# STRATEGIC EDUCATIONAL PLAN

### FOR THE

## TOWN OF HOPKINTON, MASSACHUSETTS



## HOPKINTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE September 2009

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### **Non-Discrimination Notice**

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The Hopkinton Public School System is committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals at school or at school-sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. The Hopkinton Public School System requires all employees and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, students and all members of the school community.

#### **STEERING COMMITTEE**

#### STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

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#### Introduction

The implementation of this Strategic Plan will provide our students with the skills, knowledge, and expertise to be productive citizens, to gain admission into outstanding institutions of higher learning, and to gain future employment in a competitive global economy. To ensure that the strategic plan reflected the school community's priorities and values, data was gathered from groups both internal and external to the schools during the past two school years. In the spring and summer of 2008, a survey was conducted by the Boston Research Group to understand the educational priorities of parents within the school district, to measure their perceptions of current strengths and areas for growth, and to explore their attitude towards fees.

During the 2008-09 school year, a fourteen member Steering Committee was formed that included representatives from school administration, the School Committee, teaching staff from each school, and parents. The Steering Committee collected and interpreted data gathered from the survey, from a thirty-one member Strategic Planning Team, and from focus groups conducted with staff, High School students, and other community members. The Steering Committee utilized this information to draft the Strategic Plan's mission, values, vision, and priority initiatives. The action plans to implement the initiatives were drafted by the administrative team. After completing its review of the draft documents, the School Committee approved the Strategic Plan in September of 2009.

The initiatives in the strategic plan will allow our students to master the core subjects and  $21^{st}$  century themes outlined by the Partnership for  $21^{st}$  Century Skills that are being championed by the state of Massachusetts, which is one of the leadership states for this national initiative. More information on the Partnership and the businesses and organizations supporting it can be found in Appendix A or at www.21stcenturyskills.org.

#### **School District Information**

The Hopkinton Public School District offers a comprehensive educational program for students in pre-school through grade 12. The school district includes a high school for students in grades 9-12, a middle school for students in grades 6-8, and three elementary schools for students in grades K-5. Pre-school students are educated in a wing of the middle school. Students are taught by an experienced and well educated staff. Sixty-eight percent of faculty has six or more years of teaching experience and 83% of staff possesses an advanced degree.

Increasingly Hopkinton has become known as one of the better school districts in the state. During the 2008-09 school year, Newsweek Magazine ranked Hopkinton High School as the 420<sup>th</sup> best High School in the nation, and Boston Magazine recently ranked the High School as the 30<sup>th</sup> smartest high school in the state. In addition, Money Magazine just listed Hopkinton as the 19<sup>th</sup> best small town in the country in which to live and gave the schools an "A" rating.

Hopkinton students annually excel in competitions at both the national level and state levels. During the 2008-09 school year, thirteen students were recognized as part of the National Merit Scholarship Competition, and two students were named National Merit Finalists. Hopkinton students also represented the state of Massachusetts at the International Science Fair for the third year in succession. In addition, twenty-five students received awards as part of the Boston Globe Scholastic Arts competition, and the High School Concert Band performed at the Stars at Symphony Showcase at Symphony Hall as this year's Gold Medalist in the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association (MICCA) competition. The athletic program also finished second in the most recent Division 3 Dalton Standings, which means it had one of the highest winning percentages in the state.

#### **Community Profile**

The town of Hopkinton is located at the intersection of Route 495 and Route 90, and has attracted both industry and residents with its central location, excellent schools, and rural character. Hopkinton is truly a link for professional people who work in the area. The town is within forty minutes of Boston, Worcester, and Providence, Rhode Island. There is easy access to two major airports, Boston's Logan Airport and Providence's T.F. Green Airport. Hopkinton is probably best known as the start of the Boston Marathon.

Hopkinton is currently home to 15,216 residents, and approximately fifty percent of these residents have moved to town within the last fifteen years. To accommodate this growth, many new homes were constructed, and the town built the Hopkins Elementary School, Hopkinton High School, and new facilities for police, fire, and senior citizens. The school district is currently working with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) on a Feasibility Study that will result in the renovation or replacement of its oldest school facility, the Center Elementary School.

While growth in Hopkinton has recently slowed, developer Boulder Capital is working with the town on Legacy Farms. This mixed use plan would result in 940 residential units and 450,000 square feet of commercial space on 720 acres of land purchased from Weston Nurseries. Once completed, the development will yield approximately 226 students for the school district. Progress on the development has been delayed by the recent downturn in the economy.

While Hopkinton is primarily a residential community, it is home to several high technology and biotechnology companies. The largest business in town is EMC Corporation, a Fortune 500 company that is headquartered in town and currently employs approximately 5000 employees. Other major Hopkinton businesses include Caliper Life Sciences, Barry Controls, Lonza Biologics and a Liberty Mutual Insurance Research Facility. While infrastructure improvements have been made in water, sewer, electrical service, and roadways, future industrial growth and additional revenues for the town are largely dependent on further infrastructure improvements, primarily the construction of a new wastewater treatment facility and the development of new town wells.

#### Mission

The mission of the Hopkinton Public Schools is to learn, create, and achieve together.

### Values

We accomplish our mission by embracing these values:

- Primacy of Learning
- Achievement
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Social, Emotional, and Physical Well-Being

### Vision

The Hopkinton Public School District is regarded by other school districts, institutions of higher learning, and employers as a center of educational innovation that produces critical thinkers, creative problem-solvers, effective communicators, and productive, healthy citizens.

- 1. The curriculum is dynamic and supports 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.
- 2. Data from multiple and varied assessments are used to improve student learning.
- 3. The school district's facilities, grade configuration, and organizational structure support student learning.
- 4. The school district's staffing, services, and culture support the academic, social, and emotional needs of all students.
- 5. Highly dedicated and qualified staff members are supported in their work and are compensated fairly and competitively.
- 6. The School Committee, administration, and staff effectively communicate their plans, priorities, and progress to students, staff, families, and the community.
- 7. The community works together to efficiently provide the resources to remain a high-performing district while recognizing current economic conditions.

#### 1. Vision Statement: The curriculum is dynamic and supports 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.

#### 1A. Priority Initiative: Middle and High School Programs of Study

**Goal**: By June of 2010, 100% of courses in the Middle and High School Programs of Study will be evaluated for rigor and alignment with 21<sup>st</sup> century learning standards.

#### 1B. Priority Initiative: Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

**Goal**: By June of 2011, 100% of curriculum units in the school district will include desired results, assessment evidence and learning plan, and will be developed in the teachers' curriculum database.

#### 1C. Priority Initiative: K-12 Writing Program

**Goal**: By June of 2014, cohort scores on the open response and long composition sections of the MCAS will increase by 10% when compared to the results of the 2009 MCAS administration.

#### 1D. Priority Initiative: STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics)

**Goal #1**: By June of 2014, 100% of high school students will complete three years of a lab-based <u>science</u>. As a result, there will be a 10% increase in the percentage of students scoring at the advanced level on state assessments and a 10% increase in mean scores on national assessments as measured by student aggregate scores.

**Goal #2**: By June of 2014, 100% of high school students will complete four years of <u>math</u>. As a result, there will be a 10% increase in the percentage of students scoring at the advanced level on state assessments and a 10% increase in mean scores on national assessments as measured by student aggregate scores.

#### 1E. Priority Initiative: Foreign Language

Goal #1: By June of 2014, the school district will increase its foreign language offerings at the middle and elementary levels.

**Goal #2**: By June of 2014, 75% of high school students will complete three years of foreign language, which will include in-person or cross cultural experiences with a goal of attaining at least an intermediate proficiency level.

Goal #3: By June of 2014, 10% of high school students will complete two years' study of a critical language (e.g., Mandarin Chinese or Arabic).

#### 1F. Priority Initiative: Virtual Learning and Extended Learning Opportunities

Goal: By June of 2014, 100% of all high school students will graduate having taken at least one on-line course.

#### 2. Vision Statement: Data from multiple and varied assessments are used to improve student learning.

#### 2A. Priority Initiative: Assessment

**Goal #1**: By June of 2012, an analysis of all instructional units in the curriculum database will demonstrate a balanced system of assessment (e.g., tests, performance tasks, and other assessments).

**Goal #2**: By June of 2014, student achievement on benchmark assessments to be developed will increase by 10% in all core subjects after a baseline is established by June of 2012.

#### 3. Vision Statement: The school district's facilities, grade configuration, and organizational structure will support student learning.

#### 3A. Priority Initiative: Full-Day Kindergarten

**Goal**: By September of 2012, the school district will implement a fee-based, full-day kindergarten program, which will be available to every interested family.

#### **3B. Priority Initiative:** Center School Building Project

**Goal:** By September of 2012, a renovated Center School or replacement facility for pre-school and elementary school students will be operational after its construction in partnership with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

#### **3C. Priority Initiative:** District Configuration

**Goal**: By September of 2012, the school district will be organized by regions to facilitate longer grade spans, reduce the number of transitions among schools for students, and increase student learning. (Note: The initiative is directly linked to the outcome of the Center School Building Project in 3B.)

## 4. Vision Statement: The school district's staffing, services, and culture support the academic, social, and emotional needs of all students.

#### 4A. Priority Initiative: Class Size

**Goal**: By June of 2010, the school district will establish new class size guidelines after a review of current research and an analysis of class sizes in similar communities.

#### 4B. Priority Initiative: Interventions for Students

**Goal**: By June of 2012, students who have been referred for academic intervention, enrichment, or acceleration through the school district's Response to Intervention program (RTI) will demonstrate a 15% improvement between pre- and post-intervention measures.

#### 4C. Priority Initiatives: Extracurricular Offerings

Goal: By June 2013, at least 90% of middle and high school students will participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities.

## 5. Vision Statement: Highly dedicated and qualified staff members are supported in their work and are compensated fairly and competitively.

#### **5A. Priority Initiative:** Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

**Goal**: By June of 2011, 75% of district teacher schedules will accommodate fixed periods of time during the week in which they will function as part of a professional learning community (PLC) to plan and provide interventions for students and to use data to make instructional decisions.

#### 5B. Priority Initiative: Compensation and Work Day

**Goal:** By September of 2012, teachers' and administrators' salaries and work day will compare favorably with similar school districts in the region.

## 6. Vision Statement: The School Committee, administration, and staff effectively communicate their plans, priorities, and progress to students, staff, families, and the community.

#### 6A. Priority Initiative: Staff Communication

**Goal**: By June of 2011, 90% of school staff will indicate annually that they have been effectively informed about the school district's strategic plan, its key initiatives for the current school year, and school district progress towards those initiatives.

#### 6B. Priority Initiative: Parent and Guardian Communication

Goal: By June of 2011, 75% of parents and guardians will indicate annually that they have been effectively informed about the school district's strategic plan, its key initiatives for the current school year, and school district progress towards those initiatives.

## 7. Vision Statement: The community works together to efficiently provide the resources to remain a high-performing district while recognizing current economic conditions.

#### 7A. Priority Initiative: Recycling

**Goal:** By June of 2014, the school district will implement a mixed fiber and plastic recycling program that increases recycling by 30% after a baseline is established in 2009-10.

#### 7B. Priority Initiative: Energy Savings

**Goal**: By June 2014, the school district will realize a 20% reduction in energy consumption through a comprehensive energy management program and the use of renewable energy sources.

#### 7C. Priority Initiative: Cost Savings

**Goal**: The school district will pursue alternative revenue sources and operating efficiencies that will result in a 5% savings to taxpayers by June of 2014 after the budget is adjusted for enrollment and inflation.

#### APPENDIX A: Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning

#### **Core Subjects and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Themes**

Mastery of core subjects and 21<sup>st</sup> century themes is essential for students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Core subjects include:

- English, reading or language arts
- World languages
- Arts
- Mathematics
- Economics
- Science
- Geography
- History
- Government and Civics

In addition to these subjects, we believe schools must move beyond a focus on basic competency in core subjects to promoting understanding of academic content at much higher levels by weaving 21st century interdisciplinary themes into core subjects:

#### Global awareness

- Using 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to understand and address global issues
- Learning from and working collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work and community contexts
- o Understanding other nations and cultures, including the use of non-English languages

#### • Financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy

- o Knowing how to make appropriate personal economic choices
- Understanding the role of the economy in society
- o Using entrepreneurial skills to enhance workplace productivity and career options
- Civic literacy
  - Participating effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes
  - Exercising the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national and global levels
  - o Understanding the local and global implications of civic decisions

#### • Health literacy

- Obtaining, interpreting and understanding basic health information and services and using such information and services in ways that are health enhancing
- Understanding preventive physical and mental health measures, including proper diet, nutrition, exercise, risk avoidance and stress reduction
- Using available information to make appropriate health-related decisions
- Establishing and monitoring personal and family health goals
- Understanding national and international public health and safety issues

#### Learning and Innovation Skills

Learning and innovation skills increasingly are being recognized as the skills that separate students who are prepared for increasingly complex life and work environments in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and those who are not. A focus on creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration is essential to prepare students for the future.

#### • Creativity and Innovation Skills

- Demonstrating originality and inventiveness in work
- Developing, implementing and communicating new ideas to others
- Being open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives
- Acting on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution to the domain in which the innovation occurs

#### • Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills

- Exercising sound reasoning in understanding
- Making complex choices and decisions
- Understanding the interconnections among systems
- Identifying and asking significant questions that clarify various points of view and lead to better solutions
- Framing, analyzing, and synthesizing information in order to solve problems and answer questions.
- Communication and Collaboration Skills
  - Articulating thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively through speaking and writing
  - o Demonstrating ability to work effectively with diverse teams
  - Exercising flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a goal
  - o Assuming shared responsibility for collaborative work

#### Information, Media and Technology Skills

People in the 21<sup>st</sup> century live in a technology and media-suffused environment, marked by access to an abundance of information, rapid changes in technology tools, and the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale. To be effective in the 21st century, citizens and workers must be able to exhibit a range of functional and critical thinking skills related to information, media and technology.

#### • Information Literacy

- Accessing information efficiently and effectively, evaluating information critically and competently and using information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand
- Possessing a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information
- Media Literacy
  - Understanding how media messages are constructed, for what purposes and using which tools, characteristics and conventions.
  - Examining how individuals interpret messages differently, how values and points of view are included or excluded and how media can influence beliefs and behaviors.
  - Possessing a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information
- ICT (Information, Communications, and Technology) Literacy
  - Using digital technology, communication tools and/or networks appropriately to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information in order to function in a knowledge economy
  - Using technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information, and the possession of a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information

#### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Support Systems:

The elements described below are the critical systems necessary to ensure student mastery of 21st century skills. 21st century standards, assessments, curriculum, instruction, professional development and learning environments must be aligned to produce a support system that produces 21st century outcomes for today's students.

#### 1. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Standards

- Focuses on 21st century skills, content knowledge and expertise.
- Builds understanding across and among core subjects as well as 21st century interdisciplinary themes
- Emphasizes deep understanding rather than shallow knowledge

- Engages students with the real world data, tools, and experts they will encounter in college, on the job, and in life--students learn best when actively engaged in solving meaningful problems
- Allows for multiple measures of mastery

#### 2. Assessment of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

- Supports a balance of assessments, including high-quality standardized testing along with effective classroom formative and summative assessments
- Emphasizes useful feedback on student performance that is embedded into everyday learning
- Requires a balance of technology-enhanced, formative and summative assessments that measure student mastery of 21st century skills
- Enables development of portfolios of student work that demonstrate mastery of 21st century skills to educators and prospective employers
- Enables a balanced portfolio of measures to assess the educational system's effectiveness at reaching high levels of student competency in 21st century skills

#### 3. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Curriculum and Instruction

- Teaches 21st century skills discretely in the context of core subjects and 21st century interdisciplinary themes
- Focuses on providing opportunities for applying 21st century skills across content areas and for a competency-based approach to learning
- Enables innovative learning methods that integrate the use of supportive technologies, inquiry- and problem-based approaches and higher order thinking skills
- Encourages the integration of community resources beyond school walls

#### **4.** 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professional Development

- Highlights ways teachers can seize opportunities for integrating 21st century skills, tools and teaching strategies into their classroom practice and help them identify what activities they can replace/de-emphasize.
- Balances direct instruction with project-oriented teaching methods
- Illustrates how a deeper understanding of subject matter can actually enhance problem-solving, critical thinking, and other 21st century skills.
- Enables 21st century professional learning communities for teachers that models the kinds of classroom learning that best promotes 21st century skills for students
- Cultivates teachers' ability to identify students' particular learning styles, intelligences, strengths and weaknesses

- Helps teachers develop their abilities to use various strategies (such as formative assessments) to reach diverse students and to create environments that support differentiated teaching and learning
- Supports the continuous evaluation of students' 21st century skills development
- Encourages knowledge sharing among communities of practitioners, using face-to-face, virtual and blended communications
- Uses a scaleable and sustainable model of professional development

#### 5. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Environments

- Creates learning practices, human support and physical environments that will support the teaching and learning of 21st century skill outcomes
- Supports professional learning communities that enable educators to collaborate, share best practices and integrate 21st century skills into classroom practice
- Enables students to learn in relevant, real world 21st century contexts (e.g., through project-based or other applied work)
- Allows equitable access to quality learning tools, technologies and resources
- Provides 21st century architectural and interior designs for group, team and individual learning.
- Supports expanded community and international involvement in learning, both face-to-face and online

#### **APPENDIX B: Glossary of Terms**

**21st Century Learning/Standards** - A specified set of knowledge and skills designed to help students succeed as effective citizens, workers, and leaders in the 21st century. Standards emphasize deep understandings across core subjects, engage students in real-world data and problem-solving, and allow for multiple measures of mastery.

Acceleration – The process by which a small percentage of students who have demonstrated that they have mastered key concepts and skills at their grade level curriculum are taught a curriculum designed for older grades or ages of students.

**Benchmark assessments** – A form of assessment most often developed within a school district and administered to students at particular intervals of the school year. The assessments serve several purposes: providing evaluative information about the impact of a curriculum or a program, offering instructional information that helps diagnose student strengths and weaknesses, and informing and guiding teachers' instructional decisions.

**Cohort score** – Aggregate scores of the same group of students as they move through the grades (as opposed to the common practice of comparing year to year scores of a same grade level, which compares different groups of students).

**Comprehensive Energy Management Program** – A program that reviews current energy usage, identifies opportunities for energy savings, implements energy conservation measures, and tracks performance and savings over time.

**Critical language** – Languages that the federal government considers to be critical for students to learn for national security and for the development of the economy. The languages most often considered to be critical include Chinese, Arabic, Japanese, and Farsi.

Goals – A statement that includes specific, quantifiable measures of what will be accomplished in a given period of time.

"Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum" - An organized curriculum guaranteed to each student regardless of teacher, grade level, or course and viable in terms of the time and instructional resources used to teach the curriculum.

**Intermediate proficiency level** – The American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) metric by which learners' ability to accomplish linguistic tasks is measured. This metric demonstrates a range of levels (Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice). A student who has reached *Intermediate proficiency* is able to speak with ease and confidence when dealing with routine tasks and social situations.

**Interventions** - Assistance, such as tutoring or specially designed computer programs, that is given to children who require instruction that is different from what is offered to an entire class.

**Massachusetts Core Curriculum** - A state-recommended high school course of study based upon the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks that aligns high school coursework with college and workforce expectations.

**Massachusetts School Building Authority** – A state agency that falls under the state Treasurer's Office and assists cities and towns with the design, construction, and/or renovation of public schools.

**Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)** - The yearly state assessment designed to meet the requirements of the Education Reform Law of 1993. This law specifies that the testing program must:

- test all public school students in Massachusetts, including students with disabilities and limited English proficient students;
- measure performance based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework learning standards;
- report on the performance of individual students, schools, and districts. (From: <u>http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/overview.html</u>)

**Mission** – A statement that answers the question, "What do we do as an organization?" and which summarizes the organization's core purpose.

**Mixed fiber recycling program** - A component of the recycling program that includes all types of paper, including, but not limited to, copier paper, used envelopes, cardboard, magazines, newsletters, and sticky notes.

**On-line course** - A course in which instruction is delivered via an internet-based tool or set of tools.

**Open response** - Questions or prompts used to assess student learning and facilitate demonstration of understanding to which the student must respond in writing.

Performance tasks - A form of assessment that requires students to perform a task rather than select an answer from a ready-made list.

**Professional learning community (PLC)** - A way of organizing administrators and school staff around a common vision of excellence, a collaborative approach to planning and analyzing student learning data, and a focus on results for all students.

**Program of study** - Structured sequences of courses that students are required to successfully complete in order to earn a high school diploma.

**Renewable energy resources** - Energy captured from sources that are renewed by or available through nature such as sunlight, tides, geothermal heat, and wind.

**Response to Intervention (RTI)** - A process, sometimes referred to as the "Pyramid of Interventions" or "Early Intervening," by which students are identified for intervention based upon their performance level or growth rate. In Hopkinton, we think of interventions for students who are struggling as well as those for students who are ready for additional instructional challenges.

**STEM** - Acronym for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The state and federal government are encouraging increased instructional emphasis in these four areas.

**Student aggregate scores** – When studying assessment data, scores can be examined by looking at student subgroups that are *disaggregated* (such as students with disabilities or students who receive free and reduced lunch) or by looking at the entire student population, known as "the aggregate."

Values – Words or phrases that capture the beliefs that are most important to the organization, which guide organizational work.

**Virtual learning** – An online learning environment that teachers organize using an online "learning management system" (such as Moodle or Blackboard) that allows the teachers to post assignments, assessments, grades, and other information.

Vision – The image of the future we have set out to achieve as an organization, which is guided by the organizational values.