



## FACILITIES STUDY UPDATE



The realities of declining student enrollment, a soft economy, the new property tax cap, and rapidly increasing operational costs have combined to make cost savings a priority for many school districts in our area, including Chatham. With this in mind, the Board of Education hired a consultant group from Questar III BOCES to perform a facilities study, the intent of which was to determine the feasibility of consolidating the District from three school buildings into two school buildings.

“By taking a close look at consolidation now, the District has allowed itself ample time to plan for any possible changes before financial constraints force the issue,” said superintendent Cheryl Nuciforo.

The Questar team completed its study in the spring of 2012, and released its report in June, 2012. The facilities study found that consolidation would be practical for Chatham and that the Middle School building would be the best choice for closure, given its age and condition. The report estimated that by closing the Middle School, the District would realize approximately \$680,000 in yearly cost savings, but that certain construction/modification to the High School/MED campus would be necessary in order to fully integrate all of Chatham’s educational and extracurricular programs into two buildings.

In August and September, the Board of Education held town hall meetings to share the results of the study and gather feedback from the community.

Based on the findings of the report and conversations with the public, in late September the Board decided to move forward and fully explore consolidation as a possibility for Chatham. Over the next several months, the Board will gather information concerning the recommendations of the facilities study report, including relocating the seventh and eighth grades to the High School, moving the six grade to the Mary E. Dardess Elementary School, building additional space at the HS/MED campus, and either selling or finding alternative uses for the Middle School building. The District has formed a Board facilities study committee to spearhead the process, and will also form focus groups of staff, parents and students to gather input and feedback as the study progresses.

The Board will also schedule town hall meetings to discuss specific aspects of consolidation — including the financial state of the District, how a grade 7-12 program would work, and specific design/cost aspects of the capital project. Dates and times for

these meetings will be announced as they become available.

Prior to making a decision on whether or not consolidation is right for Chatham (tentatively scheduled for June, 2013) the Board will hold an additional town hall meeting to provide the community with a summary of its findings and provide a complete picture of what consolidation would mean for our students, our educational program, and our community.

The Board is still early in this information gathering process, and no decisions have or will be made about closing a building until the Board has completed its study and shared its findings with the community.

“By taking a close look at consolidation now, the District has allowed itself ample time to plan for any possible changes before financial constraints force the issue.”

The District has provided a link with information specific to the facilities study, including the full facilities study report, questions & answers, and board presentations at [www.chathamcentralschools.com](http://www.chathamcentralschools.com). Have a question about the facilities study? You can email it to [facilitiesstudy@chatham.k12.ny.us](mailto:facilitiesstudy@chatham.k12.ny.us).

# Fifth Grade a Good Fit at MED

The fifth grade has settled in nicely to its new home at the Mary E. Dardess Elementary School, after relocating there from the Middle School over the summer. For the students it was an easy transition, as moving on to fifth grade meant simply moving down the hall from their fourth grade classrooms.

“We feel that having the fifth grade here at M.E.D. is a very good fit both programatically and socially,” said M.E.D. Principal Kristen Reno. “The fifth grade teaching team is happy to be here, and the students are really enjoying being the big fish in the M.E.D. pond.”

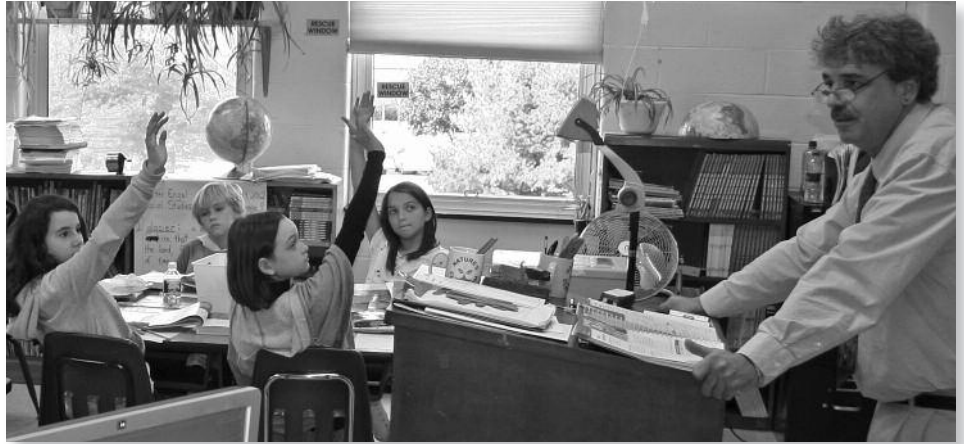
With the fifth grade now at M.E.D., students experience a schedule that is more in line with the common core requirements for fifth grade instruction, with larger consecutive blocks of time spent on reading, writing and mathematics, and fewer encore subjects, or “specials.”

“The transition has gone smoothly because the District involved the fifth grade teaching staff in the process early on, and our input helped shape what the fifth grade program looks like here at M.E.D.,” said fifth grade teacher Jeffery Kole.

“Having a teaching block of eighty minutes as opposed to forty allows us to get deeper into subject matter and better differentiate learning,” added fifth grade team leader Joshua Noble. “The schedule allows for much more flexibility in our instruction and the students aren’t demonstrating the kinds of social distractions that you see in a middle school setting.”

The fifth grade uses team-teaching, where two teachers are paired together to teach core subjects to two classes. One teacher is responsible for teaching language arts and social studies, while the other teacher handles math and science instruction. Students spend half of their day with one teacher, then change classrooms and spend the second half with the other.

“Unlike a self-contained class, we specialize in subjects,” said Noble. “I can focus on Math, and Mr. Kole can focus on ELA, yet the students are getting a balance.”



Team teaching also helps students build independence and time management skills – skills important for when they will transition to the Middle School as sixth graders. Unlike the younger grades at M.E.D., fifth graders are responsible for getting to and from their different classrooms, as well as lunch and recess, on their own. They must also keep track of multiple assignments from their two teachers in a planner, and must have their planner reviewed and signed by a parent or guardian every night.

While the fifth grade now has more of a focus on literacy, students aren’t missing out on all the specials they would have enjoyed at the Middle School. Band and Orchestra have followed the fifth grade to MED, and as a result, instrumental music is now available to fourth graders as well. Counseling, leadership and character education opportunities from the Middle School program also followed the fifth grade to MED. Fifth graders now develop and lead the school’s announcements program along with the reading the pledge of allegiance over the loudspeaker each morning.

And being a leader means fifth graders have become their school’s newest role models. Describing one example, Mr. Noble explained, “We have kids that are working hard to be the best students that they can be, because they want to set an example to their siblings or other students in the younger grades.”

## Newsletter Receives National, Statewide Awards

In 2012, Chatham CSD was recognized at both state and national levels for outstanding achievement in educational communications.

In July, our newsletter “Chatham Connections” won two national Awards of Merit from the National School Public Relations Association — one as an outstanding community newsletter, and the second as an outstanding budget publication.

This September, the New York School Public Relations Association (NYSPPRA) also recognized “Chatham Connections” with an Award of Honor at its 33rd-Annual Communications Awards.

Part of a commitment to good school-community communication practices, Chatham CSD publishes this newsletter three times a year, with regular editions in the fall and winter, and a special school budget edition each spring.



# The Dignity for All Students Act: NYS Anti-Bullying Law

The Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) is a state law that went into effect in July, 2012. The law seeks to ensure all New York students attend school in a safe and supportive environment, and prohibits discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment and bullying of students while on school property, riding school buses or attending school functions. The law also extends to cyberbullying, prohibiting verbal or written harassment through the use of e-mail, online chat rooms and social networking sites either on or off school property.

While DASA places new accountability measures on schools, Chatham's anti-bullying efforts already go above and beyond the requirements of the law.

"Our ultimate goal is that no child in the Chatham Central School District be bullied," said CHS assistant principal Amy Potter, who chairs the District's Anti-Bullying Committee.

Over the last three years, the Anti-Bullying Committee has spearheaded the implementation and enhancement of school-wide measures designed to drastically reduce incidents of bullying, harassment and discrimination. Recent efforts include, but are not limited to:

- An updated student Code of Conduct that includes an age-appropriate, plain language version of policy addressing bullying, harassment and discrimination
- Creation of a resource page on the District website where one can view District policy concerning bullying, contact our building DASA coordinators and report incidents of bullying, harassment or discrimination.
- Implementation of a research based, K-12 anti-bullying curriculum proven to reduce incidents of bullying
- Professional development for every District employee to raise staff sensitivity to discrim-

ination or harassment and enable all employees to prevent or respond to such acts

- The establishment a DASA coordinator in each of our school buildings, whose responsibility it is to address all reports of bullying, harassment or discrimination involving students in their building
- The revision of Board policy addressing bullying, harassment and discrimination
- Educating all CMS and CHS students on the specifics of DASA and appropriate ways to respond if they see or suspect someone is being bullied

Chatham Central School District fully understands the impact bullying, harassment and discrimination can have on a student's educational, emotional and physical well-being. The above measures, as well as others, reflect Chatham's commitment to effectively address bullying in our schools and ensure the safety of all our students.

## Career Cruising at CHS

**"CAREER CRUISING"** is a comprehensive, web-based, career development program that is helping students shape their post-graduation goals. Chatham students are logging in to cruise career profiles, matching their personal interests to potential occupations, and mapping out educational plans to meet their career aspirations.

"It is easy to use and helpful," said sophomore Maddy Minahan. "You pick what your interests are and it guides you from there. It really breaks it down to show you many different options that you could have as a career."

Career Cruising uses assessment tools and detailed occupation profiles to help students move through their career exploration and planning process. Students first use an interactive survey to find out how their personal likes and skills match up with different careers. They can also view feedback on exactly why an occupation is or is not considered a good match and view comprehensive career profiles that detail working conditions, earnings potential, even education and training requirements.

From there, students can find colleges or technical schools that offer desired courses

or degrees that match their desired career, and can access detailed information about those schools to find the best one for them.

"It really is one-stop career shopping," said CHS guidance counselor Amanda Carroll. "The students like it because it utilizes technology they are comfortable using and it gives them instant feedback."

Career cruising is taught in class as part of the guidance department's career development curriculum. However, students save their results electronically to an online profile where they can easily access, update, and revisit their personal research from any computer, allowing them to "cruise" from just about anywhere, including at home.

"It is developmental in nature, and has a flow that builds from grade to grade," added CHS guidance counselor Jim Lombardi.

At CHS, for example, the guidance department began using career cruising to help freshmen develop their transcripts and decision making. Sophomores are using it to explore their interests and set goals. In



eleventh and twelfth grades, career cruising plays a large role in helping students successfully organize and manage the complex process of applying to college and taking other immediate steps toward achieving their post-graduation goals. The program also offers a resume builder where students can form their personal research, volunteer and work experiences into effective resumes and college applications.

The career cruising program and related career building classes are now offered at both CHS and CMS, and are for all students in grades six through twelve.



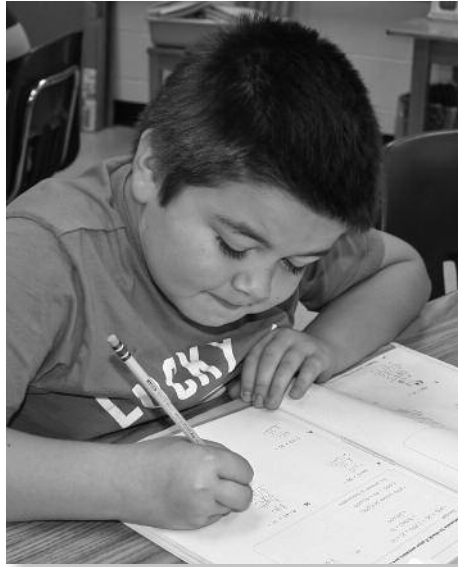
# What are the Common Core Learning Standards?

This school year, parents have been hearing a lot about the “Common Core,” but what are they?

The Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) are national educational guidelines that have recently been adopted by nearly every state in the nation, including New York. They are part of an effort by the National Governors Association for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers to clearly define the set of knowledge and skills that students need to learn in order to be prepared for college, career, and an increasingly competitive world marketplace.

The CCLS are important because they are playing a large role in how instruction is shaped here in Chatham. Also, the CCLS will form the basis for new state assessments which will replace existing state achievement tests this school year.

The New York State Education Department has adopted Common Core Learning Standards in Mathematics, English Language Arts (ELA), and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Sci-



ence and Technical Subjects for Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12. The standards are rigorous, aligned to build on college and work expectations, and benchmarked to international standards to guarantee that our students are competitive the world over.

Chatham’s teaching staff are using these standards to ensure students are learning the skills and knowledge they need. Over the last two years, the CCLS have been a focus of Chatham’s professional development and have guided curriculum writing. The standards helped define our 21st Century learning model, and as a result they have led to increased project based learning opportunities for students. The District has also updated many of our learning materials to reflect these standards.

If you are interested in learning more about CCLS, the District has provided a Common Core resource page at [www.chathamcentralschools.com](http://www.chathamcentralschools.com), which can be found by clicking the “Parents” link.

## All Chatham Central Schools In “Good Standing”

The Chatham Central School District and all our school buildings are considered “Schools in Good Standing” under New York State’s No Child Left Behind accountability system.

In late August, 2012 the New York State Education Department (NYSED) removed Chatham Middle School

from its “School In Need of Improvement” list. With students showing improvement on test scores, the school meeting requirements set forth by the state, and with changes made to the way the state identifies schools as needing improvement, CMS is now considered a “School in Good Standing.”

The state first identified CMS as a “School in Need of Improvement” in 2011, based on state assessment results in English Language Arts for students with disabilities.

As a “School In Need of Improvement” CMS undertook a number of levels of self-study to identify and address areas of deficit in its educational program. The school worked closely with a BOCES special education school improvement specialist to implement ongoing improvement in core instructional areas, provided academic intervention services and additional literacy programs for students with disabilities, implemented scheduling changes to increase focus on academics, and provided additional professional development for teaching staff. Structured improvement plans were reviewed by the Board of Education and BOCES, and were submitted to and accepted by the state.

For more information on state assessments or the No Child Left Behind accountability system for schools, please visit [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov).



# UNSUNG HEROES: ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



Vern and Wilma Westover cooking hot dogs at the "Music In The Park" concert.

The Chatham Central School Alumni Association is a dedicated supporter of educational opportunities in Chatham. The Alumni Association was formed several years ago not just as a social connection between Chatham's schools and graduates, but also as an organization devoted to supporting Chatham's students, teachers and programs.

"I always appreciated my time as a student in Chatham, and I was looking for an opportunity to reconnect with people who felt the same way and wanted to give back to the greater school community," said Alumni Association president Dave O'Connor about why he joined the organization. "We have very low administrative costs, so most of the money we raise we turn right around and send back into the schools."

Since its formation in 2005, the Alumni Association has provided over \$15,000 to support opportunities for students at MED, CMS and CHS. Among the programs they support are Chatham's music program; the eighth grade "Moving Up" program; the School Spirit Scholarship awarded to graduating seniors; as well as annual donations to the Chatham Education Foundation. In 2012, the Alumni Association established a \$1,500 "In-School Scholarship" fund with the intent of providing students in need with educa-

tional opportunities that otherwise would be cost-prohibitive for them to participate in.

Funds are raised largely through membership dues, but the group also holds a regular fundraising event - getting together to cook and sell hotdogs at the Chatham CSD music department's annual "Music in the Park" concert.

The Alumni Association also holds regular meetings throughout the year, hosts an annual picnic each fall, and publishes a newsletter for its membership every few months.

"I am amazed at what we have accomplished in the few years we have been in existence," said Association member Patricia Binzer. "We have several hundred dues paying members who are all over the United States."

And the Alumni Association would like to be able to do more. They are always seeking new members, particularly those interested in playing an active role in the organization's fundraisers and events. To be eligible, one need only be a Chatham graduate and have a desire to give back to his or her school community. Interested persons are encouraged to check out the Alumni Association's website, which can be found at [www.chathamcentralschools.com](http://www.chathamcentralschools.com). You can also contact them by email at [alumni@chatham.k12.ny.us](mailto:alumni@chatham.k12.ny.us) or by post at P.O. Box 208, Chatham, NY 12037.

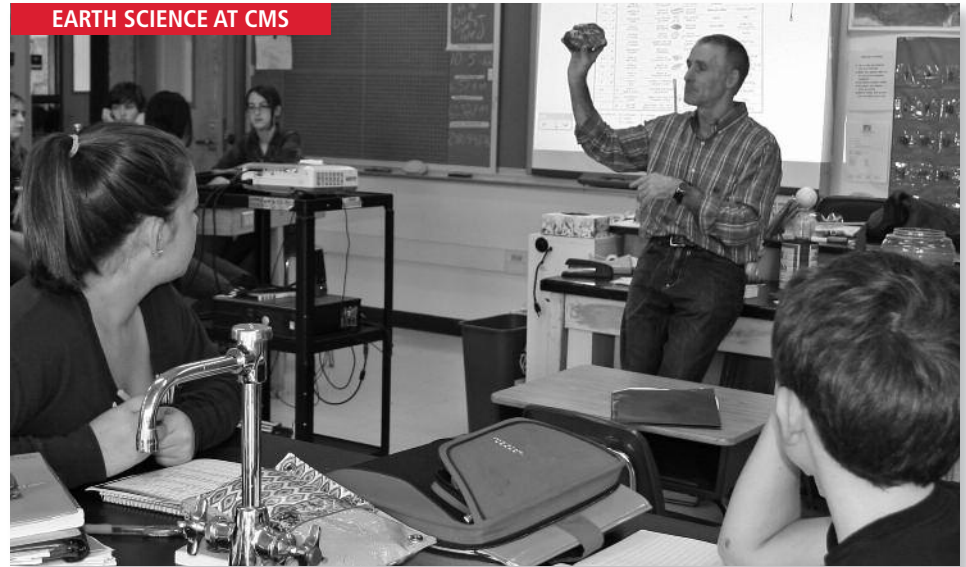


# More Science and Project Based Opportunities at CMS

Students who are interested in accelerating their science learning can now take Earth Science a year earlier, because Chatham Middle School now offers it. This freshman level course offers eighth graders the opportunity to earn high school credit, and in doing so, allow themselves more flexibility in their schedule to take other advanced electives when they reach high school.

“This is the same course students take at Chatham High School, the only difference is that it is being taught here at the Middle School,” said eighth grade science teacher Jason Kahn, who is teaching the course.

Eighth grader Bridgett Bulson is one of the students taking earth science this year,



**EARTH SCIENCE AT CMS**



**PROJECT BASED ART**

and says she has put in a lot of hard work meeting the challenges of the class, but is happy with her decision to take the advanced class. “I like science and I felt like I was going to learn more here,” she explained. “It seemed more interesting, and I will get high school credit, which is always a plus.”

CMS has also scheduled 21st Century learning opportunities for more students with the addition of Project Based Art and Project Based Technology classes. These classes are in addition to traditional art and technology classes at CMS. They are for students in grades six, seven and eight and are offered opposite one another — students take either an art or technology class

for the first half of the year, and then take the other for the second half of the year.

“These are creative projects that relate to real life careers,” said CMS art teacher Nancy Barth, who added that the project based nature of arts gives students a great way to create, innovate and collaborate on assignments that relate to any number of real world subjects.

For example, eighth grade students are studying influential modern artists while using pencil, paper and perspective to create visual illusions along the lines of famous “Op Art” works of the 1960’s. Likewise, seventh graders are exploring architects, architecture and eco-friendly home and building products by sketching out “Dream Green Homes” of their own design.

While students in art are designing green homes, students in Project Based Technology classes are building them. Here, seventh graders are incorporating concepts like energy conservation, recycled materials and renewable energy with drafting, design and mechanical skills to create scale models of eco-friendly buildings.

Depending on the grade, students are taking on projects exploring silicon chips and nanotechnology; assembling simple computer systems; methodically disassembling mechanical objects and mapping out reassembly procedures; building and testing Mag-Lev (magnetically levitated) trains; using hand and machine tools to work with wood, exploring the effects of technology on society, both present and past; and much more.



**PROJECT BASED TECHNOLOGY**

# Federal Regulations Bring Changes to School Lunches

Schools across the country are now required to meet new federal nutrition standards, part of the “Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act” that aims to promote healthy eating habits and address the rising rate of childhood obesity and other diet-related health complications.

The new school meal standards are designed to ensure students are offered both fruits and vegetables every day of the week; substantially increase offerings of whole grain-rich foods; limit calories based on the age of children; and reduce amounts of saturated fat, trans fat and sodium. Schools will phase in the nutrition standards over a three-year period, starting this year with lunches. Changes in breakfast will take place in future years.

Examples of these new federal regulations include:

- Specific portion sizes individualized for each grade range (K-5, 6-8, 9-12)
- Only fat free or low fat milk being offered (flavored milk only offered as fat free)
- More variety and larger servings of fruits and vegetables
- Students being required to select a minimum of a ½ cup of fruit or vegetable on their tray
- More whole grain products such as breads, pasta, and cereals
- Limited saturated fats and only naturally occurring trans fats

Chatham CSD’s food service staff are now working within these guidelines to create healthier meals that taste good and are convenient for students.

If you are interested in learning more, a good resource on the new federal meal requirements is available at [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov).



## District APPR Receives Seal of Approval from State

Starting this school year, the effectiveness of all Chatham teachers and principals will be evaluated each year under New York State’s Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). The law is in step with Chatham’s high standards for instruction and learning, and seeks to improve student performance by assuring every classroom has an effective teacher and each school building has an effective leader.

School districts are required to develop and submit a district APPR plan for review by the state. Chatham’s APPR plan was developed and agreed upon through collective negotiations between District officials and union representation of our teachers and principals. The plan was submitted to the NYS Education Department in August, 2012, and approved by the state this October.

A teacher’s effectiveness will be based 40 percent on state and local measures of student achievement; and 60 percent on evaluations by his or her building principal. The evaluations require principals or other trained administrators to meet with each teacher to discuss classroom lessons, observe the teacher in the classroom and compile evidence-based documentation of his or her performance.

The APPR also requires teachers to develop and implement Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) that detail what their students are expected to learn over the course of the year. As part of the SLOs, students are assessed at the beginning of the year

to determine where they are at academically. Their end of the year tests are used to gauge their academic growth. Student growth on SLO’s will play a role in gauging teacher effectiveness.

At the end of each year, every teacher will receive a composite effectiveness score with grades of “highly effective,” “effective,” “developing,” or “ineffective.” The District must then file an evaluation report with the state for each teacher. Personal improvement plans will be developed for any teacher not meeting APPR standards of effectiveness.

Principals will be similarly evaluated each year by the school superintendent. A principal’s effectiveness will be gauged by the overall effectiveness of the teachers in his or her building, as well as by student performance.

Chatham administrators responsible for conducting APPR evaluations all underwent extensive training to become certified Lead Teacher Evaluators. While teacher evaluations are by no means new (they play an important role in determining whether or not a teacher receives tenure, and our administrators conduct periodic unannounced observations of tenured teachers), the APPR mandates a significant increase in the amount of time administrators will be required to spend in classrooms observing teachers and evaluating their performance.

You can view Chatham’s APPR plan by visiting [www.chathamcentralschools.com](http://www.chathamcentralschools.com) and clicking the “NYS and District Plans” link.

## CAR-RT SORT POSTAL CUSTOMER

Produced in cooperation with the Questar III Communications Service

### ADMINISTRATORS

Cheryl Nuciforo <i>Superintendent</i>	392-1501
Michael Chudy <i>School Business Administrator</i>	392-1503
Jean Scheriff <i>Director of Pupil Services</i>	392-2417
Tamara Thorpe-Odom <i>Director of Special Education</i>	392-3104
Kristen Reno <i>Mary E. Dardess Elementary School Principal</i>	392-2255
Annemarie Barkman <i>Chatham Middle School Interim Principal</i>	392-1560
John Thorsen <i>Chatham High School Principal</i>	392-4142
Amy Potter <i>Chatham High School Assistant Principal</i>	392-4142

### BOARD MEMBERS

	<i>Term Expires</i>
Melony Spock <i>President</i>	2013
James Toteno <i>Vice President</i>	2014
James Cartin	2013
Michael Clark	2015
Gail Behrens Day	2013
Muriel Faxon	2013
Jennifer Lindberg	2015
James Marks	2014
David O'Connor	2015
Emma Roberts <i>Student Representative</i>	2013



## 2012-2013 District and BOE Goals

### LONG-TERM GOALS:

- Provide an educational program that promotes excellence and prepares students for success in the 21st century.
- Develop a school system that has the flexibility to address the learning and developmental needs of all students.
- Develop and support leadership at every level that promotes a positive school culture and supports student achievement.
- Develop a culture of long range planning that supports continuous improvement while addressing the impact of declining enrollment and economically challenging times.
- As a Board of Education, seek and implement best practices in District leadership.

### 2012-2013 FOCUS:

- Improve student achievement – Increase the number of students meeting and exceeding standards.
- Implement a successful anti-bullying program.
- Implement the new teacher and principal evaluation system (APPR) so that it is helpful in achieving District goals.
- Provide strong guidance program that helps students properly plan for life after high school.
- Develop a plan for District facilities usage in the future that reflects programming priorities and meets the long term financial needs of the District.