

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

Action Plan 2007 – 2008

Third Quarter Report (April 2008)

Introduction: This is the third Quarterly report of progress being made under the Action Plan for 2007 – 2008. This report will be rendered in summary form in writing only. 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. It is important to note that based on the progress outlined in this report as well as previous reports, planning for the establishment of Action Plans for the 2008 – 2009 school year has begun.

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

- 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: Instruction targeted at site word recognition, fluency and reading strategies has produced significant growth across all grade levels, inclusive of AIS students, as measured by the DRA2 and DIBELS assessments. A number of students are beginning to exceed the benchmarks established by the DRA2.

E.J. Arthur Elementary: A dedicated AIS Kindergarten teacher continues to have the desired effect. Fewer students than in past years have required a more intense levels of intervention. Additionally, the number of students achieving letter/sound recognition surpasses that of previous years. The continuation of the 90 minute reading block, along with the implementation of the *Foundations Program* at grade 2 has increased the number of students reading on grade level as assessed by the DRA2. Based on the success of the *Foundations Program* at grade 2, it has been introduced at grade 1.

Middle School: Teachers across all subjects continue to expand use and mastery of content area vocabulary by utilizing vocabulary in daily instruction and assessment. The continued use of study guides encourages improvement in content area comprehension. Instruction continues in the proper use of expository text in assignment completion.

Special Education: The goal to assess all identified students in Kindergarten through second grade, has not only been met, but exceeded. All K-2 students have been assessed using both the DIBELS and the DRA2. In addition, all identified middle school students have been evaluated using the DRA2. As a result of these assessments, programming implementations have been made which will positively impact all identified students in grades K-8.

- 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: Specific classroom strategies have been implemented which focus on increasing writing, reading and communication skills at grades 3 and 4. Consequently, there has been a significant increase in the number of students performing at or above proficiency in grade 3 as measured by writing assessment scores and acquisition of *Accelerated Reader* goals. In fourth grade, the use of rubrics to increase student awareness and expectations has led to more comprehensive and detailed written work by students. A variety of reading strategies that support identification of main ideas and supporting details, and highlight the importance of headings and subtitles have been introduced across all subject areas.

E.J. Arthur Elementary School: Students have shown growth as a result of continued implementation of a 30 minute writing block in grades K-2. There has been improvement in Kindergarten writing samples, and first graders have become more capable in structuring and completing sentences. Increasing reading blocks at grades 3 and 4 to 40 minutes, has allowed for opportunities to model the writing process to smaller groups. Students at these grade levels have shown improvement in writing as evidenced by journal entries, quarterly assessments, and long term writing projects. Students are given weekly opportunities to respond to listening passages. Scoring of writing is done utilizing a rubric which mirrors the state assessments. Students continue to participate in practice ELA tests which familiarize them with format and concepts. A recently concluded after school tutoring program has improved students ability to read and answer simulated assessment questions.

Middle School: A review of January 2008 ELA test booklets during the scoring process, indicates that students utilized test taking strategies which were encouraged through the use of the "Tools for Success" motivational/rewards program. Thus the program had the anticipated impact on student performance. The utilization of countdown clocks during instruction leading to the NYS assessments seems to have made students better able to utilize their time during the testing sessions.

High School: The English department is anxiously awaiting the results of The January 2008 ELA assessments so they might proceed with their data analysis. The department continues to coordinate efforts to prepare students for end of the year exams; they have aligned practices at grades 9 and 10 with the requirements of the Grade 11 assessment. A summer curriculum proposal has been drafted to address the results of the data assessment to be completed for the January 2008 ELA Exam.

Special Education: The established goal to evaluate and analyze ELA assessments has been met and exceeded. Analysis of all the assessments for all special education students in grades 3 – 8 was completed; progress was noted, areas of skill deficit were defined, and suggested instructional strategies were made.

- 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: The Chief of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment facilitated two meetings. The first included middle school and high school building administrators, middle school and high school math curriculum leaders, and Sam Jovell and Gail Sobolewski, math specialists from Questar III. The purpose of the meeting was to strategize and prioritize math needs over three time periods: the remainder of the 2007 -2008 school year, the summer of 2008, and the 2008 -2009 school year. The second meeting included elementary administrators, the K-4 math curriculum leader and Gail Sobolewski. The priorities established at these meetings will continue to be addressed under the direction of the Chief of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Coxsackie Elementary: Instruction and increased home communication continue to improve student knowledge of math vocabulary across all grade levels. Teachers consistently and successfully employ a number of strategies to increase math fact fluency. Even as students begin to encounter problems that require higher level thinking skills and mathematical reasoning, their problem solving has improved as a result of the incorporating reading strategies in the problem solving process. Identified AIS students have shown a better understanding of math vocabulary, progress in math fact fluency, and an improved ability to identify and apply proper problem solving strategies as evidenced by daily work and assessments.

E.J. Arthur Elementary: Students have shown significant improvement in speed and accuracy of addition and subtraction facts following the implementation of “mad minute” and “fast fact” drills. At grades 3 and 4 there has been a marked improvement in the mastery of multiplication and division facts as evidenced by a number of measures. Teachers have utilized “problem of the day” and modeling the importance of reading and writing as part of the problem solving process. Those students who participated in an after school tutoring program improved in their problem solving ability, as they were better able to solve a variety of math problems.

Middle School: The March 2008 NYS Math Assessments were recently scored by middle school teachers, giving them an opportunity to begin to assess student performance. A more detailed item analysis will occur in the near future. Middle school math staff had an initial meeting with Questar III math specialist Gail Sobolewski to discuss needs; dates were scheduled for embedded staff development at each grade level.

High School: The High School math department has made significant progress in carrying out their action plan: they have used assessment data to identify areas of weakness, and develop a series of progressive lessons and assessments to address these areas in the months leading up to the June exams. The department continues to incorporate Regent’s questions in classroom assignments and assessments, and utilize Smart Boards to bring students to sites dedicated to assessment preparation. High school staff has had an initial meeting with a Questar math specialist, and will continue to meet throughout the remainder of the school year to continue to move toward improved student achievement. This relationship will continue over the summer as curriculum maps are developed for the newly mandated Geometry course that will begin in the fall.

Special Education: Assessments of students using Key Math continues with an anticipated completion date of late April. Results have and will continue to impact program and instruction. The 2006-2007 NYS Math Assessment results for special education students were analyzed (and charted) progress was noted and areas of skill deficit defined; relevant instructional suggestions were made.

- 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: At grades 3 and 4 students are employing the use of the scientific process during each unit of study. Additional classroom science stations have been made available so that students can practice the proper use of scientific tools. Students successfully implemented the scientific process and use of inquiry tools as demonstrated at the recent Science Fair.

E.J. Arthur Elementary: Students are improving in their ability to independently write-up science experiments in their science notebooks. Students are utilizing the inquiry method to conduct experiments.

Middle School: Students continue to experience opportunities to incorporate metric measurement, decimal and graphing skills throughout math and science lessons. Reinforcement of the scientific method, and development of higher level thinking skills are achieved when students are allowed to create, test, and make conclusions during lab activities.

High School: The high school science department has made significant progress in carrying out their action plan: they have used assessment results from the Chemistry and Living Environment Regent's Exams from June 2007 to identify areas of weakness, and develop lessons and assessments to address these areas. Members of the department attended professional development opportunities to prepare for the proposed new part D of the Earth Science Regent's Exam.

- 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: A number of opportunities have been provided for students to improve geography and social studies concepts and vocabulary. Students have actively engaged in opportunities to explore citizenship. Smart Board technology has been utilized to increase student understanding of document based writing.

E.J. Arthur Elementary: The use of document based questions during instruction continues to provide students the opportunity to assess multiple documents as they prepare for the NYS assessment in social studies.

Middle School: Instruction continues to improve student's ability to analyze political cartoons and promote a better ability to understand and respond to document based questions. Posters depicting the previously identified assessment vocabulary have been created and are currently in use in each classroom.

High School: The social studies department used internal data from the June 2007 Regent's exams to determine areas of weakness. As a result of this analysis, both global studies and U.S. history teachers implemented a number of classroom practices to address the areas of concern. This included instruction and incorporation of commonly used vocabulary, as well as using questions and questioning techniques which parallel those routinely found on Regent's exams. These classroom practices will continue for the remainder of this school year as students prepare for June exams, and will continue into subsequent years in an effort to further insure student achievement.

- 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: The foreign language department has used internal data regarding student performance to identify and address areas of weakness. They are working towards developing end of the year exams for year 1 and 2 students that align with NYS standards, and parallel the content and format of the Comprehensive Regents Exam.

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

District Office: Staff was provided time during the March 28 Superintendent's Conference Day to continue work toward creating performance indicators. Work to date has been submitted. A recent meeting of the Superintendent, the Chief of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and the Curriculum Leaders representing each group was held to assess progress and establish how we will proceed from here.

High School: Members of the art department successfully completed the steps set forth in their action plan. They identified commencement level indicators, they established specific required projects and the rubric that would be used to assess them, and determine what would constitute level I, II, III, and IV benchmarks for each of these products. The business department made progress toward establishing Level 4 Benchmarks for E-Commerce.

2. Goal Number Two. Coxsackie – 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: The District Office with the assistance of the Professional Development Planning Committee offered opportunities for Professional Development during the recent Superintendent’s Conference Day held on March 28. Results of the surveys regarding these opportunities will be reviewed as the Chief of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment along with the PDP Committee continues to prepare offerings for conference days to be held during the 2008 -2009 school year. Significant planning for professional development has already commenced. Consideration of the utilization of additional half-day use for data analysis is part of this process. The CCIA has begun to disseminate opportunities for ongoing professional development through Curriculum Leaders, and is maintaining a record of participation.

- b. 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: Due to a change in regulations regarding mandated reporting, a portion of the recent Superintendent’s Conference day was used to provide an update of the regulations as they pertain to staff. Contact has been made with Needham Risk Management to secure mandated trainings that pertain to health and safety for the 2008 September Conference Days.

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: The District Office has provided support to current staff members who wish to pursue an administrative career. Letters of recommendation have been requested of and provided by the Superintendent for individuals entering programs of study leading to 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 and discussion of professional literature pertaining to issues currently impacting the district is ongoing at monthly meetings of the administrative team. Additional research and information is shared as necessitated by particular circumstances.

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 Four. *Collaborate with others to lower costs and to evaluate program offerings.*
District Office: The District’s Chief Financial Officer is currently researching collaborative purchasing options available for natural gas and electricity.

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.*
Technology Services: A cross section of C-A staff, both elementary and secondary, had the opportunity to attend one of two site visits to the Stillwater CSD to observe Smart Board instructional practices. Discussion continues at monthly meetings of computer lab assistants in regard to how they might better assist teachers in incorporating Smart Board technology in their classrooms; particular attention has been given to how to better mobilize the technology. A method has been established as a result of a collaborative effort between the Director of Technology and building administrators to provide ½ day Smart Board training/lesson development sessions for selected staff. This method will be evaluated and adjusted so that such opportunities can continue through the 2008 – 2009 school year. The Technology Committee continues to make progress as they research webcams, webcam activities and webcam software. The Spanish Immersion Project conducted this year utilized web cams to facilitate communication between high school students and second graders at Coxsackie Elementary. Through the use of *Creative Webcams* and *Skype* software, students were able to interact with Mr. Roberg as he visited Israel. The March 28 Superintendent’s Conference Day gave high school and middle school staff opportunities to pursue technology proposals. This had an immediate impact on classroom instruction, as well as providing staff the opportunity to share what they had accomplished through the use of the O-drive. This opportunity was well received. It expected future opportunities will be offered and expanded to include more staff.

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: At its March 18 meeting, the Board of Education unanimously adopted the Long Range Facilities Plan. At the same meeting they further authorized that the plan be made available to the public via the District’s website.
- b. Strategy Number Two. *Consider and act upon the Long-Range Facilities Plan.*
Board of Education: The Superintendent along with the Board of Education is in the process of establishing a Building Advisory Committee to review prospective projects put forth by the Facilities Committee as a result of the adoption of the Long-Range Facilities Plan.

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 Three. *Initiate processes and procedures for input into the budget process.*

District Office: Some discussion has been held concerning the feasibility and logistics of developing a Budget Advisory Committee.

8. Goal Number Eight. Coxsackie – 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 Two. *Execute a high quality recruitment and hiring program.*

District Office: Recent conversation was held at an administrative team meeting regarding the District's potential participation in Recruitment Fairs.

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

District Office and Coxsackie-Athens Teachers Association: The Chief of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment has met with the existing coordinator's of the Professional Partner's Program to determine future steps needed to pursue the extension of the existing program.

9. Goal Number Nine: Coxsackie – 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. Utilizing the assessment information, initial discussion of goals and plans for the 2008 – 2009 school year has begun.