

Salem City School District Goal, Objectives, and Indicators
2009-2014

Transforming Schools in the Images of Children's Potential

During the summer of 2008, the Salem City School District consisting of a representative group of board members, the superintendent, and administrators along with a facilitator assembled in a retreat for the purpose of establishing goals to provide direction for the district. The consensus conclusion clearly established that the overall goals should all focus on Salem City becoming a high performance school district. Four goals all centering on high performance emerged with the understanding that those four goals would be shared and refined so objectives and indicators could follow.

The process of refining and reexamining the four goals took the form of discussion and ultimately revision through a committee of educators who had been invited by the superintendent. This approach was also presented and accepted by the Board of Education in a December, 2008, Board of Education meeting. The district committee, representative of the professional staff met with the consultant and through conscientious and candid discussion produced one goal and four objectives. This resulted from a collective analysis that the four draft goals from the work of the summer retreat essentially could be further refined as one goal and then four strategies or objectives. The committee submitted that document of one goal and four objectives to the Superintendent for his review and subsequent discussion with appropriate educators in the district and board members. The goal and indicators are:

Goal: The Salem City School District will be a high performance district as demonstrated by the Salem City students who:

Objectives: Exceed state standards in literacy and computation, develop intrinsic motivation to pursue education in and outside of the classroom setting, master the skills necessary to retrieve and analyze information, and become lifelong learners.

The committee met again with the consultant in early May to establish indicators for the objectives. They decided that in order to become a high performing district the indicators for all students had to become difficult targets that are significantly higher than present levels of student achievement in Salem City and actually higher than most districts in the state. They also concluded that a high performing district also required comparisons with international standards as those standards will govern the world that students graduating from the Salem City School district will enter. Before listing the indicators and approaches to the objectives, the committee determined that

there were some guidelines to the goals and objectives that are fundamental to achieving the goal and objectives. They are:

- The indicators must be pursued every year by all grade levels at each school but measured and reported at established grade levels at the conclusion of a three year period.
- The indicators should be, at the conclusion of three years, measured and reported at the established grade levels of either grade 2 or 3 (one grade level to be selected by the district), grade 7, and grade 11.
- These established grade levels provide the necessary benchmarks for the professional and support staff to both work with fellow educators from different grade levels and schools but to also remediate aggressively and support the students who fall short of the high achievement indicators. (As an example since successful participation in Algebra in the ninth grade is an accepted measure of high achieving school districts, then meeting a high indicator by the end of the seventh grade provides time for additional support for the students in the eighth grade who did not meet the indicator by the end of the seventh grade).
- Teachers must be the primary educators responsible for the results in these indicators but these high indicators require a commitment from the Superintendent, Board of Education, Administrators, and Parents for resources and the support necessary for teachers to succeed with their students. Professional Development in the district must be decided strictly in the context of what is necessary to raise student achievement to the levels established in the indicators.
- A baseline of student achievement must be established by September, 2009 (and where appropriate at the conclusion of the 2009-10 school year) and shared with the entire school community so annual progress towards the goal and the indicators can be established.
- Review of annual progress requires Principals to develop in each school year and to share with the teaching staff and parents in appropriate ways the plans that each school has to improve student achievement. There can be no interval formula on a percentage basis but **significant improvement in student achievement must occur in every school.**
- If the significant improvement that is achieved indicates that some adjustment in the overall timetable of three years is necessary, it should be considered and adjusted well before the target date of three years
- International bench marks for student achievement should be set for a five year attainment and developed within eighteen months of September, 2009.

Objectives and Indicators

Students in the Salem City District shall,

1. Exceed state standards in literacy and computation as indicated by:

- 90% of all students shall perform at proficient or advanced proficient levels on state tests in grades (2 or 3), 7, and 11
- 90% of all students will read at grade level in grades (2 or 3), 7, and 11 as indicated by either state assessments or an agreed upon valid alternate measure
- 90% of all students will indicate readiness for Algebra by the conclusion of the seventh grade
- 90% of all students will meet state graduation standards by the conclusion of the 11th grade
- 90% of all students will successfully complete the Accuplacer examination

Note: The remaining indicators are dependent upon measures, programs, and baselines not yet established. Once established timetables and benchmarks will be established

2. Develop intrinsic motivation to pursue education in and outside of the classroom as indicated by:

- conversations that Pre-K through 2 grade teachers have with all students about what in school they like, dislike; what they read/do outside of school; and what they think they want to be when they grow up. These conversations should be broadly summarized by the teachers in each grade level by the conclusion of October and March so grade level and school level benchmarks can be established at the end of 2009-2010 and compared each year.
- students in grades 3 through 8 will keep a journal annually where they record their thoughts and responses to three questions: What do they like/dislike in school. What do they read/do when they are at home or not in school. These journals should be reviewed by teachers at the conclusion of October and March so each grade level and school can establish a baseline for improved intrinsic motivation to be established at the end of 2009-2010.

- guidance counselors will record by the end of March of each year their discussions with their students about what their students like, dislike, as well as how they spend their out of school time, and what they want to do when they graduate from school. These should also be summarized and established as the baseline for high school students at the end of the 2010 school year.

3. Master the skills necessary to retrieve and analyze information

- The district shall search and if available on a cost effective basis purchase for a Grade 2 or 3 to grade 11 framework that provides structured tasks for all students at every grade to respond through retrieving and analyzing information.
- Should no framework be available, then a district committee of teachers and administrators shall construct by the conclusion such a framework with a multi year timetable to measure progress and results.

4. Students to become life-long learners

- The district shall assist the high school administration and guidance counselors in developing ways in which students after they graduate can be contacted to ascertain what they are doing two years after they graduate, and five years after they graduate.
- Plans should be developed with any post secondary high school institution such as the Salem County Community College to learn about the progress of Salem City students. This should be pursued only with institutions that have at least ten Salem City students.
- A data base of graduates without publicly establishing names should be developed and maintained annually.
- Successful life-long learners should be honored and publicly entered into a Salem City Hall of Achievers or some other appropriate name for this entity.
- A baseline needs to be established for the results of these follow up activities so measures of improvement and attainment can be established.