

Milford Public Schools

**Instructional
Plan
2008**
An Overview



The Work We Have Done

As a school district, we have invested a lot of time and energy on what is known as *Continuous Improvement*. Our work in the areas of common assessments, evaluation plans, improved writing curriculums and differentiated instruction (among many others) have **all** played a part in enhancing the level of learning happening in Milford.

These initiatives have each played a part in the work we present to you today: The Milford Public Schools Instructional Plan 2008.

Our Mission

Before any organization can move forward, a mission statement must illustrate our expectations for the final outcome; in other words, the goal. Our mission goes to the very core of what we believe our students must have as a result of their education in Milford:

Students who graduate from the Milford Public Schools will:

- *demonstrate mastery of reading, writing, and numeracy;*
- *comprehend, organize, and analyze information in order to independently solve problems and articulate solutions; and*
- *demonstrate the attributes of good citizenship and community/school engagement.*

Learning Principles

Learning principles are **common understandings** or beliefs that form the vision of a school system. We must have a common understanding of what we should see in the classroom, in the school, and in the district's policies if these principles are to be honored. This concept frames the term *learning for understanding*.

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 3. To reflect upon and improve performance, learners need regular and timely feedback on progress as it relates to standards.
 4. When the right learning conditions exist, all learners are capable of excellence.
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 3. To reflect upon and improve performance, learners need regular and timely feedback on progress as it relates to standards.
 4. When the right learning conditions exist, all learners are capable of excellence.
 - ◆ Learners need to understand the value of what they are learning and how it relates to past and future learning.
 - ◆ Learning is an active and reflective process in which learners are engaged in higher order thinking.
 - ◆ Learners' diverse needs are met through appropriate instructional strategies and materials.
 - ◆ Motivation is essential to inspire learning.
 - ◆ A supportive environment is necessary for learning.

Strengths/Weaknesses

In order to identify the condition of the district before embarking on the mission before us, we needed to determine our strengths and weaknesses. A great foundation had already been forged through our work on:

- Writing Curriculum
- BEST Support
- Differentiated instruction
- Common Assessments
- Graduation Requirements
- Evaluation Plans
- Professional Development

In addition, the *Classroom Walk Through* technique was implemented last fall. This brief visit is conducted by an administrator and focuses on systemic improvement. It is not a time to evaluate a teacher -- rather it provides a 'snapshot' view of what is happening in the school, and throughout the district as a whole.

Are students engaged? Are they motivated? Are they involved in rigorous lessons that stretch them beyond their comfort zone?

Over 2,000 walk-throughs have been conducted since September in Milford, and the resulting information points to a small set of strengths and weaknesses we see in the district. Here's what we found:

Critical Issues

With this learning in hand, a conclusion came from this: the heart of our work, the one thing we can control is *instruction*. Good instruction is founded on three critical issues to learning -- *curriculum consistency*, *engagement*, and *rigor*. This became the framework of our work to come.

Consistency

The purpose of consistency is to regulate content information and ensure the best teaching practices are used. Instructional goals define what all students are expected to know, are able to do and understand as a result of their course/grade level work. Curriculum consistency will require alignment with the Connecti

cut State Frameworks and the standards on which students are evaluated via the CMT and CAPT. There will be an assurance that each student in each grade comes out with a comparable educational experience.

Student Engagement

Student engagement is evidenced when they make connections between current tasks and prior knowledge and experience. Students pursue inquiries and problems that are both teacher-directed and self-generated to go deeper into the content and concepts of the curriculum. Students produce quality work as evidenced by their desire to improve current and future performance. Students are connected to their learning via a challenging curricula, and instruction that is meaningful. Students must feel they are in a safe, respectful learning environment and have teachers who are responsive to their needs.

Rigor

We will need to focus on every student and help them reach their learning goals, even though those tasks may be different. The work must be authentic in that it prepares students for the next level of instruction and, ultimately, the workforce. Learning experiences will need to be tailored in order to appropriately challenge each and every student. Attributes of rigorous instruction include: learning that goes beyond content, makes a connection to the real world, and provides developmentally appropriate problem-based learning.

How Will We Get There?

Our key focus area will continue to be the Instructional Plan. We will also continue to use Academic Improvement Plans (AIPs) in our work ahead. This work will include the *analysis of student performance*, *common assessments*, and *differentiation*.

In addition, the following areas of work are being considered for continued progress:

- Curriculum writing
- Evaluation plans
- Professional development initiatives
- Vertical alignment
- Consistent application districtwide
- Common assessments, pK-12

The Instructional Plan is only the beginning. We will include other components as we get deeper into the plan.

**The Mission
is formulated**



**Learning Principles
to be embraced by
entire organization
in order to achieve goal**



**Strengths &
Weaknesses identified**



**Critical Issues
become cornerposts
for work ahead**



**Strategic Roadmap
developed**



Instructional Plan