

Coxsackie – Athens Central School District, Strategic Plan, 2007 – 2012

Action Plan 2009-2010

First Quarter Report (December 2009)

Introduction: Action Plans have been developed and implemented for the 2009 – 2010 school year. Reported herein is a summary of the first quarter information reported by each building principal, the Director of Technology, and the Director of Special Education. This report will be rendered in summary form in writing only. The midyear report along with the final report at the conclusion of the school year will be rendered in writing and presented formally to the Board of Education at a regular monthly meeting. All reports will be disseminated to various constituent groups and will be posted on the school district's webpage.

1. Goal Number One. Coxsackie – Athens will ensure that every student exceeds the learning standards set by State and Federal regulations.

District Office: Research has been conducted and materials gathered relative to a variety of Distance Learning opportunities. Funding has been allocated utilizing ARRA funds to support a pilot initiative in this respect. Data analysis has continued, and the fourth volume of Dashboard Lights was presented at a meeting of the Board of Education.

- a. Strategy Number One. *Provide students with reading instruction, steeped in the latest research to ensure that they will develop the necessary skills to read on grade level by the end of grade 2.*

Coxsackie Elementary: In grades K-2 baseline data has been collected relative to student performance in reading. Items assessed include: sight word recognition, fluency and guided reading levels. Instruction in reading has included utilization of Foundations, Raz-kids, and shared reading opportunities as well as other research based best practices. Additional targeted instruction is being provided via Academic Intervention Services, and a book club has been proposed at grade two for those students who are exceeding established benchmarks.

E.J. Arthur Elementary: Assessments have been conducted on students in the early elementary grades to establish baseline data relative to reading ability. Kindergarten students have been assessed to determine recognition of letter sounds and identification of capital and lowercase letters. Students in grades one and two were assessed on their knowledge of sight words, and reading levels as determined by the DRA 2.

***The base line data collected at both elementary schools during the first quarter will provide comparative information for future reports, so that student growth and progress throughout the year will be evident.**

Middle School: Reading comprehension instruction has been developed in response to student performance on NYS ELA Assessments. Careful analysis of student responses on the prior year's assessments was used to develop instruction. Further data was gathered through grade level

implementation of the AIMS WEB Assessment to better understand student needs and develop appropriate programming for reading instruction.

Special Education: Phonemic awareness and phonics has been the focus of instruction for students with disabilities who are emergent readers. Student benchmark performance levels were established using Foundations, and their progress will be monitored regularly. K-8 students with disabilities will be assessed to identify their specific needs and programming will be developed based on the assessment results. Staff members in grades 4-12 have gleaned knowledge from professional book study.

- b. Strategy Number Two. *Teach students the necessary skills to meet or exceed Level 4 English language arts requirements at Grades 4, 6, 8, and 11 as measured on the statewide assessments.*

Coxsackie Elementary: At grades 3 and 4 significant instructional time is dedicated to students being able to read and analyze documents. Generation of written responses is paramount to this instruction. Students are provided ample instruction and opportunities. Quarterly assessments are scored utilizing a rubric consistent with that used on the NYS ELA assessment.

E.J. Arthur Elementary School: Classroom practices consistent with exemplary student performance in EJA have been implemented including daily and significant blocks of writing and reading instruction. Student writing is assessed quarterly utilizing a rubric consistent with the NYS ELA assessment. Students experiencing less than adequate gains are being provided additional targeted instruction through Academic Intervention Services offered both during and after school.

***Initial quarterly writing assessment results from both elementary schools will serve as a basis on which to measure future performance and student growth.**

Middle School: Middle school ELA staff continues to develop instructional practices that will positively impact student assessment performance. Instruction has focused on pacing, short answer responses, the identification of appropriate information in reading passages, and listening comprehension. Significant opportunities to practice editing have also been established.

High School: The action steps for the high school English department resulted from a thorough review of student performance on the June English regents. Resulting instructional practices have been developed and implemented. ELA classroom staff members are working closely with AIS staff members to improve skills of particular students in targeted areas.

Special Education: Special education teachers developed writing rubrics consistent with various developmental levels. These rubrics will be utilized to create consistency in the manner in which students with disabilities will have their writing assessed, thus improving student performance.

- c. Strategy Number Three. *Teach the students the necessary skills to meet or exceed Level 4 Mathematics requirements at grades 4, 6, 8, and on Algebra as measured on statewide assessments.*

District Office: An embedded staff developer will spend time in each of the elementary schools throughout this year to share research based, best practice strategies with elementary staff responsible for instruction in Math.

Coxsackie Elementary: Instruction in Math is focused on math vocabulary, fact fluency and problem solving strategies. Baseline data has been reported for fact fluency in grade 2-4, and will serve as the basis for future comparisons. Technology, particularly smart boards are being utilized to teach and review topics in mathematics.

E.J. Arthur Elementary: Students are provided classroom instruction and opportunities which will assist in mastery of fact fluency. Baseline data has been collected in this regard. Problem solving

strategies and the appropriate manner in which to devise written responses and explanations are focal points of the upper elementary grades. After school tutoring opportunities are available to students requiring target assistance.

Middle School: Cross curricular units have been developed and implemented that allow for mathematical instruction to become more connected to real life situations. Strategies have been implemented to assist students in solving algebraic and equations in a vertical format.

High School: A review of Regent's results and performance has served as the basis for instructional development. A math essentials course has been developed and implemented to assist students in their pursuit of higher education. The course has been presented by Coxsackie-Athens staff members in conjunction with representatives from Hudson Valley Community College.

Special Education: Students with disabilities in grades 3-8 will be benchmarked and receive progress monitoring of their computation skills. A similar process will be followed for high school students with disabilities in algebra for skills appropriate to this content.

- d. Strategy Number Four. *Teach students the necessary skills to meet or exceed Level 4 Science requirements at Grades 4, 8 and in high school as measured on the statewide assessments.*

Coxsackie Elementary: A comprehensive understanding of science vocabulary is being generated by having students read authentic scientific literature and utilize the vocabulary in written and spoken dialogue. The scientific process and necessary tools are employed regularly in classroom investigations.

E.J. Arthur Elementary: Students are provided opportunities to implement the scientific process for the purpose of drawing conclusions, making predictions and inferences.

Middle School: Lessons pertinent to animal identification have been developed and implemented, allowing students the opportunity to become more skillful in this area, which is a large component of the practical component of the grade eight science assessments.

High School: A review of student performance on June Regent's exams prompted the high school science department to develop a Pre-Regents assessment which will be utilized during the current year. Teachers incorporate Regent's questions in weekly plans to improve student ability to respond favorably to such questions

- e. Strategy Number Five. *Teach students the necessary skills to meet or exceed Level 4 Social Studies requirements at Grades 5, 8, 10, and 11 as measured on the statewide assessments.*

Coxsackie Elementary: Geography instruction incorporates the use of maps and globes. Reading of authentic literature and documents is used to reinforce vocabulary and content. Graphic organizers are incorporated to assist students in developing written work. Citizenship activities are incorporated to foster a better sense of community.

E.J. Arthur Elementary: Students have been provided opportunities to synthesize multiple documents and pieces of literature, and create summaries of the material in their own words. Instruction in responding to document based questions has and will occur.

Middle School: Lessons have been developed and implemented at the fifth grade level that pertain to political cartoons and document based questions. Eighth grade lessons utilizing primary source documents have also been developed. The materials and content utilized in these lessons is consistent with what is being assessed on the grade 5 and 8 NYS Assessments.

High School: Through careful review of student performance on June Regents, areas of student weaknesses were identified and mini-classes were developed to provide targeted student assistance. Technology is being utilized in classrooms to engage students at a higher level.

- f. Strategy Number Six. *Teach students the necessary skills to meet or exceed Level 4 Language Other Than English requirements on the Proficiency Test and the Comprehensive Regents examination.*

High School: Students participated in the language immersion opportunity conducted at the Rensselaerville Institute.

Strategy Number Seven. *Establish Level 4 benchmarks in which students do not complete statewide written assessments.*

High School: Established commencement level benchmarks in non-assessed areas are in place and being utilized to measure student performance in music, art and technology. Both the business and music departments are working toward expanding their offerings through development of new courses.

2. Goal Number Two. Cossackie – Athens will promote continued professional growth of current and future teachers, administrators, and support staff members by providing a coordinated program of affordable, needs – based staff development.

- a. Strategy Number One. *Provide professional development that will give staff members the knowledge, skills, and abilities to bring students beyond the State and Federal standards.*

District Office: Two and one-half Superintendents Conference days have been conducted, providing staff opportunities for viable high quality staff development. Initiatives in mathematics and writing have continued utilizing experts in the field. The elementary and middle schools have made significant progress in optimizing their writing programs under the direction of Rochelle Solloway, and Dr. Robert Fulmer. Gail Sobelewski from Questar III B.O.C.E.S. has transitioned from working with middle school math teachers to elementary teachers. Various administrators have begun to develop book study groups as a means of professional development.

Strategy Number Two. *Give staff members the tools to deal with events in school relative to health and safety consistent with State and Federal guidelines as well as New York State law.*

District Office: Mandated Right-to-Know and Blood Borne Pathogen training was conducted in September. Select staff members participated in First Aide, CPR & AED training in August, September & October. A district wide evacuation drill was conducted during the fall.

3. Goal Number Three. Cossackie – Athens will deliver the highest quality programs and services by incorporating quality management principles and practices in all operations and by empowering all staff members to engage in continuous progress improvement.

- a. Strategy Number Two. *Develop and retain leaders with the tools to propel C-A to that of being a flagship district.*

District Office, Middle School, and Cossackie Elementary: Two Cossackie-Athens teachers have been supported during the completion of internship requirements necessary in pursuit of administrative certification. In her first full year the high school principal continues to be involved with a mentor.

- b. Strategy Number Three. *Provide professional development that will give staff members the knowledge, skills, and abilities to bring students beyond the State and Federal standards.*

District Office: Review of professional reading and pertinent reflection occurs at monthly administrative meetings.

4. Goal Number Four. Cossackie – Athens will operate with optimum efficiency consistent with the delivery of high quality, cost effective programs and actively search for non – district funding sources to aid in accomplishing its goals.

- a. Strategy Number Two. *Collaborate with others to lower costs and to evaluate program offerings.*
District Office & BOE: The New Visions Committee & Superintendent of Schools have met with various agencies and gathered additional information in pursuit of establishing an Educational Foundation.
- b. Strategy Number Four: *Collaborate with others to lower costs and to elevate program offerings.*
District Office: The Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene Health Insurance Trust was able to provide an opportunity for the district and the employees to save on health insurance premiums relating to CDPHP by converting from the HMO to an EPO. The conversion will take effect January 1, 2010 with an anticipated savings of \$60,000 in the current year.

5. Goal Number Five. Cossackie – Athens will develop and use an integrated system of technology to improve communication, enhance operational and instructional effectiveness and efficiency and foster increased student achievement.

- a. Strategy Number One: *Integrate technology into curriculum support and instruction.*
District Office: Meetings of the Technology Committee continue to be supported, as do both formal and informal professional development opportunities relative to technology. In particular, multiple training opportunities were provided to assist with the transition to MS Office 2007.
Technology Services: Sixty-six staff members participated in offerings made available through the Summer Technology Institute. Smart boards continue to be installed, as do document cameras and are utilized consistently district wide. Department staff conducted ample training in Microsoft Office 2007.

6. Goal Number Six. Cossackie – Athens will ensure that sufficient, appropriate space is available for all programs and services on a continuing basis in a safe and stable environment.

- a. Strategy Number One. *Prepare a Long – Range Facilities Plan.*
Board of Education: Completed.
- b. Strategy Number Two. *Consider and act upon the Long-Range Facilities Plan.*
Board of Education: A resolution was adopted on October 26, 2009, to bring a Repair and Renovation Project to the voters on December 14, 2009. The project's focus is that of Maintaining Our Facilities.
District Office: Superintendent Gregory and Chief Financial Officer Copleston have conveyed information about the proposed project to civic groups, politicians, and at public information sessions. They have also disseminated information orally, in writing, and electronically to the district community as a whole.

7. Goal Number Seven. Cocksackie – Athens will ensure that all students, staff members, parents, and community members are fully informed in a timely manner as well as involved in addressing issues that affect them.

- a. Strategy Number One. *Develop enhanced communication protocols.*

District Office: The Board of Education charged the Superintendent with having a Communication Study conducted for the district. The Questar III B.O.C.E.S. Communications Office met with focus groups throughout the fall. The Communication Study will be presented to the Board of Education on December 15, 2009.

In addition, the District continues to use the Synervoice system to inform parents and guardians about emergency situations, immunization clinics, and the like.

The initial annual meeting of the district wide shared decision making committee was conducted and dates for subsequent meetings were established.

Technology services: Edline is consistently being utilized by staff members to post student information. Building level calendars are being utilized. The Technology Committee has conducted a review of the district web page and made recommendations; these recommendations will be considered along with those put forth as part of the aforementioned Communication Study. The ability to access voicemail via email continues to be expanded. Technology staff members in conjunction with the technology committee have and will develop a technology desk reference guide.

8. Goal Number Eight. Cocksackie – Athens will enhance its organizational value by recruiting and retaining a highly qualified and fully diversified staff to meet the present and future needs of its students.

- a. Strategy Number Three. *Develop retention practices for existing staff members.*

District Office and Cocksackie-Athens Teachers Association: Mentors for the 2009-10 school year were assigned, new teacher orientation conducted, and the first quarterly meeting of partners was held.

9. Goal Number Nine: Cocksackie – Athens will identify and prioritize its major goals and align resources on an annual basis with appropriate input from stakeholders.

- a. Strategy Number One. *Use a continuous improvement model on a yearly basis whereby goals, strategies, and priorities are reviewed and have impact on the budget process.*

District Office: As evidenced in this report, ongoing assessment of progress toward Action Plan completion continues.