

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

Action Plan 2009-2010

Second Quarter Report (February 2010)

Introduction: Action Plans have been developed and implemented for the 2009 – 2010 school year. Reported herein is a summary of the second quarter/midyear information reported by each building principal, the Director of Technology, and the Director of Special Education. 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. A mobile laptop lab was purchased for this purpose.

Data analysis has continued and these results are being used to drive instruction.

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 (AIS), and a book club has been proposed at grade two for those students who are exceeding established benchmarks.

Improvement has been seen in all areas. In the area of sight vocabulary In AIS 88% of kindergarten AIS students learned 11-23 new sight words, 86% of first grade AIS students learned most of Quarter 1 words, and 65% learned Quarter 2, 85% of second grade AIS students are working on grade levels words (as compared to Sept when 6 students could not read the kindergarten words). On grade levels 86% of kindergartners have mastered the first 23 words. In first grade 90% of students are at or above grade level. In second grade sight vocabulary benchmarks are up from 72% to 85%.

In the area of fluency: 100% of kindergarten AIS students demonstrated 1 to 1 correspondence in Concepts about Print Test, 82% of first grade AIS students met DIBELS fluency benchmark (all students improved), and 62% of second grade AIS students are reading at DIBELS first fluency benchmark. In the kindergarten as a whole 86% of student met the middle of the year DIBELS benchmark. At first grade 52% of students are reading fluently at or above grade level. Fluency level have risen to 62% in second grade, up from 43% in November.

In the area of reading: 81% of kindergarten AIS students learned 15-38 new sounds (others learned at least 10), 70% of first grade AIS students went up 2 reading levels (the other students went up one level), and 56% of first grade AIS students met DIBELS midyear benchmark in nonsense word fluency. In second grade 100% of students have increased their reading level since the universal screening and 53% of AIS students have increased their independent reading level by four or more levels in just half a year. At first grade 71% of students are reading at or above grade level. This number is 60% in second grade, up from 50% in November.

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.

In the area of sound fluency: 96% of kindergarten students increased recognition of letter sound and 100% of AIS students have shown improvement in letter sound. Letter Name Fluency: 100% of kindergarten students increased their letter name fluency. Capital Letters: 67% of kindergarten students increased recognition/use of capital letters and 33% of students knew capitals at end of first quarter. 100% of AIS students showed improvement in capital letters. Lowercase letters: 83% of kindergarten students increased recognition/use of lowercase letters and 100% of AIS students have shown improvement.

The DIBELS results also show improvement. In first grade 100% of students increased their test scores from the beginning of school year. In second there was a 76 % increase in test scores from beginning of school year.

DRA results: First grade: 40% of students are reading above grade level, 23% are reading at grade level, and 37% are reading below grade level. Second grade: 49% of students are reading above grade level, 32% at grade level, and 19% below grade level.

Sight word results: First grade: number of sight words 50 with 60% of students with low risk of not meeting benchmarks, 15% with some risk, and 25% at risk of not meeting benchmark. Second grade: number of sight words 200, 95% of students with low risk, 2% with some risk, and 3% at risk of not meeting benchmark.

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. The second administration of the AIMS WEB occurred on February 10th. The results will be scored by staff on March 1st.

Special Education: Elementary: Naming Letters: All but 1 student is at 100%. Sound to letter: all but one student above 70%. Write Letter/Words: all but two students above 65%.

- 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 and reading strategies are being taught: re-reading, predicting, questioning, summarizing, making text connections, and using visualization. Nonfiction skills being taught include: using text features- captions, glossary etc. In third grade running records and classroom performance show progress as a grade level, as well as, 87% of students having reading assessment scores of 3 or better. In addition, 74% of AIS students are reading independently on grade level, 24% have met the benchmark for third grade, and 70% have increased one or more grade levels. In fourth grade running records and classroom performance show progress with 83% of students meeting or exceed grade level expectations. 69% of AIS students are reading independently at grade level, and 31% met the second quarter benchmark. In writing the following strategies have been employed: modeling, mini-lessons, graphic organizers, daily writing support with basic mechanics and support with sentence/paragraph/essay format. AIS students have received Writing Fundamentals instruction which is showing progress. The fourth grade is practicing skills and strategies from NYS ELA book one and book two tests.

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.

Reading: Third grade: 42% of students are reading above grade level, 24% reading at grade level, and 34% reading below grade level. In fourth grade: 56% of students are reading above grade level, 26% reading at grade level, and 19% below grade level.

Writing: Third grade results from a nonfiction sample: in content skills 55% of students are meeting benchmark, 22% have some risk meeting benchmark, and 23% of students at risk of not meeting benchmark. Mechanics: 53% of students are meeting benchmark, 18% have some risk, and 29% of students at risk of not meeting benchmarks.

Fourth grade results from feature article and listening sample: in content 53% of students are meeting benchmark, 35% have some risk, and 12% of students at risk of not meeting benchmark. Mechanics: 53% of students meeting benchmark, 35% with some risk meeting benchmark, and 12% of students at risk of not meeting benchmark.

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. Dr. Fulmer has also been working with staff on test analysis and forming suggestions for instruction. ELA AIS reports that last year 75% of their students were able to get a 3 or better on the state test. As a result the number of students requiring AIS support has been reduced from around 189 five years ago, to around 50 students in grades five through eight currently.

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 student skills in targeted areas. In addition, staff will be reviewing/evaluating the

Regents from January 2010 to see where instruction can be improved for the remainder of the year. The AIS teacher has also been pushing into various English classes to further help students in need.

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. Dolch Sight Words has shown progress for many students, going from an average of 42 words to 148 words.

- 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. Due to scheduling issues with the staff developer in question this will occur in the fall of 2010.

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.

Vocabulary: In grades 2, 3, and 4 the following strategies are used: highlighting key words in directions and posting vocabulary definitions around the classroom to introduce and maintain words and their meaning. Also, students are encouraged to use these words in their responses to problems.
Problem Solving Process: In grades 2, 3, and 4, students know they have to use a strategy to solve the problem. This includes setting up a plan for solving, either written or orally. Their progress in this area is evident by their verbal and written responses.

Math Fact Fluency: In grades 2, 3, and 4 fluency is being developed through the use of flash cards, multiplication games, daily quizzes, and timed math sheets. Success is evident in successful recall and use of facts in daily work.

In second grade addition facts benchmarks have been met by 83% of students, up from 62% in November. The third grade is averaging 88% on math chapter tests. In the fourth grade, 96% of students are meeting or exceeding grade level expectations on chapter assessments. All students with difficulties are receiving AIS support.

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.

In third grade 69% of students are proficient at subtraction facts to 12, 31% are not proficient at subtraction facts to 8, and 7% of students are proficient at multiplication facts to 3.

In fourth grade 63% of students are proficient at multiplication facts, 37% are not proficient, and 51% are proficient at division facts.

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. There have also been K-12 math department meetings to discuss common vocabulary and strategies.

High School: 1) A review of Regent's results and performance has served as the basis for instructional development. During Regents week work was done looking at specific indicators and brainstorming strategies to reinforce these skills. A complete review of the June Geometry Regents was completed and this information will be used to guide instruction for the remainder of the year.

2) The Essentials Math course has been implemented at two levels to build and extend math skills. Also, the integrated Algebra Prep class has been successful with 6 out of 7 students scoring a 65% or better on the January Regents

3) A Core Support period has been implemented. With regard to math students, those assigned to the Math TA's Core SS have been more successful than they would in a regular study hall. However this is a limited number of students and should be looked at.

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.

Students are being monitored on their various developmental skill levels, either basic addition facts, subtraction or multiplication. At the middle school level timed math tests are being used.

- 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. In third grade students are also using flashcards and use of vocabulary to in context to reinforce information. In fourth grade 75% of students are meeting or exceeding expectation on chapter tests.

AIS teachers in grades 3 and 4 are supporting classroom teachers using mini-science readers which are part of the science series. The success is evident in the use of information in daily work and class tests.

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

In third grade on chapter 3-5 tests 49% of students showed mastery (80% or higher), 29% of students have some risk with the benchmark (65%-79%), and 22% students at risk of not meeting benchmark (below 65%).

In fourth grade on tests and unit 3: 67% of students at mastery, 16% of students have some risk, and 16% of students at risk of not meeting benchmark.

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 Regents 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. Science teachers are incorporating past Regents questions into test, quizzes, and homework. Reading sections from past regents will also be included in classroom tests. Lastly, there has been considerable help given during Core SS as well as L period and we were able to schedule an intensive class for students who needed the Biology Regents for graduation. All students just passed the January Regents.

- 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. Third grade is using Maps Globes and Graphs to learn and apply targeted geographic skills and vocabulary as well as Daily Geography review to reinforce concepts. In the fourth grade 87% of students are meeting or exceeding expectations on chapter tests. In grades three and four AIS teachers support classroom teachers through the use of leveled social studies trade books focusing on informational reading, as well as, giving guided support with related writing activities and assignments that apply to this newly learned information. Grade 4 AIS teachers also the grade four social studies textbook, and content related websites to gather relevant information for their individual and group projects this quarter. Success is evident in daily work and class tests.

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. In third grade on the map, globes, and graph skills pages 53% of students showed mastery (80% or higher), 27% of students have some risk with meeting benchmark (65%-79%), 20% of students at risk of not meeting benchmark (below 65%). In fourth grade on tests and chapter 3 51% of students showed mastery 33% of students with some risk, and 16% of students at risk.

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. The high school continues to use past Regents evaluations to inform instruction. More lessons have been developed in the areas of Global 10 and Economics and Government.

Online research and sharing of ideas at monthly meetings have broadened the knowledge base for staff. NBC learns has been looked into for next year.

Although help was provided during Core SS and L period, the lack of an AIS instructor and no formal classes for help was reflected in our January Regents scores.

- 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.

The Spanish classes attended a cultural performance at the East Greenbush Central Schools; while the French class prepared for Immersion day.

Student achievement on projects and tests are monitored and discuss at Department Meetings

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. Curriculum areas are writing new courses for the fall; Musical Theater, Sports Marketing, Adolescent Psychology and Gourmet Foods and Desserts.

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. The March 26th Conference Day has been planned to allow for technology work and articulation to ensure flow of information. 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. At the elementary level rubrics have been created and will be shared March 26th among all 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. CPR will again be offered on March 26th to certain staff who need refreshers. Training will also be offered to

custodians during Spring break. On March 26th Dr. Gregory will be leading a crisis debrief/plan review with the counselors, nurses and administrators.

3. Goal Number Three. Coxsackie – 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 Coxsackie Elementary: Two Coxsackie-Athens teachers have been supported during the completion of internship requirements necessary in pursuit of administrative certification.

- 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. A team of staff is attending a Leadership for Student Achievement series of workshops.

4. Goal Number Four. Coxsackie – 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. This information has been shared at a board meeting.

- 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. The Chief of Curriculum Instruction and Assessment along with staff members is pursuing a number of grant opportunities.

5. Goal Number Five. Coxsackie – 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. Time has been set aside on March 26th for technology proposals. The CCIA is also working with curriculum leaders on implementing technology benchmarks.

Technology Services: 1) Sixty-six staff members participated in offerings made available through the Summer Technology Institute. The technology committee has reviewed the statistics regarding the institute and made recommendations for next year.

2) Smartboards continue to be installed, as do document cameras and are utilized consistently district wide. Two smartboards have been added to EJA thanks to PTA. Two level I trainings with a total of 30 participants have been planned. One level II training for 15 participants has been planned. The technology committee, in conjunction with PDP, is offering Technology Proposals as an option for the March 26th Superintendent's Conference Day.

3) Department staff conducted ample training in Microsoft Office 2007. Also model school workshops have been offered throughout the fall for all staff members.

6. Goal Number Six. Coxsackie – 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. On December 14th the community voted in favor of the Repair and Renovation Project.

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. They will continue communication as the project moves forward.

7. Goal Number Seven. Coxsackie – 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 was presented to the Board of Education. The Board of Education will be using this information to create a communication plan.

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. On March 1st Star Award nominations will be reviewed and a winner selected. The committee is also reviewing the plan for resubmission.

Technology services: 1) Edline is consistently being utilized by staff members to post student information. Building level calendars are being utilized.

2) 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. District Wide Nurses' Web Page has been developed and is live. A building and renovation link was created to disseminate information. A directions link is in process.

3) Technology staff members in conjunction with the technology committee have developed tech office guides to assist teachers in the use of gradequick, email, smartboards, and office tools.

4) Synervoice continues to be used for emergency closings and meetings, as well as, for the Building and Renovation Project Public Hearings and vote.

8. Goal Number Eight. Cossackie – 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 Cossackie-Athens Teachers Association: Mentors for the 2009-10 school year were assigned, new teacher orientation conducted, and mentor meeting are occurring through the year.

9. Goal Number Nine: Cossackie – 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.