Ashford Board of Education
Retreat Minutes Notes
8-11-16

J. Longo

Attendance: J. Rupert, K. Rourke, M. Matthews, L. McAdams-Donegan, J. Calarese, T. Hopkins, C. Ford, G. Dukette, J. Longo

Also Present: Steve Morytko, Mary Morytko and Rebecca Haeger

Meeting called to order at 4:15

1. Persons to be heard moved until 5:00 PM
2. Goals Discussion
   BOE discussed concept of goals that are built upon and last a few years. Keep last year's goals as a foundation and build a few more this year.

   Jim Rupert opened the BOE 2016-2017 Goals discussion with areas he felt needed to be addressed, and the entire Board joined the discussion brainstorming their concerns, coming up with the following list. While some of the concerns may not result in goals they should become matters addressed by the administration
   1. More custodial Professional Development. Develop a comprehensive facility Maintenance Plan. Make cleaning of the building's storage spaces a priority
   2. Get Green Bank back to the school for a more detailed energy study of the building
   3. Actively explore tuition students by surveying the community and contacting communities such as parish Hill
   4. Seek ways to increase parental and community collaboration with school decisions and activities.
   5. Increase Teacher's involvement with BOE meetings
   6. Add emphasis on social responsibility, community service to curriculum
   7. Further develop our web presence and have teacher's websites more informative ith assignments, and daily notes to parents.
   8. More emphasis on preparation for high school and high school transition
3. Persons To Be Heard
   a. Steve Morico asked for the BOE to explore a student and Teacher exchange program. Look at the Mansfield model. Could be international or domestic.
   b. Rebecca asked us to look at the school heating system. There are rooms that get real hot while others do not.
   c. The Gifted and Talented program needs to be expanded and more time devoted to an enrichment program
4. Administrator's Reports – Each administrator broke their report into three parts: Current Activities, Future Activities, Next Year's Goals
   a. Principal's Report - Troy Hopkins
      i. Mr. Hopkins used a PowerPoint to guide his report. It is attached.
      ii. Presented an outline of current activities which included revisions in the school schedule, changes in professional development to include Paraprofessionals and other non-certified staff, new curriculum software, improved use of data
      iii. He then went to future projects that are in the works

1. Research based grading, a comprehensive wellness program, more teacher support programs,
2. Initiate our one-to-one laptop program
3. Collaborate with EO Smith on professionals development

iv. Review of the Principal's 2016-2017 draft goals
1. Increase opportunities for collaboration
2. Add new courses of study
3. Add more opportunities for faculty leadership
4. Support NAEYC accreditation process

b. Assistant Principal's Report – Garrett Dukette
i. Current Activities
1. Participation in scheduling by doing the grade seven and eight schedule as a means of professional growth
2. Chaired revision of written handbooks such as the student/parent handbook, STRIVE handbook, Student Success Plan program
3. Worked on refining our PBIS professional development for August 29
4. Worked on a new training session for substitutes
5. Involved in PD planning with EO Smith administrators
6. Developed a new monitored reading program to improve reading and writing in Ashford School

ii. Future Projects
1. Continue to improve upon the Gifted and Talented Program Curriculum and structure
2. Continue to develop the PBIS program with staff involvement
3. Improve the PD program through modeling of good teaching as well as collaborative choosing of topics of PD
4. Introduce more use of Flipped Classroom
5. Increase technology use
6. Develop Project Based Learning use in our school
7. Increase understanding of Restorative Discipline
8. Seek ways to integrate new initiatives into the schedule

iii. 2016-2-17 Goals
1. Enroll in a doctorate in leadership program
2. Improve leadership skills through increased feedback
3. Improve our writing program
4. Increase classroom presence
5. Be a char in a NEASC study team

c. Director of Pupil Personnel's Report
i. Current Activities
1. Successful Extended Year Program
2. Expanding understanding of our education for all students' program
3. Early intervention supports improved through administrative support
4. Report on the success of the de-escalation program – CPI
5. Discussion of SRBI and its role
6. SIT – explaining the role and success of the Student Intervention Program
7. Ashford School's IDEA compliance and process

8. The important role of our contracted pyschologst

ii. Future Projects
1. Implementing an improved K-3 Special Education program
2. Expanding in-district support for intensive needs population
3. Increased use of our contracted Experts
4. Refining professional development for SpEd Staff

iii. Goals for 2016-2017
1. Expand Professional Development opportunities for SpEd Staff
2. Improve leadership Skills through Personal professional development
3. Improve communication both internally and to the community

5. Capital Improvement priorities
   i. Look at current July 2016 Capital Improvement priorities list
      1. Add Sprinkler system
      2. Add Bollards to rear school entrance
      3. Add Protective Benches or Boulders to front playground area
   ii. Await report from Friar & Associates to see if their recommendations will influence our capital plans
   iii. Bring the new plan to the BOE for review, approval and adoption
6. Three-Year Plan
   a. BOE reviews the current three-year Plan and notice that administrative team has updated it for BOE review
   b. The administrative team should review its proposed three-year plan and bring it aas a report to the October BOE meeting for approval
7. Technology Plan
   a. All inventory has been updated in recognition of pre-purchasing due to use of 2015-2016 funds
   b. Discussion of the one-to-one laptop plan pilot to take place this year in grade six.
8. Board Of Education Retreat Roundtable – Brainstorming session of ideas for the future
   a. Improve our Global Education initiatives through study of European successes
   b. Explore Coalition of Essential Schools for Ashford School
   c. Look for international and national partnerships
   d. Increase teacher reports to BOE meetings
   e. Change BOE meeting time to 7:00 Pm

Meeting Adjourned at 839 pm by Mutual Consent

Attachments:

Administrator's PowerPoint
S.T.R.I.V/E. handbook
Overview of PBIS program
Student Success Plan Brochure
Overview of Reading Program
NAETC Accreditation notes

Principal's Report

Current Projects, Future Plans, Goals for 2016-2017 school year

Current Activities:

- Finalizing the school schedule
  - Extra special periods allows small class size under the four-day schedule
  - Specials are year-long aligning with STEAM
- Professional Development
  - Developing a workshop on Project Based Learning for August 29, which supports our STEAM initiative
  - Working with EO Smith and sending schools on joint PD Days
  - Working with custodial staff to develop a positive climate
- Monitoring the initial use of the Unit Planner software
- Analyzing student data at each grade level
- Hiring an art teacher

Future Projects:

- Research grading and reporting options that lead to increased learning
- Establish a cohesive wellness that promotes optimum health and wellness
- Plan and implement a successful one to one laptop initiative in the sixth grade
- Organize teacher support sessions with a focus on newer teachers

Future Projects (Cont.):

- Enable faculty to work on their individual needs while aligning to school goals
- Plan PD
  - increasing adult knowledge and skill
  - with accountability for implementation of new learning
  - In collaboration with EO Smith and other sending schools
- Offer learning opportunities for all staff throughout the year

2016-2017 Goals

- Closely monitor the work within our organizational structure
  - data teams, PBIS committee, climate, curriculum, assessment
  - Ashford School Council (ASC)
- Promote effective instruction through collaboration
  - Encourage conversations among administrators and faculty members
  - Discuss data collected during co-observed lessons and peer observations
- Support the implementation of new courses
- Continue to develop a climate of shared leadership among the faculty and build upon my leadership skills
- Support NAEYC accreditation through the visitation and follow-up steps

Assistant Principal's Report

Current Projects, Future Plans, Goals for 2016-2017 school year

Current Activities:

- Created and finalized 7th and 8th grade schedule
  - Personal growth
  - Challenge Math
- Revised student handbook for 2016-2017 school year
  - Clarified language
  - Updated technology policy
  - Revamped PBIS initiative
- Developed PBIS PD for August 29
  - Refocus the staff
  - Provide examples
  - Answer questions

Current Activities (cont.):

- Worked with E.O. Smith to develop continuity regarding Power School
  - Email blasts by January 1
  - Consistent icon use
- Developed Gifted/Talented mentor handbook
  - Mentor/Mentee relationship
  - Individualized learning
  - Life long learning
  - Student retention
- Worked to hire new subs
  - Advertised/Interviewed
  - Personal growth
  - School need

Current Activities (cont.):

- Planned for Monitored Independent Reading Program
  - Grades 7/8
  - Fills ELA hole
  - Reading impacts writing
  - Providing choice

Future Projects:

- Fine tune and grow the Gifted/Talented program
  - Increase challenge opportunities
  - Broaden mentors
  - Focus on publication
- Continual support of staff rollout of PBIS program
  - Ongoing PD
  - Emphasize restorative discipline
  - Ongoing feedback from stakeholders
- Continue to model good teaching practices in PD
  - Stations
  - Workshop

Future Projects (Cont.):

- Staff development on "Flipped Classroom"
  - Homework alternative
  - 21st century skills (Habits of Mind)
- Increase consistent technology PD
  - Google
  - Edmodo
- Develop a fluid process for benchmark scoring
  - Blind scoring
  - Calibration
- Develop personal knowledge of PBL
  - Project vs. Problem
  - Examples are key

2016-2017 Goals

- Apply for and be accepted into UConn Educational Leadership doctoral program
- Use feedback from all stakeholders to continue to grow as a leader
- Continue to develop the Ashford School writing program
- Increase presence in classroom- Emphasize educational leadership and de-emphasize paperwork
- Chair a school accreditation visit
- Strike a better balance between work and family

Director of Pupil Personnels Report

Current Projects, Future Plans, Goals for 2016-2017 school year

Current Activities:

- ESY Program
  - Successful summer with a theme around Willy Wonka and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
  - Creative projects with candy through writing, reading and mathematics depending on the individual needs of the students.
- Early Intervention Support
  - Benefit to the education of our students.
  - Multiple at-risk students were able to be supported through the Student Intervention Teams (SIT).
  - Progress was documented very clearly and communicated with parents.
- Support through a Clinical Psychologist
  - Asset for the district bridging the home/school relationship.
  - Assists with educating our students in-district.
- Building In-house Capacity via Professional Development
  - Meeting the state and federal requirements for identifying and servicing students with Dyslexia, crisis intervention and prevention through Crisis Prevention Intervention(CPI).

Future Projects:

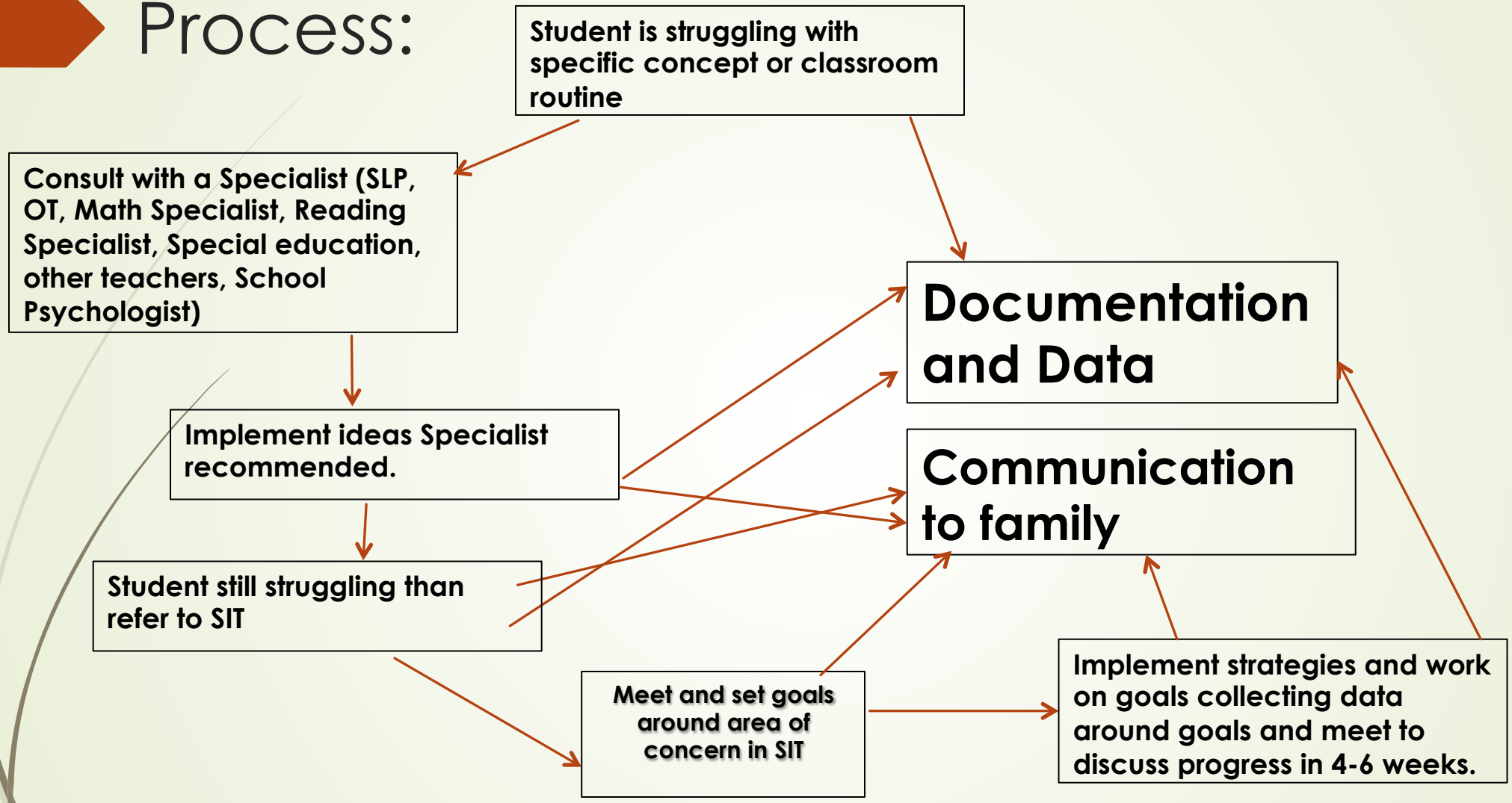
- New Special Education position for the grades K-3.
  - supporting students on the Autism Spectrum and behavior.
- Providing in-district support to Intensive Population
  - Extending support from our contracted experts: Speech and Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist and our Physical Therapist.
  - Our leading experts provide support our at risk population by supporting teachers.
- Professional Development of our Special Education Staff.
  - Specific areas of training topics: Training on PPT process and proper communication during meetings, Specific disabilities training, Law on Special Education, Behavior management tools, and CPI trainings and refreshers as needed.
- Updating the website to provide information around our Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI) which is our Student Intervention Team(SIT) Process, 504 Process and Individual Education Planning Process

Goals for 2016-2017:

- Plan and implement appropriate professional development for all faculty and staff in the areas of at risk population and those labeled with disabilities.
- Continue to improve upon my leadership skills by attending conferences put on by national, state and local organizations to ensure the most accurate information and practices are put into place at Ashford School in the area of Special Education.
- Continue to ensure lines of communication between the entire department is clear, direct and supportive to all stakeholders.

Overview: Avenues of Support at Ashford School

Student Intervention Team (S.I.T.) Process:



504 Process- Americans with Disabilities Act- ADA

- Diagnosis of a disability
  - Dr. Diagnosis
  - District can recommend testing which would move to the Special Education Process
- S.I.T. Process typically is in process and is used for the diagnois.
- 504 plan is created for students who have a disability whom would benefit from accommodations within the classroom
  - Accommodations: These are things that can be implemented by the regular education teacher with at times some assistance from an intervention teacher, OT, PT, SLP or Special Education Teacher. They do not include any changes to the content that is delivered. They learn through the general education curriculum. They learn same content
  - Modifications: This is when a student needs a completely different instruction than the general education classroom and requires specialized instruction from a special educator.

Special Education Process- Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)

- S.I.T. Process used and limited to no progress has been made on individual goals.
- Testing would be recommended
- A Planning and Placement Team (PPT) is brought together to review the data from S.I.T. process and testing is usually recommended.
- Team has 65 days(Federal mandated timeline) to complete all testing and reconvene a PPT meeting to review results of all testing
- Recommendations are made according to the results of testing
- Parents at any time have the right to refuse any stage of this process. Testing can not be done without the consent of the parent. Parents also have the right to refuse the services recommended at the PPT.
- IEP's are disigned for students who need both accommodations to the curriculum and specialized instruction.
  - Speech, Reading, Writing, Mathematics or Intensive Social Skills

Ashford School uses a project/problem-based approach to learning that is interdisciplinary and provides students with choice in how they learn. Students have different interests and strengths and all students at Ashford have opportunities to challenge themselves through interest-based, creative problem solving and hands-on learning.

All Ashford students have access to Type 1 and Type 2 enrichment opportunities. The goal of Type 1 enrichment is to expose students to a variety of subjects and skills that might spark an interest that they would like to pursue further. The goal of Type 2 is to develop in children the skills they need to solve real world problems. This is accomplished in a variety of ways. For example, there are monthly cultural arts assemblies where students in all grades enjoy learning about different art forms and cultures. In addition, students in kindergarten through grade six have regularly scheduled classes with the school's science and enrichment teacher, Miss Imhoff. In these classes students enjoy hands-on investigations that encourage critical thinking.

We also have extra challenge opportunities for students who are recommended by their teachers to be part of the talent pool. Talent pool students are not identified as gifted or talented but their teacher has identified a need for more challenge. Sometimes through involvement in an extra challenge activity gifted behaviors are observed helping us determine if the students should go through the gifted or talented identification

Renzulli's Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness

Nomination for gifted and talented begins in third grade, but students may be identified in later grades as well. When identifying students, teachers take into account the three areas indicated in the above figure: above average ability, creativity, and task commitment. Using multiple criteria helps us to consider the whole child when making identifications. Our goal is to ensure that learning is optimized for every child, including our gifted learners.

Nominations for gifted and talented are brought to PPT in the spring of each year and parents are notified. Students must be re-identified annually.

For more information, please contact:

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Ashford School's Enrichment

Including STRIVE

The gifted and talented program

Ashford School

440 Westford Road

Ashford, Connecticut

860-429-6419

STRIVE

Students Taking Responsibility for Innovation, Venture & Exploration

What is STRIVE?

Students who are identified as gifted have the opportunity to participate in an enriching mentoring program. The STRIVE (Students Taking Responsibility for Innovation, Venture and Exploration) program pairs students with a faculty mentor who works with them in focusing on:

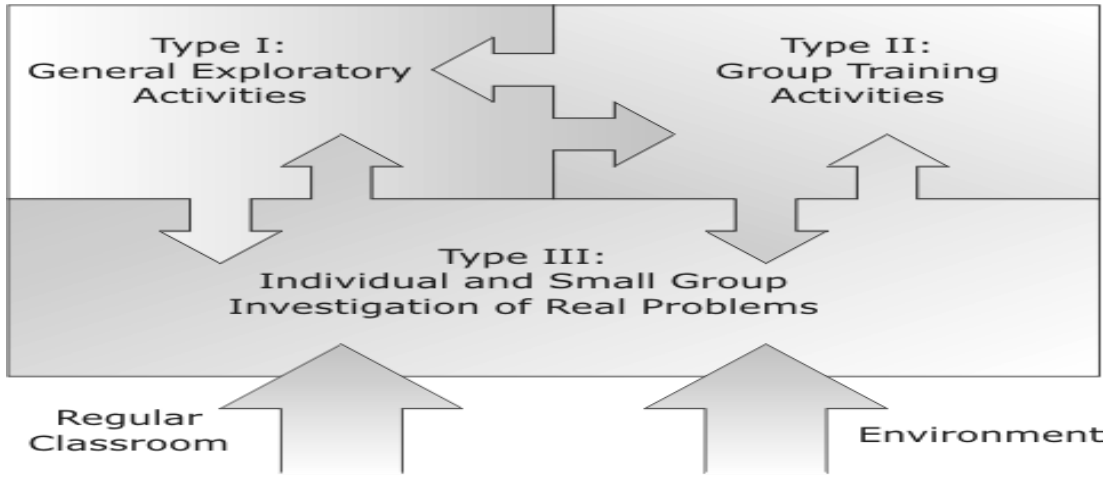
Interest-based independent studies

Deeper explorations of current classroom curriculum

Developing a curiosity and personal passion for learning

In addition, Ashford School uses Project and Problem Based learning to challenge gifted students in all subjects. For example, students may use a Problem Based Gifted Math curriculum (M_3) to add depth and complexity that compliments state standards and their learning in the regular education classroom.

The Enrichment Triad Model



Source: Joseph S. Renzulli and Sally M. Reis

Opportunities

Enrichment for All	Extra Challenge	STRIVE-Academic
All Students (K-6) receive regular whole-class Science instruction, following a S.T.E.A.M. model, with Miss Imhoff. During this time, students participate in hands-on, engaging, scientific investigations. At specific times, the school offers enrichment clusters to children so that students can explore an area of their interest in small groups with an adult who shares that interest. All students attend monthly cultural arts assemblies where they are exposed to a variety of art forms. All students are encouraged to participate in the invention convention, a program where students create inventions to solve real problems.	The Academic Talent Pool includes students who were recommended by their teacher, using performance data, as needing additional challenge. The Talent Pool is part of the Renzulli Model of gifted education. While these students are not identified as gifted, they may be identified in the future. Students may be identified for the talent pool as early as the end of second grade. Some opportunities may include: 3rd grade: Odyssey of the Mind 4th-8th: Future Problem Solvers 4th-8th: Stock Market Game 6th-8th: National History Day	Starting in 3rd grade, students are identified using the Renzulli Hartman Scale, STAR math and reading scores, and Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT). Teachers nominate students, parents are notified and a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting is held to make the identification. Identified students may participate in any of the extra challenge options, but also participate in our school's gifted program: STRIVE. In STRIVE students are paired with a faculty mentor. The mentor and mentee collaborate to enrich and deepen the student's academic learning; additionally the ultimate goal is to develop the student's curiosity and desire to learn.

There are many tools used to identify gifted behaviors in students. At Ashford School, we use STAR assessment data for both reading and math, the Renzulli-Hartman Teacher Rating Scales and the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test. The careful consideration of the results of these assessments ensures appropriate identification.

NAEYC Accreditation Survey Results - 2016

August 10, 2016

Dear Families

The Early Childhood staff would like to thank you for taking the time to complete the family survey. Family perspectives are essential to the NAEYC accreditation process and to use in our ongoing program improvement . We would like to share the results of the family surveys and provide additional information in the areas where there appeared to be questions.

1. *I have a good relationship with my child's teacher and other staff.*
    - 98% of families responded yes.

2. *The teacher takes good care of my child, helps my child learn to get along with others, and is a good teacher.*
    - 98% of families responded yes.

3. *The teacher often shares information about things happening in the program and wants to know things my child is doing at home.*
    - 100% of families responded yes.

4. *I talk with a teacher about my child at least once a week.*
    - 64% of families responded yes.
        - Due to the fact that many of our children ride the bus to and from school we do not have a weekly opportunity to talk to most families. However, we communicate weekly with the families who volunteer regularly and daily with the families who drop off or pick up their children. We also send home weekly newsletters and daily communication notes.

5. *I have received information at enrollment and/or throughout the year about the program and my child's classroom, including information about:*
    a. Program mission and philosophy.
        - 100% of families responded yes.
    b. Rules and expectations.
        - 100% of families responded yes.
    c. Procedures for drop-off and pickup and handling emergencies.
        - 100% of families responded yes.

6. *I receive this information in a language that I understand*
    - 100% of families responded yes.

7. *The teacher asks about things that are important to our family and uses this information to help my child grow and learn.*
    - 98% of families responded yes.

8. *For families who speak a language other than English at home: The teacher and I discuss the language used to teach my child.*
    - 63% of families responded yes, 30% responded N/A
        - The school registration form asks families to indicate their primary language spoken at home. For students for whom English is a second language, support services are available.

9. *I am invited to take part in classroom activities and events.*
    - 100% of families responded yes.

10. *When I disagree with how a teacher works with my child, I feel comfortable letting the teacher know and working together to find a solution that works for both of us.*
    - 85% of families responded yes, 15% of families responded "don't know" or "N/A"

11. *I am comfortable with what my child is learning and how my child's progress is measured. I have the opportunity to discuss what is learned and how it is measured.*
    - 100% of families responded yes.

12. *I know how the program makes sure that information about my child and his or her progress is kept confidential.*
    - 94% of families responded yes.
        - The program's confidentiality policy is listed in the Preschool and Kindergarten handbooks.

13. *I receive written reports about my child at least twice a year.*
    - 96% of families responded yes.

14. *I am told about my child's progress in a language I understand and in ways that are respectful to me and my family.*
    - 98% of families responded yes.

15. *The teacher and program work with me to meet my child's individual or special needs and help me get other resources within the community when needed.*
    - 100% of families responded yes.

16. *The program helps me get to know other families in the program and encourages us to support each other.*
    - 96% of families responded yes.
        - We offer evening programs throughout the year for families to get to know each other such as Family Yoga Night, Family Fitness Night, and Family Reading Night. We also have

information nights, Playground Meet and Greet, Open House before school starts, and other family celebrations throughout the year.

17. *I am always welcome at the program and am invited to participate by helping to plan events, being involved in decisions about the program, and taking on leadership roles.*
    - 96% of families responded yes.
        - As stated in the Preschool and Kindergarten handbooks, volunteers are always welcome. Ashford School's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and the Ashford School Readiness Council both offer opportunities for families to get involved and take on leadership roles.

18. *I am provided a translator when needed.*
    - 100% of families responded yes.

19. *The program staff helps me learn about community events and resources that can help my child and family.*
    - 94% of families responded yes.
        - We have community resources available for families who would like to learn about community events and services. These are listed in the preschool and Kindergarten handbooks. Please contact us if you would like information.

20. *The program gives me information to help my child make a smooth transition to kindergarten and first grade.*
    - 98% of families responded yes.

21. *When program evaluations are completed, I receive information about the finding.*
    - 83% of families responded yes, 2% responded No, 15% responded "don't know" or "N/A"
        - The family survey is the program evaluation. This letter reports the findings.

22. *I generally feel respected by the program staff and that my contributions are valued*
    - 100% of families responded yes.

23. *For families with babies: The program supports breastfeeding by providing space, storing milk, instructing staff on handling procedures, etc.*
    - N/A

24. *For families with babies or children with special nutritional needs: Staff work with me to meet my child's nutritional needs and document for me what my child eats each day.*
    - N/A

Thank you for participating in our program evaluation!

The Early Childhood staff

Program Improvement Plan

Based on data collection from 2015-2016 Family Surveys

Criterion	Description	Plan	Teacher Action Needed	Administration Action Needed	Goal Date
7.B.05	Talking with teacher regularly	Continue to provide opportunities for face-to-face interactions. Because so many students are transported by bus, and/or parent work schedule, communication may also be by notes, emails, or phone calls	Emphasize to families the available lines of communications for parents, to ensure they know what is available to them		Look for immediate improvement; Assess regularly
10.F.02	Include parents in program improvement planning/ evaluation	Be more deliberate in inviting parents to be on the Readiness Council. Inform them that the surveys they are asked to complete is an evaluation. In face-to-face contacts, ask for ideas or thoughts. Make sure families know that there is a link to the Readiness Council information on the School Website	Be more intentional in communication and asking for ideas/input after various activities/events	Post meetings/events on the school calendar	Check for progress in December

Digital Passport - Grade 5 Media Literacy course

Digital passport gives today's students the tools that they need to succeed in a digital world. Students will explore communication and collaboration, digital citizenship, information literacy and citation, Internet safety and privacy, and appropriate use of technological tools.

Trimester 1: Digital Citizenship and Online Safety
Trimester 2: Digital Literacies
Trimester 3: Digital Footprint

Essential Questions:

Q1	What is a Digital Citizen and how do I become one?
Q2	How do Digital Citizens keep their information private and secure online?
Q3	How do I create a positive digital community?
Q4	How do I stay safe, both physically and emotionally, while online?
Q5	How can I collaborate with others online?
Q6	What is a multimodal text and what steps can I take to understand one?
Q7	How can I use a variety of different searching techniques and resources to locate what I'm looking for in the digital world?
Q8	How can I respect the intellectual property of others online?
Q9	How can I balance my "Digital Life" and "Digital Identity" with my life in the real world?

Students demonstrate an ability to use the following tools:

- iMovie
- Garageband
- Google Apps for Education (Docs, Sheets, Slides, Calendar, Hangout, etc.)
- Microsoft Office Suite
- Weebly (and other website makers)
- Todaysmeet
- Wikispaces
- Skype
- Prezi

Digital Compass - Grade 6 Media Literacy course

This course builds on their digital knowledge from fifth grade, and works to introduce them to a variety of new tools, deepen their understanding of the tools they have, and help them think critically about what it means to use those tools responsibly and be a proactive digital citizen.

What is Student Success Planning (SSP)?

Student Success Planning allows students to conduct a self-study of their interests, explore careers, develop an educational plan, and build the skills needed to follow through in accomplishing their goals. Students are empowered to apply our core values of respect, responsibility, and pride in conducting a community service project. They assemble a portfolio that describes their SSP work and also includes other course work with reflections on the Habits of Mind. During the 8th grade year, students showcase their portfolios by presentation, display, or performance.

Better prepared for tomorrow!

Ashford School

Ashford School

440 Westford Road
Ashford, CT06278

www.ashford

Student Success Planning

STUDENT SUCCESS PLAN

For Present and Future

Grade 7
Grade 8

THE STUDENT SUCCESS PLAN IN CONNECTICUT

What is the content?

I. Academic Development
Learning styles
Time management
Note taking
Study skills
Self-advocacy
Public speaking
Test taking

II. Career & Skills for Living
Career planning and preparation
Career pathway of interest
Interviewing
Goal setting
Digital citizenship
Money/budgeting

III. Social/Emotional/Community
Team building/working in groups
Personal strengths/weaknesses
Bullying
Internet safety
Coping with stress
Conflict resolution
Respectful disagreement
Respect/diversity
Drug/Alcohol prevention
Balanced Living/healthy mind

IV. Portfolio
Personal interests
Collection of work
Habits of mind reflections
Career study
Educational pathway
Community service

Q&A

Why Student Success Planning?
To ensure that students have developed their individual skills necessary to fully achieve their goals, while helping others and dealing with obstacles that may get in their way.

When does the course meet?
Student Success Planning (SSP) is a course in the specials rotation and meets every 4th day of the school year.

Who teaches SSP?
The 7th and 8th grade teachers teach the course for the entire school year.

How is the course graded?
The SSP course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Is the portfolio required?
Yes

What are the Habits of Mind?
Autonomy, Collaboration, Communication, Creativity, Critical Thinking, Cultural Competency, Problem Solving Innovative, Motivation to Learn, Perseverance, Reflection, and Self-control

Overview of Monitored Independent Reading Program

Who:
Grade 7 and 8 students

Frequency:
3-4 days per week (Students enrolled in Select Choir, Intervention, and/or Robotics will have this class less often)

Goal:
To provide a supplemental Language Arts time that is focused on building learner capacity for and enjoyment in independent reading.

Program Overview:

1) Using STAR data and Accelerated Reader, teachers assist students in selecting independent reading books that are: a) at their reading level, and b) of interest to them
2) Students spend 43 minutes reading for enjoyment (and for growth)
3) Students are assessed in multiple ways:
    a. Reading logs- Simple tallies of time spent reading and pages read on a day-to-day basis
    b. Journaling- Students respond to weekly journal prompts to engage them in thinking critically about what they read
    c. One-on-One conferencing- Every student meets with their teacher once a week for ten minutes to discuss what they're reading. This provides an opportunity for the teacher to check for comprehension, to give feedback, and to start dialogue around reading
    d. Accelerated Reader Quiz- Students can take an online quiz to check for comprehension. This is part of our STAR program.

* Research shows that students who engage in pleasure reading, at their level, make greater gains than if they spend all of their time reading at a stretch level.

Overview of PBIS Overhaul

- Focus on K-8 continuum- Paw power tickets and Paw punches
- No more "Green and Gold" program
- 5-8 Program focuses on rewarding positive behaviors with "punches" on a card.
- Students turn in their punches for specific rewards.
    - This builds delayed gratification, as larger rewards cost more punches
- Created a new continuum of what behaviors are office-handled vs. classroom-handled
    - Research shows that kicking students out of class, especially for minor infractions, leads to a loss of respect and a breakdown in teacher/student relationships.
- Focus on Restorative Discipline-
    - Students take responsibility for their actions
    - Students hear from others the impact of their actions
    - Consequences focus on restoring relationships rather than on "punishment"
    - Include teachers in "office conversations" related to behavior in order to provide greater transparency and also to restore the relationship
- Improvement of homeroom at higher grades to provide more time for advisor/advisee roles.
    - Develop Habits of Mind
    - Build community
    - Morning meetings

Traditional Approach	**Restorative Approach**
• Schools and rules are violated.	• People and relationships are violated.
• Justice focuses on establishing guilt.	• Justice identifies needs and obligations.
• Accountability is defined as punishment.	• Accountability is defined as understanding the effects of the offense and repairing any harm.
• Justice is directed at the offender; the victim is ignored.	• The offender, victim, and school all have direct roles in the justice process.
• Rules and intent outweigh the outcome.	• Offenders are held responsible for their behavior, repairing any harm they've caused and working toward a positive outcome.
• No opportunity is offered for the offender to express remorse or make amends.	• Opportunities are offered for offenders to express remorse or make amends.

*chart taken from *Better than Carrots or Sticks*, pg. 3.

Ashford School

S.T.R.I.V.E. Program

Building student capacity for lifelong learning

Handbook for Faculty Mentors

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S.T.R.I.V.E. Program Philosophy

At Ashford School, our motto is "We optimize learning for all". As part of our continuous school-wide drive to provide every student with the education that they need, Ashford School values and places emphasis on providing appropriate enrichment, at various levels of challenge, for all of our students. As a significant piece of this enrichment approach, the S.T.R.I.V.E. program focuses on providing academic and creative enrichment to students who have been identified "Gifted/Talented," as defined by Connecticut General Statute 10-76a-2.

The philosophy of the S.T.R.I.V.E. program is to nurture the strengths of gifted/talented students in order to help them to develop as lifelong learners. When gifted/talented students are supported in their learning, they are better able to solve problems and find novel, out-of-the-box solutions across various situations. In taking part in the enrichment experience offered by the S.T.R.I.V.E. program, Ashford School aims to provide a solid foundation for our gifted/talented students that will enable them to operate at this deeper level of engagement over the rest of their educational and personal lives.

S.T.R.I.V.E. Program Overview

Through participation in the S.T.R.I.V.E. program, students will work closely with a faculty mentor. The faculty mentor will meet regularly (at least once every four-day rotation) with their student mentees on the following goals:

- Building a close bond, so that each student understands that their mentor is a faculty member that they can rely on for support beyond the classroom.
- Developing the skills necessary to becoming lifelong learners, *e.g.* self-motivation, curiosity to pursue learning related to interests, perseverance in the face of adversity, etc.
- Adding knowledge- and experiential-depth to areas of academic strength.
- Compacting curriculum, *i.e.*, identifying areas of curriculum that are already a strength and focusing instead on deeper or different learning.
- Exploring personal projects that apply academic strengths to authentic, real-world projects.
- Building educational *Habits of Mind* that foster the ability to work independently and to recognize when to seek help.
- Creating a toolkit of digital and physical resources for students to use across all parts of their life.

Role of the S.T.R.I.V.E. Mentor

As a S.T.R.I.V.E. mentor, your role is to work closely with your student mentee(s) as well as their academic teams, to identify curricular opportunities for enrichment. All S.T.R.I.V.E. mentors should spend significant time at the beginning of the school getting to know your students, understanding what their strengths and interests are, and working to identify ways to enrich their strengths while allowing them to explore their own personal interests.

Responsibilities of being a S.T.R.I.V.E. mentor

As a S.T.R.I.V.E. mentor, you are responsible for ensuring that your mentee(s) experience(s) academic/creative enrichment that challenges them and meets the goals set forth by the S.T.R.I.V.E. program. As a mentor you will be expected to:

- Meet with your mentee(s) for **a minimum of 30 minutes** at least **once per every four-day rotation** with a focus on developing a strong student-to-teacher relationship
- Keep accurate, up-to-date logs of your meetings with your mentee on the shared *Google Sheet*
- Contact the parents/guardians of your student mentee **at least once every ten school days** in order to:
    - Keep open lines of communication and improve the school/home partnership
    - Share important goals/information about their child's enrichment program
- Work with your mentee's academic teachers to identify areas within the classroom that enrichment opportunities can occur

- Work with your mentee's academic teachers to identify opportunities to collapse the curriculum in order to provide deeper/challenge learning opportunities
- Use provided gifted/talented resources to find extra-curricular extension opportunities
- Encourage your mentee(s) to participate in extra-challenge opportunities as offered, such as Odyssey of the Mind, Future Problem Solvers, Stock Market Game, etc.
- Seek opportunities for enrichment outside of Ashford School, *e.g.* community members as interest mentors, field trips for enrichment, etc.
- Expose your mentee(s) to technology as a means for building organization, efficiency, learning strategies, etc.

Note: Although it is not required, you may choose to set one of your two SMART goals in regards to growth for your S.T.R.I.V.E. mentee(s).

Developing a Relationship with your Mentee

As a S.T.R.I.V.E. mentor, a critical part of your role is in developing a strong relationship with your mentee(s). Every student deserves to have an adult in the school that they feel they can trust, and the goal of the S.T.R.I.V.E. program is for each mentor to fill that role. In addition, through developing you're a relationship with your mentee(s), you will also be able to gain insight into their academic strengths and personal interests; this information should then serve to guide your work in providing them with appropriate enrichment opportunities.

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Challenge Opportunities

Ashford School provides various challenge opportunities for Type II enrichment. Where appropriate, as a faculty mentor, you should support your mentee(s) in taking advantage of these challenge opportunities when they arise. Some opportunities that may be offered at Ashford School are:

- Odyssey of the Mind- Odyssey of the Mind is an international educational program that provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Team members apply their creativity to solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics. They then bring their solutions to competition on the local, state, and World level. (Excerpt taken from CT Odyssey of the Mind website: http://ctom.org/?page_id=25)
- Future Problem Solvers- The Future Problem Solving Program of Connecticut prepares Connecticut's students for the future by teaching them essential **problem solving skills**. *The challenging materials of the Future Problem Solving Program are designed to help students learn **how to think***, not what to think. Future Problem Solving motivates and assists students to develop an active interest in the future, improve written and oral communication skills, work cooperatively, develop research skills while learning about complex social and scientific issues, and think creatively, critically and analytically. (Excerpt taken from Future Problem Solvers of CT website: http://www.fpspofct.org/fpsp-of-ct/)
- Stock Market Game- The Stock Market Game is a tool for you to help your students build a fundamental understanding of investing while providing them with real world skills practice in math, English Language Arts, economics, social studies, and other subjects. (Excerpt taken from: http://www.stockmarketgame.org/expteacher.html)
- National History Day- Every year, National History Day frames students' research within a historical theme. The theme is chosen for the broad application to world, national or state history and its relevance to ancient history or to the more recent past. The intentional selection of the theme for NHD is to provide an opportunity for students to push past the antiquated view of history as mere facts and dates and drill down into historical content to develop perspective and understanding.

  The NHD theme provides a focused way to increase students' historical understanding by developing a lens to read history, an organizational structure that helps students place information in the correct context and finally, the ability to see connections over time. (Excerpt taken from: http://nhd.org/contest-affiliates/annual-theme/)

While these are the opportunities that have been offered at Ashford School in the past, as a faculty mentor, you are encouraged to identify other challenge opportunities that will provide challenging, meaningful enrichment for your mentee(s) as well as the other students at Ashford School.

Interest-Based Independent Studies

At times, you may come across an area of interest that your mentee wishes to explore in-depth. In order to facilitate this, Ashford School has invested in a series of "Gifted/Talented" books that provide authentic, real-world projects that are based in specific subject areas (*i.e.*, math, social studies, science, etc.). While these are not meant to serve as a mandatory curriculum, they can provide unique opportunities for authentic, interest-based independent studies that will allow students to explore deeper learning in their area of strength. You are also encouraged to think of other ways that students can explore real-world projects, based on their interests, and beyond the classroom.

Adding Depth to Current Classroom Curriculum

As you work with your mentee's academic teachers, you should be discussing opportunities for adding depth to the work being done within the classroom. This may mean that while your mentee engages in the same learning as their peers, their product may be different. For example, if a classroom project focuses on creating a presentation to their peers, your S.T.R.I.V.E. mentee may instead present via SKYPE to a community member or a professor. The goal here is to challenge your S.T.R.I.V.E. mentee to apply their learning in ways that stretch their skills and force them to create in ways beyond the basic expectations of the classroom. Other examples could include:

- In a project on creating models of sound waves, a S.T.R.I.V.E. student also focuses on developing examples of how those waves could occur in nature
- Instead of writing an essay on the impact of global warming, a S.T.R.I.V.E. student writes an argument to the U.S. congress arguing for the importance of climate legislation.

Building Student Passion for Learning

A critical piece of the S.T.R.I.V.E. program is the need for mentors to work with their mentees to develop a passion for learning. Research shows that when students are allowed to explore their interests and to take risks, they are more likely to have increased engagement and to be personally motivated. In providing this type of learning environment for our S.T.R.I.V.E. students, Ashford School hopes build our students capacity as lifelong learners.

Using Technology to Build Capacity

As a critical part of modern society, technology offers many positive resources to the learning environment. In order for learners to be successful in the world beyond school, they will need to understand how to utilize technology as a tool for organizing themselves; for researching; for developing their thoughts and ideas; and for communicating with people from around the globe. Through the S.T.R.I.V.E. program, Ashford School will provide opportunities for enrichment students to develop their learning capacity through appropriate use of technology. This may include using tools such as online calendars, project management software such as *Trello*, presentation software other than Power Point, etc.