

Pupil Personnel Services Continuous Improvement Plan 2016 – 2017

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I. Introduction: Purpose of the Continuous Improvement Plan Process

The purpose of the Continuous Improvement Plan is to provide an overview of the development, implementation and execution of our department's goals and priorities for the 2015-2016 school year. The Continuous Improvement plan will explain how the Pupil Personnel Services Department is striving for each student to be as successful as possible and sharing our own efforts to improve. The goals and priorities are based on school and district level data and are aligned with and support the District's Strategic Coherence Plan.

The Continuous Improvement Plan provides the direction for our improvement process and helps maintain the cohesiveness of our community by sharing that unified purpose in a comprehensive, reflective manner. This guiding document will assist in creating a supportive network surrounding our students so they are successful.

II. District Vision and Mission

Charting our Course

Our Vision: Opening Minds ... Transforming Lives

As a leader among schools and a source of pride in our community, the Canton Public Schools enrich the present and shape the future of its students by opening minds and transforming lives.

Our Mission

Our mission is to prepare independent, productive, respectful and responsible citizens who contribute to an ever changing world. We pursue continuous improvement while honoring our strong educational legacy and traditions. We unite with families and the community to provide challenging educational experiences that promote the intellectual, physical, social and emotional potential of our students.

We Believe:

- All students will successfully master Canton's Community Expectations for Learning
- All students benefit from high quality resources and experiences that foster intellectual, physical, social and emotional growth
- All students flourish in a safe and healthy learning environment that values differences while respecting cultures, abilities and perspectives
- All children are entitled to a childhood

Mapping Our Route

Strategic Issues and Goals

Goal One: Enhance Canton’s Community Expectations for Learning to ensure they are reflective of our values and educational priorities and are aligned Pre-K-12.

Indicators of Success:

- A clear set of Community Expectations for Learning are committed to throughout the system, are aligned with appropriate, locally approved standards and ensure student success in life, learning and work beyond school.
- A common language, shared set of standards, and aligned curriculum resources contain the key understandings and concepts that are essential for all children as part of the Community Expectations for Learning.
- Dedication to continuous improvement of student achievement is prevalent throughout the system.
- Family/school partnerships are working to support the Community Expectations for Learning.

Goal Two: Implement a comprehensive plan to complete the transition to a digital learning environment that promotes a culture of proficient, responsible and innovative utilization for students, staff and families.

Indicators of Success:

- All students and staff have ready access to tools for digital learning and the skills and resources they need to use them effectively.
- Professional learning supports the meaningful transition to digital learning and rewards instructional innovation and meaningful student engagement.
- Students acquire and demonstrate age-appropriate digital learning and citizenship skills as part of the Pre-K-12 instructional program.
- All students thrive in a safe learning environment for digital learning.
- Digital learning resources are used in a way that align with and support our Community Expectations for Learning.

Goal Three: Refine the assessment system to capture and share meaningful performance data that informs the continuous improvement of teaching, learning and student performance.

Indicators of Success:

- Well-developed multiple measures of student achievement for all Community Expectations for Learning are in use and reported regularly.
- Testing and accountability are balanced with the importance of quality instructional time and the health and well-being of students.
- Formative assessments that are integrated within instruction to maximize learning are predominate.
- Effective measures for student engagement in, and accountability for, learning are in place.
- Integrated feedback throughout the year to professionals and students to enhance their learning.

Goal Four: Enhance the capacity of district staff to support every child’s achievement of the Community Expectations for Learning

Indicators of Success:

- Professional dialogue is focused on student learning within a culture of innovation and growth.
- Professional learning at all levels is systematic, progressive, and aligned with district learning priorities.
- Rich and varied professional learning opportunities are extended to all district staff.
- Shared responsibility for professional learning is embraced by all members of the learning community.

Goal Five: Develop/refine strategies for community engagement and communication to support student success.

Indicators of Success:

- Community engagement in student learning and events is strong, consistent, and supportive.
- Clear, regular, and reliable communication of appropriate information in multiple locations and formats.
- Parents believe that engagement is open, meaningful and welcoming.
- Shared learning opportunities in the Canton community have been sustained or increased.
- Communication emanating from students (i.e. student-student, student - community) is frequent and meaningful.

III. Pupil Personnel Services Mission Statement

The Canton Public School System is committed to educating all students, including those who meet the criteria for eligibility for special education services according to the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). We believe that all students should receive free and appropriate educational services which enable them to develop to their full potential through the provision of specialized instruction, related services and accommodations. We are committed to meeting individual student needs through instructional efforts that focus on federal and state expectations to educate students in their home schools, in the least restrictive environment, in order to maximize access to the general education curriculum and to non-disabled peers.

Strongly committed to the concept of inclusion, the special education service models throughout the district have been developed to support this concept. At the same time, we believe that a continuum of placement options must be maintained to meet the unique and individual needs of our students.

We are also strongly committed to educating students through collaborative partnerships among families, educators, and service providers to ensure that all students are provided with a high-quality, comprehensive and equitable education which will enable our students to become confident, respected, productive and contributing citizens of our community, higher education and the workplace.

Adopted – June 6, 2012

IV. Pupil Personnel Services Department Description

The Canton Public Schools Pupil Personnel Services Department certified staff comprise special education teachers, school psychologists, social workers, and speech-language pathologists. In addition, licenses occupational therapists and a physical therapist round out the Department. These staff members provide programming that meets the needs of students with identified disabilities. In doing so, they must meet state and federal mandates around special education practices and procedures defined in state regulations, as well as the federal regulations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). PPS staff provides instruction and intervention primarily in the areas of academics, behavior, functional and social supports, all based on individual student needs.

Pupil Services staff members believe that student success and a family's engagement in their child's educational process are paramount. To support student's opportunities for success, PPS staff works as part of a collaborative educational team that includes general educators and parents.

V. Description of School-Based and District-Based PPS Leadership Teams

In order to ensure timely legal information and opportunities for professional growth, the Pupil Personnel Services Department convenes in school level multi-disciplinary teams either weekly, bi-weekly or monthly, depending upon the grades where they provide services. At the elementary and intermediate levels, each meeting has an agenda and is 30 minutes in length. At the middle and high school level, each meeting has an agenda and is 60 minutes in length.

Elementary Level Seminars: Seminars are held weekly and include all PPS staff, the building principal and Director of PPS. Seminars are a structure that provides team members the opportunity to work collaboratively on ensuring staff is prepared for upcoming meetings and to discuss any educational issue. Administration has the opportunity to provide new information to the team, including best practices and procedural updates.

Intermediate Level Seminars: Seminars are held weekly and are conducted in the same manner as elementary level seminars.

Middle and High Level Department: Meetings are held monthly for one hour and are conducted in the same manner as the elementary and middle level seminars.

PPS District Meetings: To address more long-term professional learning monthly district meetings are convened to address professional learning and continuous improvement of all Pupil Personnel staff. These meetings are held once a month for 45 minutes. The primary purpose of these district Department meetings is to provide a structure for all PPS staff to participate in professional learning relevant to their role in the district. The focus is on best practices in special education delivery, including a focus on student-centered learning.

VI. Results and Outcomes of 2015-16 Continuous Improvement Plan

Theory of Action for 2015-16

If I collaborate with Pupil Personnel staff to develop and provide a system of professional development to address the needs of students with disabilities that incorporates the use of precise data analysis, knowledge of curricular expectations, and evidenced based interventions aligned to grade levels, **then** staff members will improve their skills in these areas and students will demonstrate measurable and meaningful progress towards achieving grade/age and/or developmentally appropriate academic, social, and emotional standards.

Highlighted Outcomes

- Each certified staff member focused on a student learning objective (SLO) in an area related to both the curriculum and the student's need. All staff met success with student outcomes in their area of focus.
- As a result of district meetings, certified staff gained a broader and deeper understanding of assessment and data analysis for the purpose of special education identification and development of appropriate interventions and specially designed instruction, based on student needs.

VII. District Goals

Goal #1: Students with disabilities will improve their literacy skills (Aligns with Board of Education Goal: Teaching, Learning and Assessment.)

Measures:

District literacy assessments

Smart Goal:

By June 2016, students with disabilities K-6, will improve overall reading level, improving by at least a grade level.

Results: K-3

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (Dibels)

Grade	Fall % below or well below	Winter % below or well below	Spring % below or well below
K	6%	6%	4%
1	9%	7%	10%
2	3%	3%	6%
3	8%	8%	8%

Developmental Reading Assessment II (DRA)

Grade	Fall % below benchmark	Winter % below benchmark	Spring % below benchmark
K	50%	0%	0%

1	57.14%	75%	62.5%
2	66.67%	66.67%	66.67%
3	100%	100%	100%

Results: 4-6

Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI)

Grade	Fall % below or basic	Winter % below or basic	Spring % below or basic
4	50% (below) 50% (basic)	62.5% (below) 37.5% (basic)	62.5% (below) 0% (basic)
5	54.55% (below) 45.45% (basic)	54.55% (below) 45.45% (basic)	50% (below) 41.67% (basic)
6	66.67% (below) 16.67% (basic)	77.78% (below) 0% (basic)	66.67% (below) 11.11% (basic)

Reading Level Performance

Grade	Fall % below standard	Winter % below standard	Spring % below standard
4	90%	55.56%	25%
5	83.33%	40%	90%

6	77.78%	85.71%	77.78%
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Goal #2: Students will improve their learning in the area of Science (Aligns with Board of Education Goal: Teaching, Learning and Assessment).

Measures:

Percentage of students with disabilities achieving success on district wide assessments in the area of science

Smart Goal:

By June 2016, students with disabilities in grades 9-12, who are participating in Science Lab will improve their demonstrated progress in Science, as measured by their quarter grades. (This goal was revised during the 2015-16 school year)

Results:

The Special Education Department Chair, Science Department Chair, Assistant Principal, SRBI coordinator, and myself collaborated around students with disabilities who had performed poorly in the area of Science. A Science Lab intervention was designed to support students having difficulty. Special education teachers at the high school continued to review student data and make recommendations for students to participate in Science Lab, in addition to receiving classroom instruction and specially designed instruction through special education.

Eleven students with disabilities participated in the Science Lab over the course of last school year. Five students demonstrated between five and twenty points improvement over the course of the school year. Six students either saw no improvement or a

decrease in their scores over the course of the school year. Follow up reflection and analysis will continue this school year to identify what interventions may be more effective and if using grades is the best measure of improvement.

Goal #3: Increase parent communication and training with families of students with disabilities (Aligns with Board of Education Goal: District Wide Communication).

Measures:

Survey Monkey parent survey on the Planning and Placement Team Process

Smart Goal:

By June 2016, the Pupil Personnel Services Department will have survey data collected between November 2015 and June 2016 to identify the clarity and effectiveness of the Planning and Placement Team process for the 2015-2016 school year. The results will define next steps in the area of district parent engagement for the 2016-17 school year.

Results:

A revised parent survey was offered for parents to highlight areas for improvement in the PPT process, as well as a follow up in the area of parent training, including the best mode of delivery. Twenty Canton families responded to the survey. The results indicated a slight decrease in satisfaction on 5 of 6 similar questions (range of 3-20%). One question had an increase of 8% . Given the small number of respondents or if they were the same respondents as last year, it is difficult to make generalizations about the results. However, this will be taken seriously in terms of improving our current PPT process. Continued work on increasing the number of families responding to the survey will also be a focus area.

Goal #4: Assist the Superintendent in reviewing special education service delivery (Aligns with Board of Education Goal: Management of Resources).

Measures:

Outcome data from program review

Smart Goal:

By January, 2016, a review of special education service delivery will be conducted, analysis completed, and a summary report written.

Results:

District information continued to be provided to the New England School Development Education Council (NESDEC) for analysis.

The final report for the 2015-16 school year identified the trend data below. These data are consistent across the reporting period examined.

Number of PK-8 IEPs

2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
105	103	103	106	114	119

Number of 9-12 IEPs

2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
66	61	72	68	73	73

Special Education as a % of Total District Expenditures

2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
20.56	20.63	20.36	20.45	19.83	19.99

Special Education Support Staff: Number of IEPs per Para/Assistant

2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
4.27	4.24	4.68	4.64

(Typical Range = 5-8)

VIII. Theory of Action, 2016-17

A “Theory of Action” is a guiding principle that leaders develop and subsequently use to help in making decisions that will improve an organization. A strong theory of action consists of a hypothesis comprised of an if/then statement that will produce important results within the teaching and learning process. .

Through district administrator collaboration and to achieve coherence we have adopted the following Theory of Action:

If we identify, support, develop, and elevate our *Student-Centered Learning** practices, **then** student achievement and ownership relative to *Canton's Community Expectations for Learning** will improve.

Action Steps

- Provide focused opportunities for PPS staff to engage in professional learning that increases their capacity in the area of student-centered learning
- Provide models and exemplars of student centered learning practices
- Provide PPS staff with a professional learning environment that encourages them to take instructional risks to improve their practice

In addition, as I have continued to examine the strengths and areas to improve within the Pupil Services Department, an additional Theory of Action will be implemented that highlights additional focus areas.

If I collaborate with Pupil Personnel staff to develop and provide a system of professional learning to address the needs of students with disabilities that incorporates the use of precise data analysis, student-centered practices, knowledge of curricular expectations and evidenced based interventions aligned to grade levels, through collaboration with general education colleagues **then** staff members will improve their skills in these areas and students will demonstrate measurable and meaningful progress through achievement of *Canton's Community Expectations* (student success in life, learning and work beyond school; key understandings and concepts that are essential for all children; and family and school partnerships).

Action Steps

- Provide ongoing and regular professional learning in the areas of evidenced based specially designed instruction and service delivery practices, assessment for learning, and assessment for identification.
- Encourage purposeful collaboration between Pupil Personnel Services staff and their general education colleagues.
- Work collaboratively with the Principal of Canton Intermediate School to design and implement a more inclusive model, that targets professional learning around Co-Teaching.
- Focus PPS supervision and observation around three key areas related to instruction for active learning as indicated in the Canton Public School's *System for Educator Evaluation and Development Evaluation Plan*.

Action Plan – Goal: Students with Disabilities Will Improve Their Reading Skills		
<i>Strategies (what adults will do)</i>	<i>Measures / Smart Goals</i>	<i>People responsible</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use district baseline data to determine those students who are below goal and proficiency ○ Based on individual student performance, identify other diagnostic measures that may better target areas of concern ○ Based on individual student performance, identify research based interventions that address targeted areas of reading ○ Based on individual student performance, Identify progress monitoring procedures and frequency ○ Provide professional learning that is 	<p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ District assessments in reading (DRA, Dibels, SRI) ○ CT State Department of Education SBAC assessment <p>Smart Goal:</p> <p>By June 2017, students with disabilities in grades K-6 will improve their overall reading level, improving by at least a grade level.</p>	<p>Director of PPS, Special education teachers</p>

targeted toward areas of concern (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary)		
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Action Plan – Goal: Students with disabilities at the high school level will improve their learning in the area of science.		
<i>Strategies (what adults will do)</i>	<i>Measures / Smart Goals</i>	<i>People responsible</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Set up a collaborative meeting to discuss all available data ○ Review individual student data in Science, both formative and summative ○ Determine intervention strategies to support students learning in this area ○ Regularly examine available data to determine student progress 	<p>Measures:</p> <p>Formative and summative district assessments in science</p> <p>Smart Goal:</p> <p>By June 2016, students with disabilities in grades 9 and 10 will improve their average score on measures of learning in science, based on district wide assessments</p>	<p>PPS Director, Special Education Department Chair, Science department chair, Special Education Teachers, SRBI Coordinator</p>

Action Plan – Goal: Communication and training with families of students with disabilities will increase		
<i>Strategies (what adults will do)</i>	<i>Measures / Smart Goals</i>	<i>People responsible</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ After each Planning and Placement Team meeting, from November through March, parents will be provided a link by e-mail to participate in a survey to provide the PPS Department with further parent feedback on their experience. ○ Strategies to increase participation will be developed. ○ Parent training will be provided both during the day and evening that address the areas of post-secondary transition planning and strategies and tips that help the child succeed at school via supporting the child’s education at home. ○ The PPS website will be published. Additionally a link to districtwide counseling, speech-language therapy, and occupational therapy websites will be made to ensure easier access and understanding of the Pupil Services offered by the District. 	<p>Measures:</p> <p>A Parent Survey will be developed that expands on the 2016 -16 survey emphasizing the effectiveness of communication through the PPT process and parent training needs</p> <p>Smart Goal:</p> <p>Between November 2016 and March 2017, the Pupil Personnel Services Department will administer a similar parent survey to the 2015-16 survey, with a focus on increasing the numbers of families that participate.</p>	<p>Special education teachers, school psychologists, social worker, occupational therapist, speech-language pathologists, PPS Director</p>

Action Plan – Goal: **The PPS Director will Assist the Superintendent in a program review of special education service delivery**

<i>Strategies (what adults will do)</i>	<i>Measures / Smart Goals</i>	<i>People responsible</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue work with Superintendent and Business Manager to analyze district data ○ Continue to examine current PPS service delivery options ○ Continue to analyze available state data on students with disabilities 	<p>Measures:</p> <p>A 2015-16 report based on NESDEC and district obtained data will continue to inform any necessary changes in protocol and practices in special education service delivery.</p> <p>Smart Goal:</p> <p>By May 2017, a review of special education service delivery will be summarized</p>	<p>PPS Director</p>

IX. Priorities

Priorities for 2016-2017

To improve student success in school, PPS staff will be able to:

- Use multiple levels of assessment to target student instruction and intervention (*Aligns with Board of Education Goal: Refine the assessment system....*).
- Determine and use evidenced based instruction and intervention in academic, behavioral, and social areas with students (*Aligns with Board of Education Goal: Enhance Canton's Community Expectations for Learning...*).
- Work collaboratively with general education staff to plan instruction that is aligned with the common core and based on student needs (*Aligns with Board of Education Goal: Enhance Canton's Community Expectations for Learning...*).
- Use technology to enhance their instruction and assessment practices (*Aligns with Board of Education Goal: Implement a comprehensive plan to complete the transition to a digital learning environment...*)
- Participate in a meaningful way in the district's Teacher Performance Evaluation and Continuous Professional Growth Plan (*Aligns with Board of Education Goal: Enhance the capacity of district staff...*)
- Build on student strengths to address their challenges (*Aligns with Board of Education Goal: Enhance the capacity of district staff...*)
- Identify agency supports for students and their families (*Aligns with Board of Education Goal: Develop/refine strategies for community engagement and communication to support student success*)
- Promote and support parent engagement in their child's learning process (*Aligns with Board of Education Goal: Develop/refine strategies for community engagement and communication to support student success*)

X. Professional Development Plan

The information below contains the planned professional development focus areas for the year.

Pupil Personnel staff require professional development that focuses on both the general curriculum and on special education delivery. To that end, the goal of the professional development plan for this school year is to ensure that staff actively participate in general curriculum development that is provided at their building level, as well as in professional learning that targets special education service delivery. Special education service delivery training will include both technical and adaptive learning opportunities.

At each of the 10 district Pupil Personnel Services meetings, relevant special education topics will be reviewed and discussed. In addition, at least two meetings over the course of the school year, staff will have opportunities to work at their level (elementary, intermediate, middle or high) or in role alike groups (psychologists, speech-language pathologists) targeting areas relevant to their professional development needs.

Focus areas of professional learning for this school year are as follows:

- Implementing effective student learning goals that are student-centered as part of the teacher evaluation system.
- Developing a solid understanding of the Common Core State Standards and the importance of aligning student goals and objectives with high priority standards, as determined by collaboration with general education grade level staff.
- Using multiple levels of student data to identify root causes of difficulty for students and to develop target areas for instruction that are student-centered.
- Engaging families in the Planning and Placement Team Process.
- Using evidence based practices in assessment and intervention in academic, behavior, and social emotional skill development.
- Refining understanding of the Planning and Placement Team Process and current state and federal regulations that are the foundation of this process.

