

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

16 Charter Road

Acton, MA 01720

978-264-4700 www.abschools.org



Paul P. Gates Elementary School

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

School Improvement Plan

2016-2017

Submitted By: Lynne Newman, Principal

School Council Membership

Name	Role	Year of Term
Lynne Newman	Principal/Co-Chair	N/A
Priscilla Kotyk	Assistant Principal	Year 3
Lindsay Hussey	Teacher	Year 2
Rebecca Rosen	Parent/Co-Chair	Year 1
Manoj Thadani	Parent	Year 2
Mani Pandi	Parent	Year 2
Michael Eracleo	Community Representative	Year 2

2015-2016 School Council Meeting Dates

<http://gates.abschools.org/parents/school-council>

November 12, 2015

December 10, 2015

January 21, 2016

February 11, 2016

April 14, 2016

Goal One: Implement a new K- 6 Standards-based report card that communicates to parents, guardians and students current information on student progress in achieving standards and grade-level expectations.

Background and Rationale: The Gates staff has worked on creating a standards-based report card for the past two years. Together the staff has identified curriculum reporting standards and work habits & social development expectations in grades K - 6.

Strategies:

Timeline: September 2016 - June 2017

Lead Parties: Gates Staff

- Present new standards-based report card to parents at the Back to School Night on September 27 & 28.
- Publish report card information on the Gates School website
- Distribute report cards electronically in grades 2 - 6 three times a year (12/9, 3/31 & last day of school). Report cards in grades K/1 will be shared with parents at the end of the school year
- Review and revise report cards, if needed in June 2017

Outcomes: A new K-6 standards-based report card will be fully implemented in the 2016-2017 school year.

Goal Two: Expand the implementation of the Wilson's Foundations phonics program to kindergarten.

Background and Rationale: In the 2015 - 2016 school year classroom teachers in grades 1 - 3 introduced the Foundations program to their students. Teachers collected data throughout the year and shared the program's effectiveness with the kindergarten teachers. The decision was made to expand the Foundations program to include students in grades K - 3.

Strategies:

Timeline: September 2016 - June 2017

Lead Parties: Kindergarten teachers

- Purchase classroom Foundations kits

- Provide workshop training for teachers in Foundations
- Offer collaboration time to teachers to share and discuss the implementation of this new program

Outcomes: All teachers in grades K-3 will use the Wilson's Foundations program to provide a cohesive multi-grade approach in teaching phonemic awareness, decoding, and spelling to students.

Goal Three: Review the current homework policy at the Gates School and if necessary make revisions that will best support the academic and social-emotional well being of students.

Background and Rationale: Concerns were raised in 2015 - 2016 regarding the amount time students in grade 6 were spending on nightly homework. Sixth grade teachers surveyed students and learned that there was a significant discrepancy between the amount time spent on homework compared to their perception of its value, as well as the perceived stress of students. These results were shared with the Gates staff. As a result, the staff voted to look more carefully at homework. Questions raised included: What is the purpose of homework? How much time is being spent on homework? Is there consistency within and across grade levels?

Strategies:

Timeline: September 2016 - June 2017

Lead Parties: Gates Staff

- Analyze *Challenge Success* data regarding grade 6 homework
- Review current homework practices
- Research best practices
- Articulate the purpose of homework
- Determine what our homework policy will be at each grade level

Outcomes: Gates homework guidelines in grades K-6 will be updated in the student handbook.

Goal Four: Continue to implement the Responsive Classroom approach with the focus on positive teacher language.

Background and Rationale: This is our second year of implementing Responsive Classroom at the Gates School. In the first year all classrooms began their school day with Morning Meeting. Because a teacher's language is a powerful teaching tool, this year we are focusing on the three R's of positive teacher language: reinforcing language, reminding language, and redirecting language.

Strategies:

Timeline: September 2016 - June 2017

Lead Parties: Gates Staff

- Purchase a copy of the book *The Power of Our Words: Teacher Language That Helps Children Learn* for each teacher to read over the summer
- Purchase *Teacher Language* professional development kit
- Offer Responsive Classroom Summer Workshop training to teachers
- Provide professional development to all staff on August 30, 2016 at Gates
- Share effective Responsive Classroom strategies to enhance the four components of Morning Meeting: greeting, sharing, group activity, and morning message

Outcomes: All staff will use positive teacher language that encourages and supports students in their learning in the classroom, cafeteria, and at recess.

Goal Five: Research and discuss strategies that support the health and well-being of students.

Background and Rationale: How can we best support students in school to be happy and confident and not anxious and depressed? The staff has shared the growing concern that students are increasingly anxious and stressed at school. Our goal is to research a variety of strategies, such as movement breaks, mindset in academic areas, sleep, and mindfulness exercises to support the health and well-being of students.

Strategies:

Timeline: September 2016 - June 2017

Lead Parties: Gates Staff

- Analyze *Challenge Success* data that focuses on Student Health & Well-Being and School Stress & Academic Worries in grade 6.
- Identify additional movement breaks such as GoNoodle and Tabata that teachers can use in the classroom
- Review Responsive Classroom energizers
- Research Mindfulness strategies

Outcomes: Gates staff will research and collaborate on best practices that support the health and well-being of students. Resources will be posted on the Gates website and included in the electronic monthly newsletter that is shared with parents.

Assessment of School Improvement Plan 2015 - 2016

Goal One: Advance Standards-based Learning/Assessment

#1

Strategies: Gates staff will develop a K - 6 standards-based report card.

Outcomes: A new K - 6 standards-based report card will be complete and ready for the 2016-2017 school year.

Outcomes/evidence and means by which they were assessed: The K - 6 standards-based report card was completed in June 2016 and will be fully implemented in the 2016 - 2017 school year.

Narrative: Gates staff developed a new K - 6 standards-based report card by completing the following:

- Develop the reporting standards in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies (K-6)
- Identify Work Habits and Social Development expectations (K-6)
- Develop the report card form
- Collaborate with School Council to create a mechanism to collect parent feedback
- Collaborate with School Council to create parent resources that describe/explain Standards-Based Report Cards

#2

Strategies: Teachers in grades 1-3 will implement the Wilson's Foundations phonics program.

Outcomes/evidence and means by which they were assessed: All students in grades 1- 3 participated in the Wilson's Foundations Program.

Narrative: Teachers identified the need to provide a cohesive multi-grade approach in teaching phonemic awareness, decoding, and spelling. Teachers will implement the Wilson's Foundations Program in Sept. Feedback about the program's effectiveness will be collected, shared, and discussed throughout the year. Teachers agreed that the program is effective and will be expanded to Kindergarten next year.

Goal Two: Advance Social Development/Emotional-Physical Well Being

#1

Strategies: The Gates School will implement the Responsive Classroom social skills program.

Outcomes/evidence and means by which they were assessed: All classrooms implemented Responsive Classroom morning meetings.

Narrative: Teachers participated in the one-day workshop in August 2015 to introduce Responsive Classroom to the staff prior to the opening of the new school year. All classroom teachers in grades K - 6 were committed to begin each day with a morning meeting. In January 2016, teachers were given a survey to identify interesting Responsive Classroom topics that could be offered as mini workshops at the February 2016 professional development. Staff members led mini workshops on the following topics: Positive Teacher Language and Logical Consequences, Making Learning Meaningful, and Discipline and Working with Families. Teachers attended two sessions, each lasting approximately 30 minutes. Teacher & parent feedback have inspired the staff to continue to learn more about Responsive Classroom in the upcoming 2016-2017 school year.

The first year of implementation included:

- Purchase a copy of the book *First Six Weeks of School* for each teacher to read over the summer
- Offer professional development on August 31, 2015 (PD on February 4, 2016)
- Implement Responsive Classroom morning meetings in grades K-6
- Use in-district resources to support implementation during the school year
- Gather parent and teacher feedback about the program's effectiveness will be collected and shared throughout the year