

Conant School Council

School Improvement Plan for the 2006 – 2007 School Year

**Luther B. Conant School
Acton, Massachusetts**

Principal: Dr. Maureen Bingham

June 7, 2006

Table of Contents

I.	Background and Rationale	
	A. School Council Membership -----	3
	B. School Council Meeting Dates-----	3
	C. School Council Process -----	3
	D. School Council Task Forces -----	4
II.	Evaluation of Current School Year Improvement Plan	
	A. School Council Goal One: -----	4
	Safety and Diversity	
	B. School Council Goal Two: -----	5
	Community Service	
	C. School Council Goal Three: -----	6
	Math	
	D. School Council Goal Four: -----	7
	Technology	
III.	Plans for the 2006 – 2007 Academic Year	
	A. School Council Goal One: -----	8
	Safety and Respect	
	B. School Council Goal Two: -----	9
	Community Service	
	C. School Council Goal Three: -----	10
	Academic Goal – Math	
	D. School Council Goal Four: -----	11
	Technology	
	E. School Council Goal Five: -----	11
	Reading and Spelling	

I. Background and Rationale

A. 2005 – 2006 Conant School Council Membership:

		<u>Length of Term</u>
Principal:	Dr. Maureen Bingham, Co-chairperson	2002 -
Parents:	Mary Einkauf, Co-chairperson	2004 - 2006
	Terese Hardy	2004 - 2006
	Jill Tsakiris	2005 – 2007
	Nicole LaGuerre	2005 – 2007
	Clara Paik	2005 - resigned
Staff:	Ann Burbank	2004 - 2006
	Karyn Ryan	2005 - 2007
	Maureen Brusie	2005 – 2007
	Melissa Meek	2005 - 2007
Community:	Paula Doyle	2001 – 2006
	Keith Campbell	2005 - 2007

B. School Council Meeting Dates:

September 7, 2005
October 12, 2005
November 9, 2005
January 11, 2006
February 8, 2006
March 8, 2006
April 12, 2006
May 10, 2006
June 7, 2006

C. School Council Process:

The Conant School Council generally meets on the second Wednesday of each month except for December. Decisions are made by consensus. Task Forces, consisting of at least one school council member and Conant parents and staff, are used to research and make recommendations to the Council on specific school improvement goals that are established each year. The task forces, which are not standing committees, report to the Council. This line of communication helps to provide direction and determines when a task force has completed its assigned task. Subcommittees of Council members meet as needed to accomplish tasks, such as the preparation of the School Improvement Plan. The work of

subcommittees, like that of task forces, is submitted to the Council as a whole for approval or review.

Meetings focus on monitoring the progress made toward accomplishing the Council's goals and discussing school policy issues which parents, students, or staff have requested be considered and which are not being addressed elsewhere by other groups in the school. In this latter capacity, the Council acts as a sounding board and advisor to the principal.

The Conant School Council, as a state-mandated and elected body representing parents and staff, views itself, in relation to the School Committee, as the appropriate vehicle for communicating the concerns and opinions of the Conant community. It would like the School Committee to continue to seek input from the Councils in each of the elementary schools.

D. School Council Representatives on Task Forces:

1. Respect and Diversity

Chair: Clara Paik

Members: Maureen Bingham, Mary Einkauf,
Nicole LaGuerre, Maureen Brusie, Keith Campbell

2. Community Service Learning

Chair: Ann Burbank

Members: Karyn Ryan

3. Math

Chair: Karyn Ryan

Members: Ann Burbank, Terese Hardy and staff and parents on the
Math Task Force

4. Technology

Chair: Melissa Meek

Members: Terese Hardy, Jill Tsakiris and staff on the Technology Task Force

II. Evaluation of Current Year School Improvement Plan

A. Goal One: Respect and Diversity

Objective: Continue to foster respect and appreciation of our diverse school community.

Responsible Parties: Respect and Diversity Task Force

Assessment of Progress:

- Continued the implementation of *Responsive Classroom* strategies such as “Morning Meeting” at all grades. Provided new staff with books on these practices.
- Continued to work with the Student Council to plan and run All School Meetings seven times a year and to identify the thought of the month as a theme for the ASM’s.
- Participation in diversity related events such as the International Dinner was somewhat lower this year due to the change to a Saturday lunch. We will try to get an evening event re-established.
- Established with the Student Council a cultural sharing day at Conant to be held on April 6.
- Re-established and expanded the International Committee on the PTO. Two meetings were held this year.

B. Goal Two: Community Service Learning

Objective: Continue to involve students more directly in community service learning activities through the development of school/grade level/classroom sponsored service programs that utilize and enhance grade level curriculum.

Responsible Parties: Ann Burbank and the Community Service Learning Committee

Assessment of Progress:

- Conant’s Community Service Learning (CSL) Committee met throughout the school year to discuss, plan, and evaluate a variety of projects. Within these meetings, the committee members focused on how to increase participation in CSL and how to involve students in many aspects of each service project.
- Conant students have created posters to advertise CSL projects that have taken place throughout the year, and they have encouraged other students’ participation in the CSL projects through reminders during morning announcements and All School Meetings.

The school-wide CSL projects this year were:

- Valentine’s Day cards were made for soldiers.
- Coats were collected, sorted and donated locally.
- A food drive, sponsored by the Student Council, was held in the fall to support the victims of Hurricane Katrina.
- A food drive to support local families was held in the spring.
- A very successful money drive to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina was held in September. Over \$14,000 was collected and donated to the

American Red Cross (which included a matching contribution from Roche Brothers.).

- The “Pennies for Pediatrics” collection was held in the spring. The money from “Pennies for Pediatrics” will be used to purchase games, books, etc. for the pediatric ward at Emerson Hospital.
- An “Adopt a Grandparent” program has been started this year. Five senior citizens were “adopted” within 5 separate classrooms.
- Students in Grades K-3 had Book Buddies who met weekly to read together or complete projects across grade levels.

Specific classroom or grade level CSL projects taking place were:

- A child book-taping project was completed to support the Perkins School for the Blind
- Numerous intergenerational connections were made
- An infomercial is being developed as part of a science project with the Acton Garden Club.

The children at Conant School are truly gaining a sense of how they can directly impact their community through their service, while learning at the same time. The goal was to have every grade level participate in at least one project in some form during this school year. This goal was met!

- The K-12 Community Service Learning folder, which is part of the system-wide email, has not been very active this year, mostly due to the lack of its visibility. The system-wide CSL liaisons are trying to work with the TRC to improve this situation.
- A system-wide Community Service Learning (CSL) committee continued for the second year, and Conant School has a representative on that committee. An \$800 portion of a grant was once again given to Conant to support its CSL projects. Conant used this money to pay for professional release time to assist with the planning and coordination of CSL projects and to purchase materials and literature that support and enhance our existing CSL projects.
- The School Council monitored the Community Service Learning Committee’s work.

C. Goal Three: Math

Objective: Continue Math Task Force to implement strategies that will best meet the mathematical needs of our teachers and students.

Responsible Parties: The Math Task Force

Assessment of Progress:

- In June 2005, 182 students participated in a voluntary summer math program.
- Throughout the school year teachers met with a Scott-Foresman trainer to discuss questions and the scope and sequence of the newly adopted math program.
- The staff continues to meet weekly by grade level to analyze the scope and sequence of the Scott-Foresman Addison Wesley program through curriculum mapping and journal keeping.
- On October 28, 2005, teachers discussed Marilyn Burns' book *So You Have to Teach Math?* which they read over the summer.
- Several teachers were enrolled in a graduate level course designed by Acton Public School Staff focusing on curriculum and technology integration, including math.
- On March 10, 2006, all teaching staff participated in a professional development day devoted to how children learn math.
- Some teachers have begun professional development discussion groups, which will continue over the summer and into the 2006-2007 school year.

D. Goal Four: Technology

Objective: Continue to make progress in the integration of technology into Conant's curriculum.

Assessment of Progress:

- Each teacher was equipped with an iMac workstation programmed with OSX.
- Several members of the Conant staff continue to participate in technology workshops as part of staff development. This year's workshops included an introduction to OSX and core curriculum applications, Microsoft Word, Inspiration, and PowerPoint.
- Consistent with the technology goals for Conant Elementary School, several faculty members took the graduate course being offered to APS teachers, "Enhancing Education with Technology". This course met every other month for approximately 10 hours on Friday and Saturday throughout the academic year. Teachers investigated the role of technology and its impact on education.
- Several teachers learned about and are beginning to use a valuable new web based book marking utility, The PortaPortal, where links to all favorite or teacher approved websites are stored. After learning about this tool, teachers

worked together to assist the primary grade classroom teachers in setting up a student bookmark to this site.

- Several teachers read parts of the book, *Teaching with the Internet K-12: New Literacies for New Times* by Leu et al. and *Developing Curious Minds* by John Bartell. The teachers consider this a great reference book to support learning about the new technologies available and their specific instructional value. The group shared information they found useful or websites they found worth investigating. The group participation in the course provided all an opportunity to share ideas and thoughts concerning ways to integrate technology and enhance instruction. The required readings prompted thoughtful discussions as teachers focused on the use of technology with math instruction. They explored new websites related to math skills and shared discoveries. Teachers were also introduced to the software, *Math Circus* and *Neighborhood MapMachine*. From creating a map to solving a map mystery, this application software was engaging and could easily offer students in grades 2 and up some educational fun while learning mapping skills and applying math concepts. (Description of the course was provided by Robyn Harding, Grade 5.)

IV. Plans for the 2006-2007 Academic Year

A. Goal One: Respect, Safety, Health and Diversity

Introduction: The School Council has recommended returning safety as a part of this goal and adding health in order to begin to implement the district wellness policy.

Objective:

Continue to foster respect, safety, health and appreciation of our diverse school community at Conant.

Suggested Strategies:

- Continue the implementation of *Responsive Classroom* strategies such as “Morning Meeting” at all grades and provide staff development opportunities to learn about more ideas for becoming a *Responsive Classroom* school from our staff who attend summer training.
- Continue to work with the Student Council to plan and run All School Meetings seven times a year and to identify the thought of the month as a theme for the ASM’s.
- Increase participation in diversity related events, such as the International Dinner, through increased communication about the events, incentives for attendance and scheduling the event at a more accessible time.
- Continue to work with the Student Council on organizing the second annual cultural sharing day at Conant called the *Free to Be You and Me* day.

- Work with the PTO to expand the International Committee.
- Work with the International Committee to identify “buddies” for new international parents.
- Work with our youth officer and Student Council to develop an All School Meeting on Safety Issues.
- Establish a Health Task Force with additional parent representatives to review and implement recommendations from our new district Wellness Policy.
- If funding permits, continue and possibly expand the *Second Step* anti-bullying program.

Outcome: Increased participation in respect and diversity events and more awareness of health and safety issues on the part of the students.

Responsible Parties: Maureen Brusie and the Respect and Diversity Task Force

B. Goal Two: Community Service Learning

Introduction: Following a very successful year of community service learning projects on the part of our students, the School Council wishes to maintain the goal of offering these opportunities for student involvement in both the local and larger world communities.

Objective:

Continue to involve students more directly in community service learning activities through the development of school/grade level/classroom sponsored service programs that utilize and enhance grade level curriculum.

Suggested Strategies:

- Continue the Community Service Learning (CSL) task force of Conant teachers and parents to identify community and other service opportunities.
Possibility of:
 - toy drive will be held instead of coat/book drive
 - increased participation in the Adopt a Grandparent program
 - two food drives (September and April) will be held instead of one drive
 - continuation of existing CSL projects
 - discuss the possibility of recycling in conjunction with the PTO
- Organize and facilitate a variety of school-wide CSL activities.
- Encourage staff to contribute service project ideas and successes to the K-12 Service Learning folder, which is located under NEWS in email.
- Have a representative participate in system-wide CSL discussions and training.

Outcome: Conant will continue to demonstrate successful community service learning programs, as measured by participation on the part of students.

Responsible Parties: Ann Burbank and the Conant Community Service Learning Task Force

C. Goal Three: Math

Introduction:

During the 2005-2006 school year, the math goal focused on providing Conant with a unified and updated math program. The adoption of the *Scott-Foresman/Addison Wesley* Mathematics program in kindergarten through grade six, accomplished this goal. For the 2006-2007 school year, the math goal will focus on refining the delivery of instruction to meet the needs of all students. In order to provide differentiated instruction in math, funding for two twelve hour assistant positions were requested from the PTO and approved.

Objective:

The Math Task Force will continue to serve as a steering committee to oversee the refinement of the new math program and offer professional development opportunities that meet the instructional needs of our teachers and students.

Suggested Strategies:

- Implement grade level pre- and post-testing.
- Develop grade level timelines that include spiral review of topics covered in previous grades and ensure proper pacing of instruction.
- Use the reflection logs developed in 2005-2006 to refine curriculum.
- Provide a professional development opportunity to organize math materials.
- Continue to promote the voluntary summer math program.
- Hire, train and supervise two twelve hour assistants to help provide differentiated instruction in math.

Outcome: Math instruction will be provided that is accessible to all students and enables them to build a firm foundation in mathematical skills and thinking

Responsible Parties: Karyn Ryan and Math Task Force

D. Goal Four: Technology

Introduction: Due to the successful staff development programs offered to Conant staff, the need for additional or repeated offerings has been indicated by staff requests. Conant staff will continue to work closely with the TRC to resolve technical implementation difficulties, and they are interested in learning about other applications that might assist them in meeting the learning needs of all students.

Objective:

Conant staff and the TRC will work to resolve technological impediments to the full use of programs and applications that assist in the integration of technology into the curriculum.

Suggested Strategies:

- Work closely, cooperatively and in a timely manner with TRC to resolve technological difficulties in adapting the OSX system. Provide timely feedback to TRC on the effectiveness of corrections and identify a point person for Conant who can help coordinate this. Investigate a stipend for this individual. Establish a logging system to help streamline tech requests.
- Offer a Tuesday morning series of teacher workshops on applications, “tips and tricks” and troubleshooting.
- Repeat the graduate course “Enhancing Education with Technology” and encourage staff members who have not participated to enroll.
- Research new software applications that would assist in technology integration and make these available to all teachers. Work with special and general educators to identify programs that would be of particular benefit for students with special needs.

Outcome: A notable decrease in technological “glitches” will be experienced and teachers will demonstrate increased confidence, comfort and creativity in their application of technological resources to their teaching repertoire.

Responsible Parties: The Technological Resource Center and the Conant Technology Committee

E. Goal Five: Reading and Spelling

Introduction:

As part of Conant’s Five Year Curriculum Review Plan, the reading and spelling curriculum and materials will be reviewed during the 2006-2007 school year. In the five-year interim period since the last review, Conant has developed a comprehensive writing program that provides consistency of instruction and vocabulary for narrative and expository writing across the grade levels.

Objective:

Conant's balanced literacy program will reflect recent research in instructional strategies and updated materials.

Suggested Strategies:

- Provide professional development opportunity based on Valerie Ellery's book *Creating Strategic Readers*.
- Monthly primary and intermediate meetings and grade level meetings will focus on reviewing the school's reading materials and spelling materials.

Outcome: Conant's reading and spelling programs will be updated and further aligned with the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks.

Responsible Parties: Melissa Meek and Judy Hause