

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Special Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2014
Ashford School
Library/Media Center

Attendance: K. Rourke, L. Donegan, J. Rupert, J. Lippert, D. Wesson, D. Hartigan, C. Ford, T. Hopkins, J. Longo

Audience: J. Mozeiko, R. Haeger, S. Irvine, N. Rice, C. Rupert, S. Morytko, and J. Lindsay

1. Call To Order 4:05 pm

2. Jim Rupert read a communication sent to the BOE by Gay Leedie. Her areas of concern were:

- Cleaning of foyer and cafeteria area
- Improve storage for primary and each grade level
- Improvements in recycling program

3. A BOE roundtable with public participation began with the audience having an opportunity to bring up topics for discussion by the BOE. This was a free flowing dialogue that addressed the items posted on the initial agenda, in a fluid form.

The following list represents those items arose during the discussion.

- The BOE must improve communication
 - More information on the web site
 - Publish agenda and even minutes sooner when possible
 - Publish all documents that accompany BOE agenda
 - Use K-12 alerts to publish material from the BOE
 - Consider a guidance counselor and or a social worker
 - Look into the concept of the larger classes for specials seeing if an alternative plan is possible that would still afford time for data team meetings
 - Put a parent resource section on the web site that helps parents find supplemental resources to use with their children at every grade level and subject
 - Sponsor a parent resources night where parents can see how to use additional resources and where to get them
 - Create a parent corner in the library of resource books and electronic sources that parents could use to enrich the learning experience for their children
 - Consider having evening hours for the library a few times a month for parents and students
- The BOE change its agenda for some meetings to allow more time for public input later in the meeting

- Consider changing the BOE agenda to accommodate more long term planning and goal setting in the first meeting of each month prior to budget season especially for the following discussions
 - Improving writing scores
 - Improving communication
 - Adding earlier and more foreign language instruction
 - Long term planning for facility improvements
 - Capital, i.e. such as a hung ceiling in media center and classrooms
- CMT
 - How did we decide to go with CMT rather than Smarter Balanced test?
 - Writing scores – we need to improve writing performance
- STEAM must be better explained to parents.
 - The science component is well communicated, but the arts component is not
- Teacher’s websites must be more uniform and up to date
 - Who will manage oversight of teacher’s web sites?
- BOE Should Challenge Leadership and participate more in decisions
- Change BOE meeting agendas – Persons to be heard later in the meeting
- Discussion of transportation
 - Try to find a way to notify parents of approximate drop off times, perhaps personalized messages by e-mail or text or note home
- Better use of Powerschool or other means to inform parents of homework, assignments curriculum topics to be covered
 - Parents want information from teachers, not only daily homework and long-term assignments, but also major themes of material to be covered so they might plan trips or purchase of books to support learning.
 - Parents want everyone to use the same means of communicating. If it is through their web sites, they want everyone to use it.
- Curriculum questions for discussion
 - Spanish instruction expanded to begin from Kindergarten
 - Improvements needed in the writing program

A light dinner was provided at 5:30 as a buffet and the dialogue continued while people ate.

- Board of Education concerns to be discussed in future meetings are:

- Insure school calendar matches EO Smith with opening of school and a many days as possible for ease of day-care
 - Explore ways to increase qualified family involvement in free-reduced lunch option
 - Find ways to reduce paper use by BOE
 - School should reduce repetitive forms and use more on-line forms that can be filled out on-line – electronic submission
 - Add an enrichment component to the web site to let parents know what is available in clubs, electives, computer language program availability etc.
 - Look for sister schools can be in country but another culture would be great
 - Create a group to explore beautification of the grounds and facility
 - Schedule regular inspections of the playground by an independent inspector
 - Have our maintenance staff inspect the playground equipment a s part of a checklist of routine checking of the facility and grounds
- BOE should have a long-term plan for curriculum and instruction
 - Expanding foreign language options
 - Building the writing program
 - Plan for curriculum writing an book purchase in the budget
 - BOE Long-term capital plan ideas
 - Refurbish school plumbing – systemic replacement of antiquated plumbing
 - Improve exterior signage
 - Fix the dangerous slope in the front of the building
 - Repave front area or at least seal it for purposes of appearance and consistency
 - Repair blacktop in primary play area
 - Add portico in front of the building
 - Contact local representative regarding a flashing light out front of the building – it is an accident waiting to happen
 - Upgrade the phone system
 - Dialogue around the budget and the budget process
 - The Superintendent’s narrative was helpful – it could be expanded on the web site
 - Parents want more notice of budget hearings with specific topics that will be discussed so they might attend meetings that will address topics important to them
 - Conduct a parent workshop on the budget process if possible
- Concerns and Issues (each BOE member will list concerns or issues that they would like to discuss at the retreat, or in a future meeting)
 - Time for goal setting

- Time for long-term planning
- Three board meetings to plan the budget process
- Declining enrollment
 - Regional opportunities such as sharing staff or field trips
 - Branding the town and the school to attract more residents.
- Improve test scores to stand out in the region

There was a consensus among the group that this was a very productive meeting and would like to explore ways to fit such discussions into the regular schedule of BOE meetings and special events devoted to parent involvement. The BOE will discuss this in a future meeting.

In closing the meeting it was apparent that there were a few major areas of concern shared by the audience, the administration and the BOE. They were:

- Improving communication
 - Improving the web site
- Improving resources for parents
- Improving the budget development process
- Developing three or five year plans for
 - Curriculum and instruction items
 - Staffing
 - Curriculum writing
 - Books and materials purchasing
 - Capital improvements
 - Facility and grounds items

Motion to Adjourn 8:35 - K. Rourke Second – L. Donegan

Recorded by: Dr. James Longo

To the Board of Education,

First, I would like to acknowledge that I am often a more vocal participant at board meetings, and that sometimes my passion for our school and its students create moments of tension between the Board and myself. For that I apologize. Ashford and Ashford School have become very dear to me over the 33 years I have lived here. I want this school and this town to live up to its potential, and sometimes my sense of urgency spills into a show of frustration.

This retreat, and your invitation for feedback and suggestions, is an incredible opportunity for the community to share ideas, and for you to strengthen our school system. I am grateful for the chance and would like to share some areas where I think Ashford School has room to grow in regards to our infrastructure and systems.

1. School Recycling

Currently, Ashford School recycles a small amount of what could be put into the single stream system. The majority of recyclables go into our one dumpster with the regular trash. The only material we consistently recycle is cardboard. In the classroom we are teaching our students to be global citizens who recognize that their actions impact the larger world. Renewable resources and conservation are a part of the science curriculum, but these values are not reflected in our own actions. If the Board insisted that the school executed an effective and consistent recycling system, I believe the staff and students would take on the challenge.

2. Utilizing Storage Areas

Currently, we have storage areas housing outdated or unusable items while perfectly good resources like desks are thrown away due to lack of space. I encourage you to spearhead an inventory of the storage spaces, throwing out or donating items that do not have a place in a modern school, and making room for items that should be saved for future use.

3. Updates to plumbing

There are many faucets throughout the building that leak water, often hot water, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. By replacing faucets and tightening seals the school could conserve water and energy, thus lowering it's operating budget.

4. Lower Lobby/ Cafeteria

My hope is that the Saturday staff member is dedicated to the lower area of the school where regular janitorial work is done infrequently. For example, areas like the rafters in the cafeteria and the stage are rarely, if ever, cleaned. These areas, while not classrooms, are a part of our building that the public sees most frequently. We want students and parents to feel pride when they enter our building. Additionally, staffing these areas on Saturdays will ensure that a school employee will be present during weekend activities conducted by outside groups.

5. Public Input

I would like to ask the Board consider hosting workshops or opening office hours for public input at the beginning of the budget cycle to allow staff and residents to share ideas or concerns about the school's budget. By opening this topic up for discussion you will inevitably get a multitude of suggestions that have the potential to save overhead costs, thus allowing you to spend more of our budget directly on the children and classrooms. Also, I believe it is important for the Board to get information from the staff and the public before you complete your evaluation process of the administration. When a staff member

leaves, you may find exit interviews beneficial. If Ashford School truly wants to remain an excellent institutions for learning, then feedback shouldn't just be allowed, it should be encouraged. Visit the classrooms, talk to the teachers, meet with parents. Giving more stakeholders a voice strengthens our community and our kids' education.

Thank you for this opportunity to share these concerns. I am always eager to help improve the environment where our children spend so much of their time. Please let me know if you would like to discuss these ideas in person, or if I can be of assistance as you move forward with any of these changes.

Thank you,
Gay Leedie

Unapproved

Ashford School Board of Education Retreat Board member Worksheets

Introduction

The Ashford Board of Education is holding a retreat and special meeting on Saturday, September 13, 2014 in order to discuss Board goals for the future of education in Ashford. The topics will cover a broad spectrum in order to have flexibility in discussion topics.

This is a public meeting and is designed to engage the public as well as Board members. If you have an interest you are encouraged to come and participate, or provide your written comments to us prior to the meeting for consideration. It is our sincere hope that the retreat will be well attended by the board, the public and educators from our Ashford community.

The meeting agenda that we will address is as follows:

1. Call To Order
Board Roundtable with public participation encouraged, including, but not being limited to the following topics:
2. Initial Public Input (Open Forum: Public may sign up to speak as they arrive and will be heard in that order) (Limit time to five minutes each);
 - Roundtable Dialogue around Public Input and Board of Education
4. Concerns and Issues (each BOE member will list concerns or issues that they would like to discuss at the retreat, or in a future meeting)
 - a. List the issues that you would like to have the BOE address
 - i. Issue one:
 - ii. Issue two
 - iii. Issue three
5. Board Goal Setting (Each BOE member will bring topics they feel should be addressed through BOE Goals) Goals for 2014-2015
 - a. Attached are the BOE goals from last year as well as the goals of the superintendent and the School Improvement Team for this year
 - i. 2013-2014 BOE Goals attached
 - ii. 2014-2015 Superintendent's Goals attached
 - iii. 2014-2015 School Improvement Team Goals Attached
 - b. Do you After reviewing the goals, please indicate those you would like to continue, those you feel can be eliminated and any new goals you propose here:
6. Long term planning (Projects that should be put on a timed plan both capital and general BOE budgets)
 - a. Attached Previous Three Year Plan and Older Five Year Plan
 - b. To be discussed
 - i. Budget Process – proposed changes – Meeting with BOF Plans

- ii. Capital projects – 2013-2014 Capital plan attached
- iii. BOE funded projects
- iv. Budget (discuss plans for new approach to budget process and document preparation)
- Open session/other BOE agenda items (Items not covered previously or that emerge during the retreat)
- Roundtable

Unapproved

Ashford School
2014-2015
Mission, Theory of Action, Motto and Goals

Mission Statement

To present a school district that supports all students in achieving their highest educational and personal potential as productive citizens of the diverse, multicultural, and global, 21st century community in which they live.

Superintendent's Goals

- To lead Ashford School's curriculum toward a "STEAM" (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) model, that utilizes interdisciplinary units that support the individual content areas, as well as the connections among different content areas that are at the foundation of deeper learning.
- To promote and develop a “personalized learning instructional vision” that utilizes varied sources of data to support both individualized and differentiated instruction in all classrooms.
- To conduct a needs assessment of curriculum and instruction at Ashford School, utilizing an administration/faculty committee to make recommendations for development of the 2015-2016 budget.
 - Assess the status of curriculum, staffing, and instructional practices
 - Make recommendations for the future of Ashford school based upon this needs assessment (including a proposed calendar for implementation)
- Provide leadership that promotes and improves communication between Ashford School and its community.

**Ashford School Statement of Action and Goals
2014-2015**

Theory of Action:

If we collaborate in creating a positive learning community that is respectful of and responsive to student differences, celebrates effort and growth, and provides a challenging curriculum that promotes creativity through student directed, interdisciplinary, technology-accelerated learning, then all students will grow personally, building a solid foundation of skills and enthusiasm for future learning.

Motto: We Optimize Learning For (WOLF) All

Goals:

- Promote critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills through the implementation of interdisciplinary curriculum, following the concept of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics), which apply to the real world now and in the future.
- Personalize learning for each student through the examination of performance data and the design of specific differentiated instruction that improves skills resulting in personal success.
- Communicate and display student achievements and school spirit while clearly articulating learning expectations and the school's role in preparing students for success in the 21st century to the larger community.
- Improve communication procedures among all departments and staff.

School Improvement Plan 2014-2015

How the school goals will be accomplished

Goal 1: Promote critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills through the implementation of interdisciplinary curriculum, following the concept of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics), which apply to the real world now and in the future.

- K-4 teachers met with content specialists to organize STEAM ideas and plans for 2014/2015.
- Outside professionals present STEAM training to the staff on August 27, 2014.
- Implement a schedule with extended instructional time.
- Implement a schedule with additional enrichment time for student choice in grades 5-8.

- Create a STEAM committee with a representative from each curriculum instruction committee (Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, Climate and Wellness) that will meet before our first professional development day of October 14, 2014.
- STEAM committee communicates plans, drives implementation, and monitors progress of interdisciplinary learning.
- STEAM committee will recommend professional development
- STEAM committee will support teachers as they create or modify an existing unit into an interdisciplinary STEAM unit.
- Teachers will create and implement two interdisciplinary units for the 2014-2015 school year.
- Some time during professional days, faculty meetings, collaborative team meetings, and release time will be used for STEAM planning for units and enrichments.

Goal 2: Personalize learning for each student through the examination of performance data and the design of specific differentiated instruction that targets skills and results in personal success.

- Examine student achievement data and identify areas of concern at each grade level.
- Distribute content specialists to assist areas of need and extension learning, incorporating multi grade groupings for the extension learning.
- Throughout the year, faculty will analyze areas of concern and design targeted interventions, enrichments and lessons to meet the academic, social, emotional and physical learning needs of all students. (Some of this work will occur during grade-level collaborative team meetings)
- Multi grade collaborative team meetings meet throughout the year as needed.
- Throughout the year, provide personal growth opportunities across the curriculum (i.e. Student Success Plan, HOS, Flight, Wings, Swings, SOAR, Morning Meetings, PBIS).
- Provide optional opportunities for student growth (i.e. sports, clubs, enrichments).

Goal 3: Communicate and display student achievements and school spirit while clearly articulating learning expectations and the school's role in preparing students for success in the 21st century to the larger community.

- Create and distribute Welcome Brochures for each grade level to communicate curriculum to families.
- Create a live binder for families to access for home academic support and enrichment.
- Host curriculum nights to articulate learning expectations and showcase student work.
- Participate in and support school and community events (i.e. 300th year anniversary events).
- Create and support school traditions (i.e. students vs. staff competitions and games, pep rallies, student recognition assemblies, primary pride).
- Create email groups for increased communication with families.

Goal 4: Improve communication procedures among all staff, departments and families.

- Communicate procedure changes (create a forms book with procedure instructions)
- Budget process
- Field trip and bus request process including duty coverage for attending staff
- Classroom visitors and guest speakers

- Managing visitors for large events
- Website management/changes and updates (who is responsible for what?)
- Event set-up requests
- Building use forms
- School master event calendar in the office maintained and updated regularly
- “Fly-bys” followed up with e-mails
- Weekly 10-minute grade level check-in with administration in person or via e-mail
- All forms updated and online
- Coverage process for meetings and duties
- Communication and recognition of teacher contributions, achievements and efforts.
- Anyone can submit a teacher to the climate committee, with any positive reason, to be recognized with a gold star at the next faculty meeting.

Connection of Goals to the Professional Learning and Evaluation Program

Goal 1: Evidence collected through observations of teaching (part of 40%)

Goal 2: Evidence collected through SMART goal achievement and collaborative team meetings (45%)

Goal 3: Evidence collected through teacher reflection on achievement of the parent-input goal (10%)

Goal 4: Evidence integrated with Domain 4 – Professional Responsibilities and Teacher Leadership

2013-2014 Mission Statement and BOE Goals

Mission Statement

To present a school district that supports all students in achieving their highest educational and personal potential as productive citizens of the diverse, multicultural, and global, 21st century community in which they will live.

2013- 2014 Board of Education Goals

1. To initiate policies and practices, as well as devote appropriate resources, towards the improvement of Ashford students on the Connecticut Mastery test.
2. To promote instructional practices rooted in the individual skills, talents, needs and performance of the student.
3. To initiate mechanisms for improved and effective communication with the community as well as town leaders and other town boards and committees.
4. To develop a three-year school improvement plan that presents, and explains, an optimal path towards educational excellence in Ashford.

Ashford School
 Three-Year Plan
 2011-2014
 August 2009 - Revised July 2011
 J. Longo

Plan	Budget Impact Estimate/Status
<p>Year One: 2011-12 All items continue through the three years unless otherwise indicated</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budget Improve mechanism for tracking and reconciling budget 2. Continue to work with staff regarding curriculum, instruction, assessment, culture, and climate in the school. Attend a team meeting at every level, initiate committees for the year, elicit volunteers, and engage all groups. 3. Implement an SRBI program that introduces grade level data binders for team use in tracking student achievement. Attend Team Meetings and Lead Professional Development Days. Include SRBI in evaluation plan revisions. Use data and data teams to respond to CMT performance through revised instructional practices individually designed by grade and student. 4. Add Cameras to all Buses to improve discipline and safety. Review effectiveness of camera system. Bus driver training on discipline. 5. Develop improved networks among our middle school staff and the staff at EO Smith that include spiraling of curriculum and expectations for high school success. Both grad 7 & 8 staff should be involved. 6. Review the effectiveness of the writing position in January 2011. Determine if part time is effective or if full time should be recommended. This position serves grades 5-8 to improve writing performance on the CMT as well as teach research skills in preparation for high school. This would be a co-teaching system with a specialist that goes to each group. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We hired new staff and have begun the reorganization of the department. 2. No cost. It is my intent to become more involved in this initiative, Ongoing initiative. Except for Professional Development speakers. 3. Introduced and ready for next stages through PD. 4. Installed. Will plan PD. 5. Cost of Substitutes-Estimate it at \$1,000 6. No Additional cost, yet it is a Half time teacher formally our MS reading teacher \$31,000. Going full time would be additional funds.

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| <p>7. Begin a study of our middle grades with the goal of implementing a middle school philosophy and schedule. Include a NELMS professional development experience.</p> <p>8. Look at the middle school schedule to implement a study skills program as the logical evolution of the program now offered. This should be the topic of the MS staff to determine best application of the concept.</p> <p>9. Continue to work with the new special education director to restructure the special education department.</p> <p>10. Consider effectiveness of the administrative team. Find a part time Curriculum director as we determine uses of Job Funds monies. This might be something that we initiate in the spring to be part of the future administrative configuration.</p> <p>11. Design a new professional development plan to direct energy toward efficient use of data as well as improved faculty ownership of the success and failure of school goals and connection to district mission and vision.</p> <p>12. Move faculty toward a model of curriculum and instructional practices that provide opportunities for increased instructional risk taking, creativity, innovation, and an ownership by teachers.</p> <p>13. Develop a series of sessions devoted to “Innovation” in teaching that will generate more creative and innovative instructional strategies</p> <p>14. Work on school culture to increase positive attitudes and professionalism among the staff with recognition by the community of the efforts of staff to increase student-learning capacity.</p> <p>15. Continue the District Improvement Committee work to improve the major goals of the faculty and administration to improve our school.</p> <p>16. Form a space needs assessment review committee to determine long-term classroom needs.</p> | <p>7. No cost except potential substitutes teachers.</p> <p>8. No Cost except if w decide to write a study skill curriculum \$2,000.</p> <p>9. No additional cost.</p> <p>10. Three day a week position, or full time Cost would be about \$60-75,000.</p> <p>11. Have begun this process. Committee in place. No cost.</p> <p>12. Have begun this by allowing all day-during school time team meetings. Will continue to pursue this approach. Cost about \$2,000 annually.</p> <p>13. From PD Grant</p> <p>14. No cost</p> <p>15. Cost of substitutes only</p> <p>16. No cost</p> |
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Year Two: 2012-2013

<p>17. Add a certified media specialist to run our library and computer classes including study skills: Consider for 2012-2013 implementation.</p> <p>18. Reconfigure use of classroom space in the primary wing of the building to accommodate enrollment changes and projections. May include construction of a bathroom in one room. Create a committee of Primary staff to make formal recommendations and put them in the capital plan proposal.</p> <p>19. Add a Spanish teacher to provide Spanish study in grades 3-8.</p> <p>20. Form a committee to study the value of implementing a fully developed instructional data system. Review of what purchased packages are available and their effectiveness and costs.</p> <p>21. Add to our website to increase its use for students, parents and community members including links to all curriculum, schedules, grades, support material, and school resources. Include an area for questions or concerns.</p> <p>22. Fully utilize the data binders to differentiate instruction that is responsive to individual student needs. Begin to digitize process.</p> <p>23. Continue evolution of teacher's teamwork on curriculum and instructional practices through use of professional development and time allocated to the process.</p> <p>24. The BOE Transformation committee should review the possibility of restructuring the "Transportation Administrator" Position to accommodate needs in AM and PM making the position purely administrative.</p> <p>25. Begin a thorough review of all curricula with special emphasis upon differentiated instruction, data driven instruction, inclusion new state standards and curriculum frameworks. Develop a curriculum writing schedule.</p> <p>26. Look at remedial math and reading and determine if a remedial department needs to be formed from K-8 including possibility of increased staff.</p> <p>27. Form a group of interested faculty and community members to consider the formation of a program for student exchanges abroad</p> <p>28. Explore possibility of sister school programs</p> <p>29. Develop more ties with UCONN</p>	<p>17. Approx \$60,000</p> <p>18. No Cost unless construction needed and furniture needed.</p> <p>19. Cost of one additional staff member, \$55,000 to have full Spanish instruction in the school.</p> <p>20. Cost based only upon implementation committee recommendations.</p> <p>21. No cost</p> <p>22. No cost</p> <p>23. May require outsourced web service. Inquiries will begin to determine if a cost is associated with this.</p> <p>24. Potential Cost of replacing AM and PM bus run driver.</p> <p>25. No cost until writing begins.</p> <p>26. Potential for new staff position</p> <p>27. No cost</p> <p>28. No cost</p> <p>29. No cost</p>
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30. Form a committee to begin study of renovation of building or feasibility of a new school building

30. No cost to study unless we decide to engage an architectural firm.

Three Year Plan Major Items by Category

Curriculum and Instruction

- Improve Middle school Transition to HS
- Implement MS Concept Fully
- Improve DATA use for driving instruction
- CMT and Data Analysis Applications: Develop systems to best utilize data to improve instructional effectiveness
- Create Innovative approaches through Professional Development and staff planning
- Review current curriculum writing schedule – create a new plan
- Continue district improvement committee

Staffing:

- Add a curriculum administrator
- Add Math Resource teacher
- Add a Remedial Reading teacher
- Add Media Specialist
- Add Spanish Teacher

Facility

- We should develop our long term facility plan with sequence of projects in order of need or importance
- Such as to renovate Tech Space, Tile and Paint front hallways, Tile currently carpeted rooms, Roof.
- Consider major renovations and new facility

Capital

- Buses – upgrade fleet
- Renovation Media Center, Tech Space, Halls

February 22, 2013

To: Ralph Fletcher, Ashford First Selectman

From: James Longo, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools

Re: Ashford Board of Education Capital Improvement Five-year Plan Proposal

At their February 21, 2013 meeting the Board of Education officially designated the following projects as their (five-year plan) priority list of requests from the town's capital budget.

Year One: Year one projects are to be partially funded by redirecting funds previously allocated for the purchase of a new school bus this year (2013).

	Estimated Costs
Safety Improvements to the School Building	
Turning two classrooms into offices	
Returning two office spaces from offices to classrooms	
Hallway Safety Doors	
Closed circuit camera system	
	\$95,000
Division of Tech-Ed room space	
Temporary 8' walls, doors, and two windows	
Total Estimate for all above:	
Painting front hallway	
	\$6,000
Tile for front hallway	
	\$5,500
Addition of a bathroom to a classroom fro Pre-K use	
	<u>\$36,000</u>
	Total of year one proposal:
	\$143,500
Year Two:	
Front Entrance Portico	
Retaining wall, with signage, fill (to level) and paving of front lot	TBD
Year Three:	
Replacement of windows and doors	\$90,000
Year four:	
Air Balance System	\$60,000
Year Five:	
Paving of playground, sidewalk and driveway in the front of the building	TBD