

Goals for Learning

Improved Literacy Skills

All students demonstrate improved literacy skills.

Vision Statement

Literacy is defined much differently today than in past years when literacy meant having basic reading skills. Today we mean reading complex text for deep understanding, writing and speaking persuasively, listening and thinking critically, and using literacy skills effectively to solve problems. We also speak of print literacy, digital literacy, information literacy, visual literacy and cultural literacy. This goal focuses mostly on reading, writing, listening, speaking and thinking critically.

We envision that literacy instruction at all levels is based in research on effective strategies and reflects state-of-the-art practices. Every teacher, PK-12, is a teacher of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and critical thinking. Learning in the content areas is greater than ever because of the solid foundation and priority of literacy throughout the school system and the integration of content learning goals.

At all levels, teachers model literacy strategies and skills and engage students in lively discussion of print and media selections. At all levels, students are matched by teachers to print materials at levels of difficulty that support learning. Middle School and High School content area teachers are becoming increasingly expert at incorporating literacy strategies into daily instruction and they are seeing student performance in the subject areas increasing as a result.

Opportunity for Improvement

Newburyport students are scoring below expectations on the state MCAS tests in English Language Arts in grades 4-8. Our elementary school reading program is transitioning from a thirteen year old program that is not based on current research-based strategies. A new research-based approach is in initial implementation. Our Middle School literacy program has lacked definition and has been mostly limited to the English/Language Arts area. Our High School literacy efforts reflect some training in “reading across the content areas” but the practice is inconsistent and strategies do not reflect current researched-based strategies. Middle and High School teachers report that students entering both levels are not prepared, as a group, for the reading and thinking tasks necessary at these levels.

Root Cause: Stuck in old practices

Current teaching practices need to be expanded to meet the needs of all students.

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Implement a comprehensive literacy instructional	Match each reader to appropriate level of book

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
<p>model for literacy instruction grades PK-8. A comprehensive literacy model provides a researched-based learning framework that focuses on helping learners construct meaning through reading, writing, listening, speaking and critical thinking. The model provides a conceptual tool for organizing instruction. Assessment is used to drive instruction to meet the needs of all learners. (see appendix #)</p> <p>Implement literacy practices at NHS that enable all teachers to be teachers of literacy in their disciplines meeting 21st Century skills expectations. FY 10 Articulate literacy model for grades 9 through 12 and write 3-year implementation plan.</p>	<p>difficulty with individualized assessment in grades K-6</p> <p>Integrate comprehensive literacy components into ELA curriculum maps, grades K-6.</p> <p>Provide teachers K-6 with “look fors” or expectations for implementing comprehensive literacy components</p> <p>Gather data on program implementation with “walk-throughs” (all administrators) and coach/specialist data gathering and evaluate May/June 2009 Include teachers on walk-throughs to the extent possible.</p> <p>Articulate literacy model for grades 7 and 8 and write 3-year implementation plan.</p>

Root Cause: No literacy performance baseline

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
<p>Establish metrics for literacy performance and decide what tools and processes to use to measure them, and begin measurement. Consider both year-to-year tracking and cohort-based tracking.</p>	<p>Establish metrics that are measurable in FY09, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency at which data is gathered on literacy program implementation • Degree to which school budget supports training and material needs for 5-year implementation • Teacher planning time for literacy • Amount of team-based literacy planning and development • Percentage of students with completed benchmark and DIBELS assessments

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent understanding of “comprehensive literacy” and the strategies that teachers are using • Parent knowledge of how to help their children develop strong literacy skills at home <p>Assess these metrics by the end of FY09 to establish a baseline.</p>

Root Cause: Lack of leveled books and source materials

Leveled books and source materials are lacking or non-existent.

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Acquire leveled books and source materials in multiple genre including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and drama to fully support instruction at all levels.	<p>Complete the acquisition of the second third of leveled books and source material for grades PK-6.</p> <p>Actively support NEF campaign by participating in and supporting fund-raising activities</p>

Root Cause: Hard to maintain best practices

Best practices are hard to keep up and sustain

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Provide on-going professional development (PD) and train all new staff thoroughly.	<p>Provide off-site training on Continuum of Learning program to teacher and administrative teams. Fund through grant monies.</p> <p>Provide week long training sessions to administrators on how to lead comprehensive literacy programs.</p> <p>Provide literacy coach training to Literacy Coaches through college affiliated, in-depth, and</p>

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
	<p>expert taught program.</p> <p>Send selected teachers and administrators to the Literacy for All conference, Providence, RI.</p> <p>Provide job-embedded professional development to every K-6 teacher.</p> <p>Support teacher directed and designed study groups on important areas for professional development in literacy instruction.</p> <p>Make workshops and courses on literacy best-practices available to all PK-6 teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide college credit options for courses. • Provide substitutes to allow time for teachers to participate in training as a grade-level teams.
Budget appropriately to sustain a literacy program.	Budget in the FY10 budget to sustain and expand literacy programs, including materials, personnel and professional development.
Find grant opportunities.	Investigate Expanded Learning Time grant opportunities with goal of increasing teacher common planning time.

Root Cause: Teacher mentoring needs improvement

Current mentoring and training programs need to be better utilized and expanded.

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Expand mentor program and improve matching of teachers with high skill levels in literacy instruction to new teachers. Provide literacy coaching/mentoring to every teacher on a regular basis.	Develop recommendation to revise 2nd year mentoring to better support literacy by utilizing highly skilled (literacy best practices) teachers as mentors.

Root Cause: Professional development requires improvement

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
<p>Teachers collaboratively determine best way to accomplish professional development in literacy.</p> <p>Budget sufficient professional development resources.</p> <p>Provide needed time for teachers to review data and student work and to share effective practices and strategies.</p>	<p>Gather teacher feedback on literacy professional development programs in May/June 2009.</p> <p>Brainstorm ways to improve professional development in FY10.</p> <p>Investigate Expanded Learning Time grant opportunities with goal of increasing teacher common planning time.</p>

Root Cause: Configuration with separate buildings hindered progress; better now

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
<p>Capitalize on grade configuration by providing time for teachers to work together on literacy goals.</p>	<p>Provide at least ½ day per month for teachers to work together on literacy/ELA curriculum maps (PK-5 and Grade 6 ELA teachers).</p>

Root Cause: Absence of consistent continuous and dynamic student assessment

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
<p>Implement continuous and dynamic assessment systems at all levels.</p>	<p>Complete Benchmark Assessments for every student K-5. Continue DIBELS and DRA assessments for every student, K-1.</p> <p>Utilize literacy coaches to support individual assessment of students.</p> <p>Literacy assessment calendar distributed to teachers K-6.</p>

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Establish a system to “move data forward” with students as they progress grade to grade.	Establish literacy assessment folders for each student, K-5 and targeted students in grade 6. Develop a strategy to leverage technology for collecting, maintaining and communicating student literacy data.
Provide staff with time to build assessment skills.	
Regular reporting of student progress.	Provide reports to parents on literacy assessments being implemented in FY09, grades PK-6.

Root Cause: No in-house literacy experts

There is a need for in-house literacy experts to help train staff.

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Hire in-house literacy experts to help train staff.	Hire 2 full-time Literacy Coaches to provide job-embedded professional development for teachers PK-8.
Use grants to support ongoing consultancies.	

Root Cause: Parent knowledge about literacy strategies is low

A low level of parent knowledge of literacy strategy undermines complete success of the literacy program. In many cases, more parental support to work with children at home will assist individual students in moving forward.

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
Establish metrics for determining parent knowledge of comprehensive literacy practices and parent confidence in assisting students with literacy at home. Conduct annual survey or assessment.	Establish baseline of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent understanding of comprehensive literacy practices. • Parents’ confidence in assisting their

Long Term Strategies	FY09 Specific Actions
	children with literacy learning at home.
Get parents into the buildings. Provide parents with specific training on ways to help children read and write.	Provide parent education through a “literacy night” and other communications.