

*Annual Report of the
Coventry Board of Education
and
Coventry Public Schools
2008 – 2009*



2008-2009 Annual Report
Coventry Board of Education and
Coventry Public Schools

Board of Education

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Coventry Public Schools is to provide all of its students with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to learn as well as to contribute and to participate in a culturally diverse, rapidly changing society and to live a productive life. By working in concert with the family and community, an educational partnership will assist all children to achieve these skills and knowledge.

We work to ensure that all children will reach their individual potential with an appreciation of the lifelong learning process. We support the premise that learning is challenging, rewarding, and fun. We encourage teachers to provide opportunities for participation in the democratic process and the development of democratic values and ideas. We encourage family and community involvement in support of our schools.

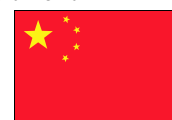


District-wide Goals, Annual Objectives and Subsequent Achievements 2008-2009

1. Improve outside resources, partnerships, and revenues, consistent with district goals.

1.1. Increase and define *collaboration with outside agencies, group homes, magnet schools, Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse (NECASA), State Department of Education (SDE), colleges and universities, as well as with the Regional Education Service Centers (RESC), including CREC and EASTCONN* in order to further develop and enhance options for students needing alternative and/or supplemental educational services.

- Our work with multiple outside agencies, especially as it relates to the increased involvement in magnet schools continues to reflect the fragmentation and hybridization in our industry. Our staff on every level works to maintain and enhance relationships and develop new and cooperative programs. Our schools' interdistrict diversity projects and ever-expanding after school programs validate this area of partnership. We have seriously increased our coordination with the Connecticut State Department of Education. In the area of international relations, Coventry was not only represented in China, but also hosted Chinese educators in January. We can be very proud of our staff members' willingness to see value in international relationships.



1.2. Coordinate with the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA) as we *implement the new Coventry High School Project Opening Doors* program for the purpose of increasing student participation in Advanced Placement coursework.

- Coventry High School continues its work with EASTCONN and the Advanced Placement collaborative. Coventry staff members serve in leadership positions in this statewide effort. In addition to increasing the numbers of advanced placement courses offered, we have also increased the numbers of staff members involved in advanced placement training and the numbers of students enrolled in these courses. The initial response from parents has been very positive.

1.3. Improve district collaborations with Manchester Community College (MCC) in order to *enhance vocational coordination for students*, especially those with special needs.

- Our high school continues its further collaboration with Manchester Community College, especially in the food service and technology education areas. The Guidance Department works with students and gives them continual support as they explore vocational alternatives and career pathways at universities as well as MCC.



1.4. Collaborate further with Police, Fire, and Town agencies *as we improve our emergency responsiveness*, including simulations and face-to-face practice coordination.

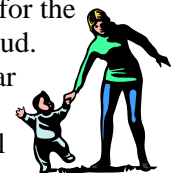
- Coventry Public Schools has made huge strides this year in its multi-agency emergency preparedness. Regular meetings with all agencies are held with school staff representatives. Plans and coordination procedures are in development. In addition, emergency exercises are scheduled for this spring involving school and district personnel and all town subsystems.

1.5. Expand efficiencies for special student needs servicing by developing further district and EASTCONN collaborative efforts, including a *primary grade autism program*.

- Our collaboration with EASTCONN in providing more cost effective preschool autism services at the Coventry Grammar School is a part of our cost saving and compliance enhancement efforts. Federal regulations require that special needs students be served in their least restrictive environments. This mandates that these students be provided educational programs closer to their neighborhood schools rather than farther. This partnership has enhanced the services provided to the non autistic children as well.

1.6. Continue to work with the Town of Coventry and other agencies as we *address preschool student needs and program development*.

- We continue our work with the Coventry Early Childhood Center and house our combined efforts at the First Congregational Church. Our National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation is something of which we can be proud. Our School Readiness Council coordinates its efforts with the Coventry Grammar School principal to enhance services to youngsters prior to their kindergarten experience. In addition, we are developing a preschool website within our school district's website system.



1.7. Collaborate with outside safety compliance resources, including the National Incident Management System (NIMS), to ensure that *critical safety procedures* are developed and followed.

- Everything from coordinated radio systems to equivalent language agreements is underway with all town emergency departments. School administrators have worked very diligently completing NIMS series 100 and 700 training and have become officially certified. In addition, NIMS series 200 and 800 training for school administrators is scheduled for this spring.

2. Promote efficient functioning and consistent refinement of subsystems within the larger organization.

2.1. Support *the second year of a five year theme – “Quality Educational Environments: Responsive, Collaborative, Clearly Defined.”* with staff development efforts that are focused, productive, and goal related.

- This is the second year of this staff development theme. As we provide learning opportunities for staff, this new theme assists with a focus on systemic responsiveness to parents and students; collaboration within and outside the system on behalf of students; and our functioning with clearly defined objectives as it relates to program development and improving student achievement. Our major strides in curriculum development, portfolio requirements, math instruction, and response to intervention strategies are only a few of the areas addressed within this category.

2.2. *Expand the use of data at all levels*, including the Effective Schools Surveys, Alumni Surveys, formative and summative student assessments, and the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC) surveys to modify educational practices.



- There are many examples of modified practices that relate to the data collected in the school district. The results from our Alumni, Preschool, and Effective School Surveys are used for further systemic development and refinements. In addition, the extensive management of data coordinated through the office of our Data Management Specialist and our District Testing Coordinator provides documentation of our ever-increasing organizational decision making as a response to evidence and data.

2.3. Implement processes and practices that further increase academic rigor.

- Currently our advanced placement initiatives lead the way in increasing rigor for students. However, our Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) programs at the Capt. Nathan Hale School and the G.H. Robertson School also continually focus staff on curriculum and instructional practices that improve academic rigor for students. Teachers are individually and collectively addressing program changes and adjustments made necessary by the annual administration of the Connecticut Mastery Test and Connecticut Academic Performance Test. The extensive work executed on behalf of the ABC Curriculum project is a large part of increasing instructional efficiencies. Beyond that, our curriculum work at the preschool and grammar school has served as a point of focus for staff resulting in classroom decision making that improves the level of inquiry and complex thinking.



2.4. Implement refinements in our *Strategies that Get Results (SGR)* focus including the *Response to Intervention (RtI)* programmatic improvements.

- Increased definitions within the special education arena, including the autism spectrum, are requiring program changes and modifications. The State of Connecticut and the Federal Government mandates continue to result in a need for deliberate attention by staff and administrators of Tier I interventions. The further development of the Response to Intervention (RtI) practices will make very large scale changes in educational service delivery systems. We are training staff and must defend in a more legalistic and compliant way our student interventions and the management of their progress. Coordination of these efforts with the schools and the Pupil and Staff Support Services department is ongoing.

RtI

2.5. Continue *school wellness committees* and enhance their functioning in conjunction with state guidelines.

- Under the supervision of the Food Service Department and the site-based Wellness Committees, the district continues to refine its wellness policies and procedures. Site-based wellness committees continue to improve school guidelines and inform our public regarding the regulations. Despite the large scope of the required changes, Coventry works to incorporate the necessary requirements in other areas of state oversight.

2.6. Redeploy staff and modify personnel role and function to *enhance and increase instructional time and increase efficiencies and productivity.*

- The administration and staff regularly address options and opportunities for increasing the efficiencies and improving program delivery at Coventry Public Schools. The Curriculum Resource Team is a major example of the redeployment of staff to get a job done without using additional resources. It continues to be a major project initiative. The newer administration at all schools is resulting in many changes and refinements to the operations of our schools.

2.7. *Complete grades 6-12 schedule coordination and redesign for 2009-2010 implementation.*

- This is a huge undertaking. Staff is to be seriously commended for its efforts on behalf of the 6-12 schedule alignment project. Although implementation for the 2009-2010 school year will not be without glitches for sure, the new design and related software training for staff is well underway. There are thousands of working parts to this effort and each part will have to execute its effort in a diligent way in order for this to be a successful implementation. Staff and administration, as well as the tech team, are collaborating to make this happen.



2.8. Complete *water compliance projects.*

- Thanks to the efforts of our School Building Committee, the water project is moving forward with its schedule. Our Physical Plant and Facilities Department is to be commended for “staying on it” and working productively with the outside contractors in this regard. The new system came online at the schools just recently. Contractors are removing old equipment and working through programming on some of the new equipment. The town will do site remediation when it is possible to do so. Their final work will likely be after school gets out so they can seed the grounds.

3. Provide clear and regular communication to all constituencies, building a support base for school programs.

3.1. Continue to use a variety of formats to *provide information and market Coventry Public Schools* to both parents and other Coventry residents.

- We continue to provide informational bulletins of various kinds. Group meetings serve as a main source of dialogue and program explanation. This is the third year of our “Community Conversations,” hosted by the Superintendent in her home. Parents and other interested residents are invited to discuss topics of interests related to developing young people. In addition, we implemented a reverse e-mail communication system this year that has been well received. It enables parents to receive school notices such as school closings and delays via e-mail format. The Superintendent again hosted the

Heartfelt Thanks Event at her home. Members from throughout the community recommend supporters of Coventry Public Schools to a Superintendent-funded catered evening event. Over 70 people shared social time and connected as supporters of school programs.

3.2. Continue development of our *user-friendly district website*, including parent information regarding website resources and e-mail response options.

- The collaborative efforts of many parties came into play in order to enable such a significant and rapid improvement of our website. The “Mini-Web Masters” at all the school sites and at the district level assist with this development. Teachers are becoming more involved in the development of the school websites as well as integrating the websites into their curricular practice. The feedback from parents has been quite positive as the district has exponentially increased the level of information on the site. The newly developing addition of preschool and birth-to-five information is an important initiative.



3.3. Expand school programs and opportunities as *resources for parents*.

- Technology is dramatically changing the ways in which information flows in all organizations. Within this culture, parent organizations as well as individual parents see the schools as a major resource for their child’s development. Although conferences with teachers continue to be an important vehicle, the use of our website and the ABC website is increasing. Parents have responded very favorably to the information available through those vehicles.

3.4. Further develop *informational seminars* and BOE *Coventry Pride* meeting segments, including facility maintenance and curriculum initiative.

- The biggest jump in informational seminars this year is the live televising of Board of Education meetings. Informal resident comments indicate that more people are watching these Board meetings than one might have suspected. In addition, many Coventry Pride sessions have been videotaped and provided as information to our public. We are attempting to continue to develop our information for television channels 13 and 17, with reduced staff. Our Curriculum Showcase was also taped as an informational seminar for television use.

3.5. Continue to develop practices that *enhance customer service and welcoming school environments*.

- The administration and staff continues its focus on developing more welcoming school environments. Visible changes in signage, décor, and staff procedures are evident. Each school is planning continuous progress in this area.

3.6. Improve public information regarding school budgets and financial transactions via *further collaboration between town finance and school fiscal committees*.

- This is another area of exponential growth and change this year. The district’s fiscal committee and town level finance committee have partnered more than ever to provide a mechanism for a more informed public. These committee members have required that the school business services division develop many new reports and have initiated many new procedures. The Business Office and the Fiscal Services Director are to be commended for their timely and responsive operations.

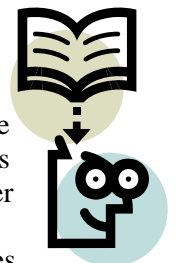


- 3.7. Continue to develop *school/town collaborations*, especially Youth Services and Parks and Recreation, in the interest of student programs.
- The district and the schools are coordinating efforts in a number of notable areas. School social workers and administration regularly attend the town's Human Services meetings, and keep well informed of cooperative projects and possibilities. In addition, the administration is in continuous communication with the Police Chief and his department. New collaborative grants have been written in coordination with the Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, the school Superintendent now provides supervisory services to the after school day care program run by the Parks and Recreation Department.
- 3.8. Continue second year implementation and monitoring of *MY Access!*, in addition to the *grade nine writing lab program* at Coventry High School.
- This is the second year implementation of the *MY Access!* writing program at the Coventry High School. Teachers in the English Department have received training from the regional agencies, and have worked with students and our portable laptop station to improve student writing performance. The software provides students with much more immediate and direct feedback which is related to improvements in results. Initial response has been very positive and there are related *MY Access!* initiatives at the middle school.



4. Implement programs and practices that improve student educational performance, ensuring that such practices align with state standards.

- 4.1. Continue to improve *curriculum alignment* coordination between classroom offerings, grades and departments, and state standards through A Balanced Curriculum program.
- We are VERY proud of being on schedule and able to “go live” this year with our ABC Curriculum project. The initial response from parents has been VERY positive. (They were the ones at a Donuts’ Session that requested we add the preschool curriculum to the website...which is in process). Grade level teams and departments across the district are writing curriculum, identifying issues of curricular duplication or absence, and making instructional and curricular modifications to further attend to state standards. This is a complex and demanding project that is comprehensive and extraordinary in its scope and ramifications. The staff is to be commended for their diligent and focused efforts thus far.
- 4.2. Further *expand the assessment of and rigorous programs related to capable students*, including the advanced placement Project Opening Doors program, middle school accelerated math, and Future Problem Solvers.
- The Challenge and Enrichment Program (CEP) is only one of the focus points for improving student programs. With the implementation of Project Opening Doors, the middle school accelerated math program and the extension of Future Problem Solvers activities, the district is making tremendous strides in assessing and developing higher level programs. Although additional Challenge and Enrichment staff would be beneficial, staff is making progress on all fronts. The reallocation of current resources continues to be essential.
- 4.3. *Review data from* the Connecticut Mastery Tests and Connecticut Academic Performance Tests to develop appropriate formative assessments to better inform instruction and ensure student progress.



- The Administrative Council continues to address both CAPT and CMT results and to structure programs that will better result in student achievement on these exams. While longer assessment trends are positive in Coventry, curriculum alignment will be necessary to continue an upward achievement trend. Our professional learning community is assessing student progress and making curricular decisions as teams rather than as individuals.

4.4. Increase the monitoring and the results analysis of our *Academic Assist Programs*.

- The Academic Assist programs are requiring further site-based focus and assessment. Areas such as case management, service delivery, K-12 coordination, and staffing allocations are under scrutiny and revision. Building principals work with the staff and the school superintendent to review these programs and are in the process of making programmatic change recommendations for the next school year.



4.5. Enhance *school climate and student behavior management strategies to improve student results*, including the expansion of before and after-school programs.

- It is the intention of the staff to ensure that students feel safe and cared for in a school environment free from ridicule and bullying. It is the major supervisory responsibility of the building Assistant Principals to be thorough in their investigation, record keeping, and follow up related to student disciplinary incidents. Their state level record keeping and compliance mandates are ever-increasing. Coventry schools are known to be school cultures that are respectful and caring. It is a credit to the staff that this is consistently so.

4.6. Provide more program alternatives for students, including *online coursework and distance learning* opportunities.

- The high school continues to develop its distance learning opportunities for students. It currently is limited by the structure of its schedule and the location of the online program. Revisions of procedures are underway for the 2009-2010 year to further enhance student opportunities in this area. We continue to provide an Advanced Placement Art Appreciation Course that is not only online, but taught by one of our teachers in the Art Department. Coventry High School belongs to the EASTCONN Virtual High School Connecticut Consortium. This will be an area for further development for all schools.

4.7. Increase *transition efforts between schools* (Pre-K to K, 2nd to 3rd, 5th to 6th, and 8th to 9th) in order to enhance resource utilization and student achievement.

- This collaborative goal continues to be a focus for the district's administration. The design and development of the ABC Curriculum project demands and gets much improved coordination among staff members from each of our school sites. Teachers are regularly visiting with other teachers to address curricular complications and issues. Within the conversations regarding alignment, staff and administration regularly are addressing curriculum and instructional preparedness of students transitioning from one school to another. The school to school transition procedures have seriously improved, especially at the 6-12 level, with joint faculty meetings, joint goals, and joint staff development occurring. In addition, collaborative projects at the Pre-K - 5 are evident and increasing.



4.8. *Implement a web based IEP program – IEP Direct* – in order to effectuate efficiencies within special education programs.

- This IEP Direct Project is another huge undertaking without the use of additional staff. The program significantly changes the ways in which student progress and program

development are implemented. It was necessary to facilitate the merger of the MMS data systems with the IEP Direct web software. Training was provided and a core team of key personnel was established to facilitate and ensure the use of the IEP Direct software by all PSSS staff. Coventry is once again leading in this area and is sharing our implementation with other districts.

5. Improve the implementation and use of educational and administrative technology systems.

5.1. Increase the implementation and the integration of *curricular technology projects* and district technology support systems.



- The above summarized IEP Direct project is but one of the technology integration projects cited throughout this document. Teachers are making significant strides in integrating technological requirements into their students' class projects. The school system continues to be responsive not only to the ever increasing demands of technological literacy for our students, but also to the ever increasing capabilities of our students as they move up through our system.

5.2. Continue to further develop procedures and practices in conjunction with the Connecticut SDE with an ever *increasing series of mandates and reports*.

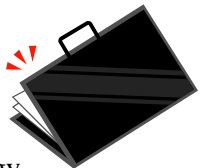
- Coventry Public Schools, like other districts in Connecticut, are dealing with an exponentially increasing demand for data from a variety of agencies. Once again, the impact of technology, including the speed of reporting and the need to compare and contrast programs and practices across state and regional boundaries, has resulted in a need for recordkeeping that is beyond anything ever known to our endeavor. In addition, compliance and legal mandates have resulted in a mushrooming effect on the production, use, and high liability nature of data.

5.3. Increase the *use of instructional technology*, including computer labs, in classroom technology, and smart boards, in order to enhance student achievement.

- The capacity of technology to assist students with special needs and provide more individualized instruction is evidenced by our IEP Direct project. More students are working with computers, other forms of technology, and Smart Boards than at this time last year, and the effort will continue to grow exponentially. Student portfolio systems are increasing as more student work can be saved on line. Teacher training in this area is a continued focus, as is true in all school districts where many of the students are outpacing the staff in technology literacy.

5.4. Implement a new *student portfolio system* at Coventry High School that is more consistent with expectations for student learning.

- The revised and restructured portfolio system at the middle school and high school focuses on furthering the quality of the student work collected. The high school staff has modified its procedures and practices related to student portfolios, and will showcase student work at a "portfolio night" this March. The complexities of the student portfolio system continue to be addressed in collaboration with the Technology Team as portfolio systems expand.



5.5. Design and develop the District's next *Three Year Technology Plan* for implementation for the 2009-2010 school year.

- Another very significant undertaking is in process. With the coordination of our technology specialist and representatives from all sites, a Coventry team is working with EASTCONN to develop our Coventry technology plan in compliance with a state

of Connecticut mandate. This three year plan must have the review of EASTCONN, by state requirement, and then will be presented to the Coventry Board of Education this spring. The staff has put forth significant effort and due diligence and is making progress through this task.

5.6. Continue the use of a *web-based facility use protocol*, including all related training and public information aspects.

- The Facilities Department continues to develop its web-based facilities protocol and procedures. The ever-moving target of room use and equipment requests is most complex, however, the partnership between the CNH and the CHS has really improved some of the challenges that were previously faced. It is the goal of the Maintenance Department to streamline the procedures and validate the agreements that are made. Further recommendations regarding the charges related to facility use are being developed by administration for presentation to the Board's policy committee.

5.7. Improve *computer access for grades K-5* students.

- The expansion of the computer systems at the G.H. Robertson School has really improved computer access for those students. It continues to be a challenge at Coventry Grammar School and will need to be further addressed in next year's Capital Improvement Program. The continuous upgrading of hardware and software is essential to effective systemic functioning.



5.8. Use *technology developed data* to track and be better informed regarding utility and facility expenses and usage.

- Several reports were provided to the Board of Education this year in this area. Using technology to study patterns and trends has laid to rest myths and provided for information essential to decision making. The Maintenance Department continues to use data to implement changes in utility and facility related operations. The complexities of data demands and use are infinite.

5.9. Further increase efficiencies and hold rising costs through a newly developed *transportation bid package*.

- The efforts of the Business Department and the Transportation Committee resulted in the rebidding of the transportation contract and the acceptance of a new contractor for providing student transportation services. The bus bid for the 2009-2010 school year is projected to save the district \$92,000. In addition, the pencil was sharpened on the special education transportation service provider and that should save on future costs.



For further information about any of these Coventry Public School programs and practices, please contact the Superintendent at her Office at 742-7317, by email at dbernard@coventryct.org, or at a "Donuts with Donna" session.