



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Avon Public Schools

34 SIMSBURY ROAD
AVON, CONNECTICUT 06001
TEL: (860) 404-4700
gmala@avon.k12.ct.us

Gary S. Mala
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

November 4, 2016

Dear Parents, Staff and Concerned Citizens:

I am pleased to communicate with you once again and hope this message finds you well.

This past summer, the District's extended leadership team, consisting of department directors, school administrators, the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning and myself, met for our annual Reflective Session. The meeting is designed for the extended leadership team to prepare for the new school year by reflecting on the past school years; thinking of the challenges that were faced as well as the accomplishments achieved.

I would like to share with you what the extended leadership created as they reflected on the many positive accomplishments and changes of the last five years. The attached list was generated and categorized using the three components of our district's Strategic Plan – Culture, Achievement and Communication. It is my hope that as you read through the list you too will reflect on where we were as a district not so long ago and what has been accomplished.

Please join with me in extending appreciation to the leadership team as well as to all our staff, for their passionate and persevering work in making these accomplishments possible.

As always, I thank you again for the privilege of serving you and your children. I wish you a relaxing and enjoyable weekend.

Very truly yours,

Gary S. Mala
Superintendent of Schools
Avon Public Schools

REPORT OF DISTRICT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2011 THROUGH 2016

(Developed by Extended Leadership Team on August 28, 2016)

What accomplishments or changes are we proud of that have happened over the last 4-5 years?

CULTURE

- Improvement of schools including new flooring, ceiling tiles, and HVAC units
- Expanded Preschool program
- Worked collaboratively with RBS PTO and DPW to install new playscape, pavilion, and buddy bench
- Blazer's Trail was expanded to include kiosks
- Appointed new administrators to fill vacancies including school administrators; Director of Athletics, Special Education Supervisor and Director of Special Education
- Staff recognition increased at all schools (e.g., TBS' Refrigerator Door award; CARES Leadership Award; Avon Achievers)
- Capturing Kids' Hearts training offered to all employees of the district to better understanding the whole student, building and understanding impact relationships
- Expanded fundraisers to worthy charities including student initiated fundraisers such as Whipping Childhood Cancer and Vie for the Kids
- Implemented a Multicultural Fair
- National Circus Project held
- One School One Book initiative implemented at the elementary schools
- Offer transportation for students and families to attend activities/events, including for out of town Open Choice students and families
- Worked collaboratively with PGS PTO to complete courtyard project
- Expanded ELL program to meet the needs of all students
- Character Education initiative established at all schools
- Refined student arrival and dismissal plans at all schools
- Student led town meetings implemented through Student Councils' at each school
- Instituted team-based general education and special education model
- Advisory program added to both secondary schools
- Staff wellness program created (e.g., EAP, CIGNA bulletins, ropes course, etc.)
- Expanded roles of Library Media Specialists using instructional blocks
- Expanded student public performances (e.g., musical productions, plays, talent shows, etc.)

- Inclusion of teacher leaders at all levels (e.g., Expanded Leadership Team, coordinators)
- Moved from isolation to a continued structure of collaboration planning at all levels
- Changed to Block scheduling successfully
- Included Common Planning time Pre-K through 12, with special education teachers and specialists included, to aid with curriculum and support
- Empowered employees through use of an inclusive model for curriculum writing, decision making, search and selection committee and extended leadership team model
- Observed and supported more risk-taking by teachers – challenged the status quo
- Successfully implemented the inclusion and implementation of the use of Chromebook carts in all schools
- Put supports in schedule (SRBI)
- Hired skillful, compassionate, caring central office staff
- Completed cross training of staff

ACHIEVEMENT

- Secured English Language Arts books and guided readers
- Implemented the use of Teaching Assistants at elementary level
- Equipped every instructional space with SmartBoards and projection devices
- Implemented the use of Elementary instructional blocks (e.g. Library Media)
- Implemented the use of Elementary intervention blocks to cause less disruption to general instruction
- Implemented the use of Math stations at the elementary level
- Implemented the use of English Language Arts stations at the elementary level
- Supported the use of Google in the classroom
- Secured an unprecedented amount of next generation technology (e.g., Chromebooks)
- Implemented a dual language program at the elementary level (Spanish & Chinese)
- Supported the acquisition of computer based software to support instruction (e.g., Raz Kids, Frontrow, Matific, EduTech)
- Hired a district-wide Math Coach and Digital Instruction Specialist
- Created and implemented what is now a nationally recognized curriculum revision model
- Implemented newly, state mandated teacher evaluation system
- Implemented structure for effective small group instruction in math and reading
- Strengthened and continue to improve Student Assistance Team model
- Implemented Talented & Gifted identification process
- Established Professional Learning Communities
- Provided common planning time Pre-K through grade 12

- Successfully converted to newly, state mandated student assessment system (Smarter Balanced Assessments)
- Implemented a full day kindergarten program
- Provided professional development regarding changes in special education law (e.g., restraint and seclusion, dyslexia, etc.)
- Established the use of PPT chairs at all schools
- Provide supports for co-teaching model
- Developed concise district strategic plan
- Increased opportunities for team teaching
- Implemented the use of data tracking systems to measure student progress and improvements
- Increased AP course offerings
- Implemented an Internship program
- Expanded the quantity of technology courses in secondary schools
- Established a vertical alignment for teaching and learning at all grades
- Added 26 electives to the program of studies at AHS
- Implemented a model that has one special education teacher per team to service all students
- Working to certify all students in CPR prior to their graduation
- Introduced universal rubrics in writing
- Restructured school menus to offer meals that are made from scratch with non-processed local ingredients
- Adhere to all federal regulations related to childhood nutrition
- Continued work of the CPDC with curriculum model adopted, curriculum review and revision procedure/guidelines, new instructional materials & course approval process
- Implementing an Enrichment for All model at elementary level - January 2017
- Added additional tutors & Teaching Assistants to support all students
- Implemented and maintaining professional development for all employees
- Reconfigured of Pre-K Program to include providing early educational access to non-resident students
- Increased support for athletic and non-athletic co-curricular programs every year for 5 years

COMMUNICATION

- Web pages used by all certified staff, schools and district
- Established use of shared drives
- More collaboration between schools than at any other time in the past
- Common planning time established at all schools and grades

- Students encouraged and supported to present at national conferences and competitions
- Implemented uniform system to communicate with parents of all students (ZippSlip)
- Improved content and accessibility to district website
- Implemented new elementary report cards
- Implemented newly, State mandated certified staff evaluation program resulting in improved communication with our veteran teachers; building relationships with young staff members
- Adding department meeting time into schedules at secondary level to meet, discuss, develop and deliver curriculum
- Improvements made to Power School portal
- Increased use and quality of school newsletters
- Piloting student choice into English Language Arts – groups, choose text to study/read, personalized instruction (ownership)
- Continuing 7-12 department coordinators merger in all subject areas
- Successfully having curriculum teams meet regularly to create opportunities for meaningful conversations to review & revise curriculum
- Training on the use of Google sites resulting in strengthened communication with families
- Using online work order system in maintenance and technology departments
- “Rebuilt” student and staff data management systems (e.g., PowerSchool, Aesop, ProTraxx, BudgetSense, Applitrack)
- “Rebuilt” district financial system and all associated processes (human resources management, benefits management, payroll, accounts receivable, accounts payable, internal financial controls system, district chart of accounts, financial software, staff time and attendance) to provide accuracy and transparency

MISCELLANEOUS

- Installed WiFi access in all district facilities
- Managing an enrollment that is not declining as projected
- Renegotiated contract for all district copiers
- Consistent team leadership
- Established collaborative nutrition services with 3 districts which is the model program in state
- Hired talented and skilled new administrators and staff when vacancies occurred
- Implemented a school breakfast program for all students
- Instituted and enforce all Board of Education Policies and district established procedures with fidelity