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To: Pelham School Board
From: Chip McGee, Superintendent of Schools
Sarah Marandos, Assistant Superintendent
Re: Progress on Pelham School District Goals for the 2023-24 School Year
Date: December 6, 2023
Cc: Deb Mahoney, Business Administrator

At the August 30, 2023 meeting, the Board approved these goals for the 2023-24 school year.

1. Improve Student Performance in Mathematics
2. Develop a Culture of Belonging
3. Make Pelham one of the best places to work

This is our first update on our progress this year.

Goal 1: Improve Student Performance in Mathematics (Year 3 of 3; complete for 2023-24)

Bottom Line: We have met our annual benchmarks at the elementary and high school levels. Our focus is now at the middle school while continuing to make progress at the other two levels.

Measurement Grades 3 - 8: Our goal has been to improve our performance on the math portion of the New Hampshire State Assessment System to be in the top 5 among our 12 peer districts. With 43% proficient or better, we had the same percentage as the state average and we improved by 5% from last year. However, we ranked 9th out of the 12 peer districts so we were not among the top 5. This result required additional analysis to determine next steps. *(Note: Red indicates lowest and green indicates highest values per year.)*

Percent Students Proficient and Above - Peer Districts Math Grade 3 - 8					
District	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023
Auburn	60	63	46	59	59
Candia	60	55	46	56	56
Derry Cooperative	42	48	33	39	37
Hampstead	63	57	34	51	55

Hooksett	53	55	55	61	66
Hudson	50	47	39	43	41
Litchfield	58	56	38	37	40
Londonderry	47	49	41	46	45
Pelham	45	48	42	37	43
Salem	55	53	47	49	50
Timberlane Regional	50	48	30	39	45
Windham	74	76	65	70	73
State	49	49	37	41	43

Elementary: We had 57% of our students proficient or better at the elementary level. That means we ranked 5th out of our 12 peer districts with testing at grades 3 - 5. This means we met our goal at this level.

Percent Students Proficient and Above - Peer Districts Math Elementary - Grade 3 - 5					
District	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023
Auburn	59	62	48	62	67
Candia	69	60	46	63	69
Derry Cooperative	46	56	39	45	45
Hampstead	61	49	41	54	54
Hooksett	57	58	58	70	74
Hudson	52	53	47	54	52
Litchfield	59	58	35	37	41
Londonderry	53	51	49	51	48
Pelham	44	51	51	49	57
Salem	60	57	52	57	59
Timberlane Regional	53	52	38	48	52
Windham	72	75	62	70	75
State	51	51	40	46	47

Middle School: We had 29% of the students in middle school proficient or better. This means we were ranked 12th out of our 12 peer districts with testing at grades 6 - 8. This means we did not meet our goal at the middle school level. This is why the most significant new action items are at this level.

Percent Students Proficient and Above - Peer Districts Math Grades 6 - 8					
District	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023
Auburn	60	65	43	57	51
Candia	51	49	46	49	43
Derry Cooperative	39	41	28	32	29
Hampstead	64	64	26	47	55
Hooksett	50	53	52	53	57
Hudson	48	41	30	32	30
Litchfield	57	54	40	36	39
Londonderry	41	46	32	41	42
Pelham	46	45	34	25	29
Salem	50	49	42	41	42
Timberlane Regional	47	43	21	30	38
Windham	76	76	67	70	71
State	46	46	34	36	39

Action Items for 2023-24

These are the efforts currently in place to continue to improve math performance.

- We have reinstated our district wide curriculum vertical teams including mathematics.
- We are coordinating efforts between the schools using our math coach at the elementary level, our math coach at the middle school level and the math department chair at the high school.

At Pelham Elementary School,

- We hired an experienced math coach who is working with each grade level on math instruction.
- We are providing training (beyond the math coach's work) to all teachers on our new math program, purchased this year.

At Pelham Memorial School,

- We have created a supplemental math course for students in need of additional math support in 8th grade. This course is in place of Spanish for these students.
- We have reinstated in the schedule a structured support time for additional math and reading instruction for all grades (called Literacy).
- We are continuing our Mathletes program for select students who would benefit from a boost in math. This is taught by our math coach and is part of the Unified Arts rotation.
- We have created a low-stakes school-wide competition using our math practice software, called IXL Leaderboard.
- We have completed the adjustment of Accelerated Math in grade 6 to allow for a high school level Algebra I in grade 8.

At Pelham High School,

- We added a Math Lab and Literacy Lab for students who need it to receive additional support during their advisory schedule.
- We are extending the SAT Bootcamp process for juniors to include additional supports in areas such as reading comprehension and problem solving strategies.

Measurement Grade 11: Our Goal in mathematics at the high school level was to increase by 5% per year the number of students at Pelham High School whose SAT score is at the College Board benchmark of “college and career ready.” That is a score of 530 out of 800. For the spring 2023 SAT (class of 2024), we moved from 18% to 29%, which was an 11% increase. For the 2023-2024 school year, we have set a goal to have more than 29% proficiency on the spring 2024 SAT. We would like to keep an ongoing indicator in math to be that the trendline increases year to year.

Goal 2: Develop a Culture of Belonging (Year 1 of 3, complete in 2025-26)

The Pelham School District strives to be a community that is (1) purposeful, (2) focused on teaching and learning, and (3) cohesive in these efforts. As individuals, we want to find deep satisfaction in the work we are doing. After two years of effort, we are in need of regrouping. Quantitative data suggest that we are not making sufficient progress. As a result, this goal is being revised.

In order to reset this goal, we have created a task force, chaired by our Director of Human Resources Toni Barkdoll, and charged with three tasks:

- (1) identify key factors that are holding the District back from a better culture of belonging.
- (2) recommend an improved process for collecting, analyzing, acting on information, and
- (3) recommend an improved method for reporting on progress.

Within this phase, the task force has been focussed on staff. It is made up of a cross section of the district including Director of Human Resources, a Custodian/Maintenance Worker, an Educator from PES, PMS, and PHS, an Educator selected by the PEA, an Instructional Assistant, a Non-affiliated Professional Staff Member, an SAU Support Staff Member, a School Level Support Staff Member, two School or District Administrators, and a Technology Support Staff Member. The Task force is on track to report out its recommendations to the Board on January 17, 2024.

Goal 3: Make Pelham one of the best places to work (Year 2 of 3; complete in 2024-25)

To serve our students and community, it is vital the District hire and retain great staff. We want all staff within the Pelham School District to feel connected to the larger effort on behalf of our students no matter the position they hold within the District. Feeling connected to their work, team and the community will create a culture of belonging, a sense of value and allow us to accomplish great things. A large step towards this goal will be the passage of supportive contracts that promote an environment of professionalism and excellence.

Measurement through Successful Contracts: The Board successfully presented a contract for the Pelham Education Support Personnel Association in March of 2023. The Board and the Pelham Education Association are currently in negotiations to develop a contract to present to voters in March of 2024.

Measurement through Retention: The Board is also tracking progress on this goal through retention data. We use PEA data as an indicator of our ability to retain professional staff including teachers, professional services providers, and administrators. We use PESPA data as an indicator of our ability to retain hourly staff including instructional assistants, support staff, custodians and food service personnel. For 2023, we saw retention of hourly employees, as measured by PESPA, improve to above our target of 70%. Retention of professional staff remained stubbornly at 82%.

Group (indicator)	Target	2022	2023
Professional Staff (PEA)	90%	82%	82%
Hourly Staff (PESPA)	70%	64%*	75%

*2022 Hourly Staff was initially reported incorrectly as 62%.

In order to continue to work to improve retention, we are currently taking the following steps.

- The Board is working to wrap up a successful negotiations with the PEA and gain a warrant that voters approve.
- The Culture of Belonging Task Force is working on identifying and sharing the defining characteristics that attract people to come work in and continue to work for Pelham.
- Our Director of Human Resources is redesigning our onboarding experience to improve the experience for new employees.
- Our Business Administrator and Director of Human Resources are developing a plan to become and remain competitive with salary and benefits for all employees. They will present that plan to the School Board for approval upon completion.

Conclusion

These goals are the core of our work to improve the Pelham School District. While not all indicators show the progress we want, we are confident that our continued efforts at improvement on multiple levels will yield the results we want as a school district and community.