also encourage and demand coordination between buildings. Teachers are regularly visiting with other teachers to address issues of curricular coordination between schools. The NEASC report serves as the pressure point for this continued dialogue.

## **5. Improve the implementation and use of educational and administrative technology systems.**

- 5.1. Increase the implementation and the integration of *curricular technology projects* and district technology supports.

Teachers are making significant strides in integrating technological requirements into their students' class projects. Technological involvement as a part of students' assignments is becoming the norm. Students are now taking classes on web design, and parents are very enthusiastic about this progress. Students work in their computer lab, at home on computers, and in their classrooms on their tech-based projects. The school system will need to continue to be responsive not only to the ever increasing demands of technological literacy for our students, but also to the ever increasing capabilities of our students as they move up through our system. It is anticipated that our tech support personnel and equipment will need to continue to be modified to address this growth in use.

- 5.2. Implement and *increase computer lab* use by students.

More students are working with computers than at this time last year, and the effort will continue to grow exponentially. The students at the Robertson, middle school and high school are increasingly using the labs, in particular as it relates to portfolio development, online courses, and the Renzulli Learning System. It is a pleasure to report that the upper elementary students are regularly using their efficiently functioning computer lab. Teacher training in this area is a continued focus, as is true in all school districts.

- 5.3. Refine *student portfolio system* consistent with the district graduation requirements.

The portfolio system that initially struggled in its implementation is continuing to become institutionalized. A series of training sessions have been executed to assist with the goal of improving not only the quantity of the student enclosures in their portfolios, but also the quality. As previously mentioned, the high school is reviewing its procedures and practices related to student portfolios, and will continue to refine this practice in the interest of recording quality student work.

5.4. Pilot standards-based *math software* system (grades 6-8).

The middle school is in the first year of the *RM Frameworks* math software pilot that will be officially presented as a Program Highlight to the Board this spring. This pilot has a tremendous capacity to engage students in the math learning process so that their math understanding might be retained in their long term memory. With the use of Smart Boards, the middle school math teachers are further connecting technology and math in their classrooms.

5.5. Refine and improve *technology infrastructure*, equipment, and email systems.

The e-mail system has been upgraded this year, as has the complete infrastructure of our technology system. An outside evaluation of the Coventry tech infrastructure indicated an aging and failing series of connections and elements. With the coordination of the town-wide tech committee, an agreement was made to use resources to ensure continuous technology services. These services have become essential to daily operations. The technology staff has recommended further improvements for the 2007-2008 school year.