

2009-2015

Timberlane Regional School District  
STRATEGIC PLAN



*The MISSION of the Timberlane Regional School District is to engage all students in challenging and relevant learning opportunities, emphasizing high aspirations and personal growth.*

## TIMBERLANE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Serving the communities of Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow and Sandown, New Hampshire*

30 Greenough Road

Plaistow, NH 03865

(603) 382-6119

[www.timberlane.net](http://www.timberlane.net)

### **DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS**

Richard A. La Salle, Superintendent of Schools

Winfried Feneberg, Assistant Superintendent

George Stokinger, Business Administrator

Kathleen Smith, Assistant Business Administrator

Edwina Lovett, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Elizabeth Rincon, Assistant Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Kelli Killen, Director of Elementary Education

Charles Coker, Director of Secondary Education

John Holland, Director of Technology

Nancy Danahy, Human Resource Director

Sandra Hodgkins, Director of Transportation

James Hughes, Director of Facilities

### **DISTRICT SCHOOLS**

Atkinson Academy, Atkinson, NH (Grades K-5)

Danville Elementary, Danville, NH (Grades K-5)

Pollard School, Plaistow, NH (Grades P-5)

Sandown North Elementary, Sandown, NH (Grades K-3)

Sandown Central School, Sandown, NH (Grades 4-5)

Timberlane Regional Middle School, Plaistow, NH (Grades 6-8)

Timberlane Regional High School, Plaistow, NH (Grades 9-12)

### **TIMBERLANE REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD**

Lori Aubrey

Robert Collins

Michael Mascola

William Baldwin

Louis Porcelli

John Paone

Arlene Champey

Elizabeth Kosta

Lisa Withee

*Adopted by the Timberlane Regional School Board April 2, 2009.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
THE CHALLENGE .....	1
AWARD-WINNING SCHOOLS .....	1
COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT TO IMPROVEMENT.....	2
<b>STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
BENEFITS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING .....	2
KEY QUESTIONS .....	3
ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT .....	4
<b>TRENDS AND FORCES ..... IMPLICATIONS FOR TRSD.....</b>	<b>4</b>
FAMILIES and ECONOMY .....	4
NATURE and NATURAL RESOURCES .....	5
HEALTH and MEDICINE .....	5
TECHNOLOGY .....	5
EDUCATION and COMPETITION.....	6
<b>MISSION, BELIEFS AND VISION.....</b>	<b>7</b>
HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS.....	8
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES: .....	9
TECHNOLOGY .....	9
SCHOOL FACILITIES .....	9
STUDENT COMPETENCIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY .....	9
<b>PRIORITY GOALS AND STRATEGY .....</b>	<b>12</b>
GOAL #1: APPLY MISSION, BELIEFS AND STUDENT COMPETENCIES FOR THE 21 <sup>ST</sup> CENTURY TO ALL STUDENTS. ....	12
GOAL #2: ACCELERATE ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS, ACROSS ALL COMPETENCIES, AND REDUCE ACHIEVEMENT DISPARITIES AMONG ALL GROUPS OF STUDENTS. ....	13
GOAL #3: CREATE SCHEDULED, SUFFICIENT, AND SUSTAINED TIME FOR STAFF MEMBERS TO CARRY OUT THE WORK OF THE SCHOOL IN COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES. ....	14
GOAL #4: ALL STUDENTS AND STAFF BECOME PROFICIENT USERS OF TECHNOLOGY. ....	15
GOAL #5: USE TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN EDUCATORS AND PARENTS.....	15
GOAL #6: DETERMINE THE TOTAL COST FOR PROCUREMENT, UTILIZATION, AND DISPOSAL OF TECHNOLOGY TO CARRY OUT DISTRICT- WIDE AND SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY PLANS. ....	16
GOAL #7: DEVELOP CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION SEQUENCE AND TIMETABLE FOR THE TRSD THAT ADDRESSES THE CONCERNS CITED IN SEVERAL RECENT EVALUATION REPORTS. ....	17
NEXT STEPS: IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN .....	18
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>RESOURCES .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE TIMBERLANE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT .....</b>	<b>21</b>

The Timberlane Regional School District will achieve the best outcome for every student.

## INTRODUCTION

### ***The Challenge***

In *School and Society*, published more than a century ago, John Dewey set a common sense aim for schools, stating, “What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy”<sup>1</sup>. The Timberlane Regional School District embraces the ideal that *all children have equal access to equally good instruction and is dedicated to achieving the best outcome for every student.*

This strategic plan identifies what must be done, pre-school through grade 12, over the next three to five years to achieve significantly higher levels of school effectiveness and student achievement in a safe, comfortable and secure environment.

### ***Award-Winning Schools***

Citizens of Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow and Sandown have reasons to be pleased with their schools’ accomplishments and awards over the years. A sampling follows. The elementary schools consistently receive the *Blue Ribbon Award for Volunteerism*, Danville Elementary for 20 consecutive years, Sandown Central for the last 19 years, and Pollard Elementary for 18 years. Pollard has also received the Gold Circle Partnership Award for two years that recognizes community partnerships. Individual student inventors receive awards in state-wide *Invention Convention* contests. Teams of elementary, middle and high school students compete successfully in *Destination Imagination* (a creative problem-solving competition) at the state level; some teams advancing to the national finals. Elementary and middle school students place well in competitions as varied as *Spelling Bees*, *Geography Bees*, and *PTA Reflections Photograph*. Atkinson students have won the Fidelity Stock Market Award two years running, while, in recent years, three teachers (Pollard School and TRMS) were recognized as *Wal-Mart Teacher of the Year*.

The Timberlane Regional High School music program is highly acclaimed throughout the state as evidenced by the extraordinarily high number of TRHS students that participate annually in the *All-State Music Festival*. Timberlane musicals and theater productions, including student-written plays, draw appreciative audiences. Each year, more students take the *College Board AP (Advanced Placement) Exam*, and more scholarship funds are awarded to seniors to continue their education. Over 400 students are chosen to represent all *Honor Societies*. In each of the last three years over 1000 student-athletes participated on *sports teams* and more

than 350 students joined *school clubs*. TRHS student-athletes have won numerous individual *and team championships at the league, state and New England level*. Several teachers have received commendations by outside organizations for their contributions to teaching and administration. Twenty percent of the graduating class of 2008 took at least one Evening Division course during their years at TRHS, and this program has been cited by the NH Department of Education as one of sixteen programs in *Public School Choice*.

### ***Community Support and Commitment to Improvement***

The Timberlane Regional School District (TRSD) would not have award-winning schools were it not for the support of the four communities comprising the district, and a school administration and staff committed to continuous improvement. Many community organizations support and have partnerships with our schools such as the police and fire departments, and libraries. Parents of each town serve on school and district committees and provide numerous hours of volunteer time.

The Atkinson Academy, Danville Elementary, Pollard School, Sandown Central and North, and the regional Middle School and High School are good, but they need to be much better if our students are to have a chance for success in the highly competitive, high skills work place in which their adult lives will play out. The rate of change is accelerating; incremental improvement in an exponential world will no longer work. Our high school graduates will possess high skills for heightened opportunities, or face the stark reality of low skills and limited prospects.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

### ***Benefits of Strategic Planning***

The strategic planning process takes into account our changing environment and identifies what needs to be done to keep the TRSD locked on mission and effective over the long term. This includes improving the TRSD's standing among public and private schools on such measures as student academic achievement, graduation rates, and graduate success in the workplace and in higher education.

Including key constituent groups in the process --- parents, students, educators, government officials, local business owners, and senior citizens --- increases the likelihood that the right priorities for improvement are identified. Putting these improvement initiatives in the spotlight adds urgency, concerted effort, and transparency to the work. Case in point: TRSD schools and the communities have indeed achieved the goals of the strategic plan adopted a decade ago.

An important side benefit of the strategic planning process is having hundreds of pages of key documents compiled, catalogued and available in a central location for future reference.

### ***Key Questions***

The TRSD strategic planning process began in the fall of 2007 by asking several *key questions*, the answers to which would later form the content of the strategic plan. These key questions, found below, drove the planning process, had no obvious right answers, encouraged serious thought, and allowed the plan to reflect the personality and promise of the TRSD.

The Steering Committee divided the key questions among three teams of educators and community members and charged each team to come up with their best answers:

#### **WHERE WE ARE TODAY? – WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF OUR SCHOOLS?**

*“What are the current key strengths and areas needing improvement in each school, and in the district as a whole?”*

*“What social, cultural, environmental, technological, economic, and political trends and forces present opportunities, or obstacles, for our schools?”*

*“Are all our students sufficiently prepared to meet the academic and social challenges they face as they “graduate” from one school to another and from high school to the workforce or college? And for those who are not, what can be done to improve their chances for success?”*

#### **WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE TOMORROW? – WHAT IS OUR STRATEGY GOING FORWARD?**

*“What are the top things today’s TRHS graduates should know, be able to do, and be like, and what 21<sup>st</sup> Century trends and developments support these choices?”*

*“What kind of learning community does our school need to become in order to more fully achieve our mission, beliefs and vision?”*

*“What do we want the schools comprising the TRSD schools to be widely and well known for? “*

Team 1 examined several studies and reports to better understand and appreciate the school district’s needs and recent improvement efforts. In addition, teams conducted surveys of students, parents and educators, and held a well-attended focus group to more fully answer the questions posed in the strategic planning process. The strategic actions recommended in the pages that follow were derived from the studies, reports and surveys listed in the Endnotes section of this report. These source documents will be invaluable to decision-makers going forward.

## ***Organization of the Report***

The wealth of information and recommendations generated by the teams in response to guiding questions was discussed and debated, summarized and prioritized by the steering committee into the following categories:

Trends and Forces.....Implications for TRSD

Mission, Beliefs and Vision

Student Competencies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Goals and Strategy

- High Expectations for All Students
- Professional Learning Community
- Technology
- School Facilities

Next Steps in Strategic Planning Process

References

Resources

Strategic Planning Committee and Team Members

## **TRENDS and FORCES ..... IMPLICATIONS for TRSD**

*“What social, cultural, environmental, technological, economic, and political trends and forces present opportunities, or obstacles, for our schools?”*

The TRSD, is nestled in southern New Hampshire, yet inextricably linked to the larger world. Schools need to get in step with the future. The trends, forces and influences which follow describe the environment in which this strategic plan was developed. Some are beyond the school’s ability to influence or control, some present opportunities for TRSD schools to take advantage of, while others present obstacles to overcome. Looking ahead, the next several years seem to be all about the economy, energy, environment and education:

### ***FAMILIES and ECONOMY***

An increasing number of families, including many senior citizens on fixed income, face growing financial hardship. The income gap is growing between the rich and the poor, both within and between nations. Currently in 2009, credit markets are tightening. Job layoffs, unemployment, bankruptcies, mortgage foreclosures, and credit card debt are increasing. Inflation and the declining value of pensions and investments cut into available income. Adding to the stress are rising college tuitions, escalating health care costs, and cutbacks in services as governments

confront declining revenues. The timeline for economic recovery is uncertain, but could take two to three years.

**Implications for TRSD:** There is the potential for little or no increase in town and school budgets. State aid to municipalities and school districts continues to decline. Town and school services are scaled back. Churches, civic and social organizations step up efforts to help families in need. Students are more likely to attend post secondary schools closer to home, or postpone plans. More families have both parents working to make ends meet, assuming work can be found, leaving less time to spend with their children. Public school enrollment increases as strained family budgets can no longer afford private school tuition for their children.

### ***NATURE and NATURAL RESOURCES***

Stress on the global environment increases as demand for resources by developed countries, and developing countries (especially China and India), grows at an alarming rate, unsustainable in the long run. Climate change portends a potentially calamitous crisis in this century.

**Implications for TRSD:** Schools, town government, businesses, civic organizations, and the community at large expand conservation efforts (“reduce, reuse, and recycle”) to save money and the environment. Local businesses join in the national effort to invent and manufacture alternative energy sources (geothermal, wind, solar, clean coal technology, etc) to lessen demand on fossil fuels.

### ***HEALTH and MEDICINE***

Medical advances continue to improve life quality and longevity. The cost of medical care continues to rise faster than the rate of inflation. An increasing number of children are diagnosed with health and handicapping conditions, for example, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and autism.

**Implications for TRSD:** Schools face an increase in the number of children determined to need special education services, putting added pressure on school budgets. Programs to reduce obesity focus on increasing physical exercise and improving the nutrition of school lunch menus.

### ***TECHNOLOGY***

Technological innovation is occurring at an ever-increasing rate. The way we “connect” with information and people is changing dramatically: In the not distant future, computers will be as common in households as toothbrushes. Anyone, of any age, who is not “technology smart”, will be at a distinct disadvantage.



**Implications for TRSD:** The decreasing per unit cost of technology is offset by the increasing number of units needed to provide every student with sufficient access to technology. Schools become “computer literacy centers” for the entire community.

### ***EDUCATION and COMPETITION***

Competition between nations’ economic systems, first and foremost, is competition between nations’ education systems, and America’s public schools are lagging behind. Pressure will grow for alternatives to public schools (charter schools, home schooling, vouchers, on-line education programs, for-profit schools, etc), world class K-12 standards, competency-based high school diplomas, apprenticeship programs connecting school to the world of work, and the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and work habits essential for success in a more demanding work and higher education environment. The 21st century graduate will need to work collaboratively in high performance teams, demonstrate creativity, ingenuity, and problem-solving skills, speak and write well (preferably in two languages), be computer savvy, and embrace ethnic and cultural diversity. Growing research and recognition of the importance of pre-school years in a child’s development will lend support for quality pre-school programs and family services.

**Implications for TRSD:** TRSD schools are labeled “failing” as the nearly impossible NCLB requirement that each and every student perform at or above the proficiency level on standardized tests by the year 2014 is unmet. NCLB and high stakes testing concentrate teaching time and resources on a narrow band of curriculum and assessment content, leaving less to prepare students for the full breadth of challenges of life and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Proposals to change the school schedule, school day or school year are met with voter skepticism, especially if they cost more money. The shortage of teachers and administrators (already a serious problem in many school districts) increases as baby boomers retire and others leave the profession, adding to financial and programmatic strain on school budgets.

Schools are expected to be more productive, to accomplish more with less. Unfunded and partially funded mandates (IDEA, NCLB, Compulsory school attendance to age 18 in NH) add to budget pressures while funding questions continue in New Hampshire years after the NH Supreme Court’s landmark Claremont school funding ruling. School funding challenges intensify as school needs compete at all levels of government (local, state, national) against a growing list of priorities including, but not limited to, national security, natural disasters, global warming, prevention of disease pandemics, escalating health care costs, rising fuel costs, nation-wide repair of deteriorating infrastructure, and underwriting the development of alternative energy sources.

## MISSION, BELIEFS and VISION

*“We cannot always build the future for our youth,  
but we can build our youth for the future.”*

*...Franklin D. Roosevelt*

The mission statement answers the question, “What is the purpose of the TRSD Schools? Team 3 examined current trends and looming forces, studied the responses of more than one hundred focus group participants, reviewed existing statements of mission and beliefs and updated them to reflect 21<sup>st</sup> century demands and expectations.

The **MISSION** of the Timberlane Regional School District is to engage all students in challenging and relevant learning opportunities, emphasizing high aspirations and personal growth.

The statement of TRSD **BELIEFS** answers the question, “What are our deeply held convictions?”

We believe that education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century includes rigorous and relevant academic, technical and problem-solving skills that prepare students for the next level of education.

We believe that strong instructional leadership and highly qualified personnel work as colleagues to deepen knowledge and improve instructional practice, creating a rich academic environment.

We believe that a learning organization practices the sharing of knowledge, the adoption of new principles, and continuous growth.

We believe effective communication connects parents, teachers, students and the community, fostering trust and interdependence.

We believe that all members of the learning community must promote respect for self, respect for others, and respect for community.

We believe creative expression and the appreciation of the arts are essential to quality of life.

We believe all students can achieve high standards and are entitled to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in ways which recognize their individual abilities, talents, and learning styles.

We believe in modeling democracy by giving voice to all who are directly affected by the school, including students, and addressing all forms of unfairness and injustice.

We believe quality facilities matter.

*“Soon after the completion of Disney World, someone said, ‘Isn’t it too bad Walt Disney didn’t live to see this.’ I replied, ‘He did see it.*

*That’s why it’s here’”*

*...Mike Vance, Creative Director, Walt Disney Studios*

VISION answers the question, “What will the desired TRSD schools look like? What will be our sources of pride? The best way a school system can attract and retain students, remain the preferred choice among parents, and build community support, is to *distinguish itself in the eyes of students, parents, the community, employers, and higher education.*

The **VISION** of the Timberlane Regional School District states that the Timberlane Regional School District in partnership with the communities of Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow and Sandown will provide resources and programs designed to support students' diverse academic, social, and emotional needs. Effective and dedicated professional educators, administrators and support staff will challenge students with a rigorous curriculum that considers individual learning styles. We will be a school district of excellence that exemplifies best practices in academics, student services, facilities, safety and security. Timberlane graduates will be prepared to assume leadership roles as students in colleges and universities, as professionals in their chosen careers and as citizens in this rapidly changing world.

### ***HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS***

TRSD schools will consistently provide rigorous, relevant, flexible, and engaging learning experiences for all students that are aligned with the mission, beliefs, and essential student competencies.

TRSD schools will lead in environmental education and energy conservation.

All students will achieve the academic standards set forth by the TRSD and the State of New Hampshire.

Student test scores will rank among the top 10 percent in the state.

Students will consistently receive individual and team awards in athletics, academics, and the fine and performing arts.

An increasing percentage of students will participate in sports, clubs, and other school activities.

All students will identify personal interests and pursue them actively and independently.

All students will volunteer service to the school and community.

All students will graduate with high aspirations, skills, and a plan to succeed at the next level.

A steadily increasing percentage of students will qualify for, and attend, post secondary education.

### ***PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES:***

TRSD schools will be staffed by well qualified, talented and committed staff.

TRSD staff members will be recognized as leaders in the development of Professional Learning Communities in their schools.

TRSD will be known for significantly reducing the time it takes to move an innovative idea to full-scale and successful implementation.

All schools continue to be recognized for effective parent-school-community partnerships.

### ***TECHNOLOGY***

TRSD staff and students will be recognized for integrating technology throughout curriculum and offering 24/7/365 access to virtual learning opportunities.

### ***SCHOOL FACILITIES***

TRSD facilities will adequately support the curriculum, current class size policy, and student enrollment; moreover, facilities will be well-maintained, safe, and comply with all fire, health and safety regulations.

*“There are two educations.  
One should teach us how to make a living and the other how to live.”  
... John Truslow Adam*

### ***STUDENT COMPETENCIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY***

Global economic, political, social and environmental challenges mount. Knowledge expands exponentially. What 21<sup>st</sup> century world do we imagine our graduates will be living and working in, and have we *wisely chosen* the most essential learning outcomes to prepare them for that world?

Team 2 was tasked to identify essential high school graduation competencies. Team members examined or created several documents including mission, beliefs and vision statements, the Scholastic Aptitude Test report, the New England Competencies Assessment Program report, advanced placement test results, the Youth Risk Behavior survey, the My Voice Survey,

community surveys, attendance and discipline data, and the high school's NEASC self-study. Interviews of college admissions officers at each New Hampshire State college provided insight into the qualities and competencies post-secondary schools expect in incoming freshmen classes.

On October 7, 2008, more than 100 citizens from Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow and Sandown met at the high school and weighed in on the question: *"What will our children need to know to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?"*

The emerging profile of what the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner should strive to become --- and our schools must focus on --- follows:

### 1. ACADEMICS

- 1.1 Students demonstrate proficiency in academic and applied subject areas.
- 1.2 Students apply what they already know, and can do, to acquire new knowledge and develop new skills.
- 1.3 Students discuss and debate issues and events which have local and global significance.
- 1.4 Students connect knowledge and experiences from different subject areas and apply multidisciplinary thinking to solve problems (simulated and real) and complete tasks.

### 2. LIFE-LONG LEARNING

- 2.1 Students take responsibility for their own learning and challenge their comfortable limits of thought and performance.
- 2.2 Students seek deeper understanding of topics, issues, problems, and questions that interest them. They enjoy learning.
- 2.3 Students approach unfamiliar situations with reasoning, adaptability and determination.
- 2.4 Students approach learning with an understanding of strategies that work well for them.
- 2.5 Students explore career options and pursue post high school plans with an understanding of requirements, confidence, and a strong work ethic.

### 3. COMMUNICATION

- 3.1 Students are proficient readers, writers, researchers, speakers, and listeners.

- 3.2 Students express ideas, opinions and information with confidence and clarity, using a variety of communication tools and techniques. Distinguish fact from opinion.
- 3.3 Students are proficient in more than one language.
4. THINKING AND REASONING
  - 4.1 Students use methods of inquiry and engage in real or simulated investigation characteristic of the academic area or professional discipline; for example, the scientific method.
  - 4.2 Students seek and evaluate various points of view and potential consequences of alternative solutions in debate, discussion, and decision-making.
  - 4.3 Students creatively connect ideas in unconventional ways to construct new insights, solutions, and inventions.
5. TEAMWORK
  - 5.1 Students work effectively and willingly with others in a variety of situations to complete tasks and achieve goals.
  - 5.2 Students manage and evaluate their behavior as group members, recognizing the impact the individual has on the group, and the group on the individual.
6. TECHNOLOGY
  - 6.1 Students use technology tools and software to expedite and enhance information acquisition, quantitative and qualitative analysis, document preparation and presentation.
7. PERSONAL ETHICS
  - 7.1 Students act with honesty, integrity, and a strong sense of fair play.
  - 7.2. Students are courteous and respectful toward others.
  - 7.3. Students take responsibility for their own actions and consequences.
8. LOCAL and GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP
  - 8.1 Students understand and appreciate their own culture and seek to understand the perspectives, values and traditions of other cultures.
  - 8.2 Students recognize mankind's interdependence with nature and seek to make a positive contribution to the lives of others and to protection of the environment.
  - 8.3 Students enhance quality of life by volunteering in their school and community.

## 9. FINE and PERFORMING ARTS

9.1 Students enhance quality of life by engaging in cultural and artistic activities as a spectator and participant.

## 10. PERSONAL WELLNESS

10.1 Students make healthy food choices and engage in physical exercise.

10.2 Students recognize and avoid dangerous involvement with drugs and alcohol.

10.3 Students access medical and emotional support for themselves and others.

## PRIORITY GOALS AND STRATEGY

*“There is nothing with so much worth as a mind well educated.”*

*... Ecclesiasticus*

**HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS** focuses on raising the achievement bar *and* closing the achievement gap of all TRSD students. Faced with unprecedented challenges, the 21<sup>st</sup> century will require the mobilization of every ounce of human intelligence. Perhaps for the first time in history, Wagner observes, “many of the competencies required for work are congruent with some of the more traditional goals of an outstanding liberal arts education: a broad understanding of mathematical and scientific concepts, cultures and peoples; the ability to reason, think critically, and solve problems”<sup>2</sup>. A high school diploma is no longer sufficient. We must prepare our students for college level work.

We are challenged by the May, 2008 Report of the NEASC Visiting Committee for Timberlane Regional High School which states, “There was a recurring theme throughout the visit that there is more tracking of students within the school than is noted in the schedule and in the self-study. Learning opportunities that group students together homogenously do not provide high expectations for all students and thus, actually inhibit student learning for some.”<sup>3</sup> In light of the NEASC Report concern about a lack of high expectations for some students, the District should examine ways to improve high expectations for each student.

***GOAL #1: Apply Mission, Beliefs and Student Competencies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to all students.***

**Strategy:**

1.1 By June 2010, create greater school and community awareness of the TRSD mission, beliefs, vision, and 21<sup>st</sup> century student competencies, and the conditions by which these become “front and center” criteria when adopting and implementing district, school, and classroom policies, procedures and practices.

1.2 By June 2010, Professional Learning Communities (Strategic Goal # 3) review state, local, and district curriculum documents (including the strategic plan) on a district-wide basis, reach consensus on the most *essential* competencies, and downsize/compact the curriculum accordingly.

1.3 By June 2010, align individual school statements with TRSD statements of mission, beliefs, vision, and 21<sup>st</sup> century student competencies. The goal is a unified, district-wide focus and direction. Individual schools are allowed to supplement, but not supplant, TRSD statements; for example “Owl” at the high school, “Respect, Responsibility, and Right Choices” at the middle school and “STARS” at the Sandown North elementary school.

***GOAL #2: Accelerate achievement for all students, across all competencies, and reduce achievement disparities among all groups of students.***

**Strategy:**

2.1 By June 2012, develop and implement programs across all grades and in all classrooms to enrich and accelerate the academic growth and aspirations of all students.

2.2 By June, 2012, evaluate and ensure that all policies and procedures create equal opportunity, high aspirations, high achievement and rigor for all students, K-12.

2.3 By June 2012, provide intensive reading, writing, or math instruction across all grade levels for students in need. Increase instructional time the further a student is away from proficiency.

2.4 By June 2009, convene a representative group of K-12 teachers and administrators to: examine NEASC Visiting Committee Reports for TRHS and TRMS and comparable elementary schools’ reports, agree on issues and needs elementary, middle and high have in common, and develop appropriate improvement plans (e.g., Six Traits of Writing, Understanding by Design).

2.5 By June 2014, implement the appropriate recommendations of the May, 2008 Report of the NEASC Visiting Committee for Timberlane Regional High School.

2.6 By June 2014, implement the appropriate recommendations of the forthcoming Report of the NEASC Visiting Committee for Timberlane Regional Middle School.



*“Raise hell, constantly question ‘the way things are done around here’,  
and never, ever rest on your laurels.”*

*...Tom Peters*

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY** focuses on staff members collaborating on a sufficient and sustained basis to improve teaching and learning. Ample research shows that “when teachers engage regularly in authentic ‘joint work’, focused on explicit, common learning goals, their collaboration pays off richly in the form of higher quality solutions to instructional problems, increased teacher confidence, and, not surprisingly, remarkable gains in achievement”<sup>4</sup>.

TRSD staff members universally lament the lack of time to do what they know needs to be done to improve their subject area, their department, their school, and their students’ achievement. Best practices cannot spread without peer collaboration in what the TRSD staff calls a “Professional Learning Community”. In *The Six Secrets of Change*, Fullan states that “positive, purposeful peer interaction works effectively under three conditions: (1) when the larger values of the organization and those of the individuals and groups mesh; (2) when information and knowledge about effective practices are widely and openly shared; and (3) when monitoring mechanisms are in place to detect and address ineffective actions while also identifying and consolidating effective practices”<sup>5</sup>.

***GOAL #3: Create scheduled, sufficient, and sustained time for staff members to carry out the work of the school in collaborative Professional Learning Communities.***

**Strategy:**

3.1 By June 2010, all schools will agree on the adoption of a Professional Learning Community model. The Dufour PLC model is recommended. If chosen, schools will be supported in attaining the following milestones: By June 2011, all schools reach the initiation stage, or higher, on all twelve components of a Professional Learning Community; and by June 2013, all schools operate at the sustaining (highest) stage of implementation. Note: Should another PLC model be chosen, other implementation milestones will apply.

3.2 By June 2011, provide training in areas that enhance Professional Learning Community success. This includes training in *people skills* (e.g., leadership, team building, communication, discussion skills, running meetings, resolving conflicts, managing time....) and *technical skills* (e.g., project planning, collection and analysis of data, exploring solutions, taking action, monitoring and evaluating results....)<sup>6</sup>.

*“Computers aren’t intelligent, they just think they are.”*

*... Anonymous*

**TECHNOLOGY** focuses on the use of technology and telecommunication services to advance learning, improve productivity, and enhance communication between home and school. We are in the midst of a communications revolution. Newer, faster, cheaper, simpler, and smarter technologies come to market every day. Employers and higher education institutions expect their employees and students, respectively, to effectively use computers and related communication devices. Computer technology presents the opportunity to go outside the walls of the school and offer virtual learning experiences to virtually any one, at any time, anywhere, for any purpose, and at any pace.

***GOAL #4: All students and staff become proficient users of technology.***

**Strategy:**

4.1 By June 2011, implement K-12 student-use-of-technology outcomes, teaching strategies, and common assessment measures, with the requirement that the entire staff fully participate.

4.2 By June 2011, provide teachers personalized, sufficient, ongoing instruction, and time, to incorporate technology “best practices” into classroom subjects and support student efforts using technology.

4.3 By June 2010, offer and/or expand options for students wishing to access distance learning for remediation, enrichment or acceleration, for high school or college credit; as examples, NovaNet<sup>7</sup>, the Virtual (On-Line) Learning Academy Charter School<sup>8</sup> in Exeter, NH., and the Renzulli Learning System/Learning Differentiation Engine<sup>9</sup>, based on the School-wide Enrichment Model. Also offer and/or expand project-based experiences for students that are academically rigorous, relevant, and build relationships with adults in the community<sup>10</sup>.

4.4 By June 2011, adopt an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) literacy program<sup>11</sup> in grades K – 12 that provides students the opportunity to become proficient in the use of technology within the context of the core subject areas, and to demonstrate ICT competency by the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade using assessment rubrics applied to the contents of student digital portfolios.

***GOAL #5: Use technology to enhance communication between educators and parents.***

**Strategy:**

5.1: By June 2009, discuss and decide on new and/or improved school on-line resources/services that could be accessed from home.

5.2: By June 2010, offer adult education courses in technology.

***GOAL #6: Determine the total cost for procurement, utilization, and disposal of technology to carry out district-wide and school technology plans.***

**Strategy:**

6.1 By June 2010, establish hardware and software standards for delivering technology and telecommunications service to satisfy academic (classroom) and administrative (office) computing and communication requirements.

6.2 By June 2009, develop a three-year technology and telecommunications plan, and budget, to meet the above-stated strategic goals. Identify and apply for external funding sources.

*“Form ever follows function.”*

*...Louis Henry Sullivan*

**SCHOOL FACILITIES** focuses on providing classroom and other spaces that are safe, secure, comfortable, and have sufficient capacity to house staff, students, curriculum, programs and services.

Four recent reports provide ample evidence of the need to seriously consider repairs, renovations and additions to the TRHS and TRMS, or new school construction. These reports include: (1) The November, 2008 Long-Range School Facilities Planning Report for the Timberlane Regional School District prepared by the New England School Development Council (NESDEC); (2) The October, 2008 Assessment of Existing Conditions at TRHS and TRMS prepared by LaVallee/ Brensinger, Architects (L/BPA); (3) The May, 2008 Report of the NEASC Visiting Committee for TRHS; and (4) The November, 2008 Self-Study Report prepared by TRMS staff and community as part of the NEASC school accreditation process.

These independent studies, cited above, conclude that the high school and middle school are overcrowded, need major structural upgrades, and are unable to fully meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century instructional needs.

The NESDEC Team prepared demography and enrollment projections, visited the schools, consulted with school and community leaders, identified near-term and long-term needs and suggested three alternative solutions and criteria for evaluation<sup>12</sup>.

### **NEAR-TERM NEEDS**

The need to develop a long range plan for PK-12 facilities and educational program planning.

The need to consider purchase of additional land at the middle school/high school site to expand field space and provide for a second avenue of egress from the school campus.

The need to continue efforts to improve building security.

### **LONG-TERM NEEDS**

The need to rehabilitate/replace school spaces which do not support 21<sup>st</sup> Century educational programs.

The need to increase high school, middle school, and elementary schools' capacities and address current inadequate instructional spaces.

The LaVallee/Brensinger Architects Team evaluated the condition of the middle school building and concludes that many of the deficiencies are not addressable at reasonable cost via a renovation of, or addition to, the building. The Team finds a high school building in need of significant improvements and additions to be supportive of the student population and a 21<sup>st</sup> Century high school curriculum<sup>13</sup>.

The NEASC Visiting Committee Report on the high school<sup>14</sup>, and the NEASC Self-Evaluation Report<sup>15</sup> prepared by middle school staff and community members, reinforces building inadequacies and concerns identified by NESDEC and L/BPA .

***GOAL #7: Develop capital improvement plan and implementation sequence and timetable for the TRSD that addresses the concerns cited in several recent evaluation reports.***

#### **Strategy:**

7.1 By June 2009, present to the school board viable options to address the identified educational and space needs.

7.2 By June 2009, develop a long-term capital improvement plan for the TRSD and identify a sequence/timetable of priorities to be addressed by the plan.

7.3 By June 2009, identify appropriate architectural design options.

7.4 By June 2010, create necessary public support for the implementation of the capital improvement plan, including funding of identified priorities.

7.5 By June 2013, demonstrate consistent adherence to the implementation schedule of the capital improvement plan.

*“What gets measured gets done, what gets measured and fed back gets done well, what gets rewarded gets repeated”*

*... John E. Jones*

### ***NEXT STEPS: IMPLEMENTING the STRATEGIC PLAN***

(Based on *Planning for Change: A Source Book for Strategic Planning*, LEADership Center, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, 1993).

1. Steering Committee presents Strategic Plan to school board, staff and community for review and comment.
2. Steering Committee considers staff and community comments and approves Strategic Plan.
3. Steering Committee submits final Strategic Plan to the school board for approval.
4. School Board, following approval, authorizes wide distribution of the Strategic Plan to the community and schools.
5. Steering Committee and school administration establish “Actions Teams” to accomplish the work outlined in the Strategic Plan for each priority area.
6. Teams present action plans for review and approval. Decide which action plans require school board approval before being implemented.
7. Action Teams are provided financial support and resources appropriate to the task of implementing approved action plans, in coordination with the budget cycle.
8. Superintendent’s office keeps school board, staff and community informed on progress in implementing the Strategic Plan.
9. Issue an **Annual Report on the State of TRSD Schools** to document and record over time progress, or lack of progress, in achievement of the vision, beliefs and vision statements, and strategic plan priority goals.

## REFERENCES

1. John Dewey, *School and Society* (University of Chicago, 1898).
2. Tony Wagner, *Improving High Schools: The Case for New Goals and Strategies* (Draft copy. Article scheduled to appear in Fall, 1992 Phi Delta Kappan).
3. *Report of the NEASC Visiting Committee for Timberlane Regional High School* (Commission on Public Secondary Schools of the NEASC, Bedford, MA., 2008) p. 21.
4. Mike Schmoker, *Results Now: How We Can Achieve Unprecedented Improvements in Teaching and Learning*, p.178.
5. Michael Fullan, *The Six Secrets of Change* (Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 2008) p.45.
6. Peter Scholtes, *The Team Handbook: How to Use Teams to Improve Quality* (Joiner Associates, Inc., Madison, WI., 1992).
7. *NovaNet*: A Comprehensive on-line courseware system for grades 6-12. <http://www.pearsonschool.com>
8. *Virtual Learning Academy Charter School*, Exeter, NH: Offers on-line courses using Internet technologies. <http://www.vlac.org>.
9. *Renzulli Learning System*. [www.RenzulliLearning.com](http://www.RenzulliLearning.com).
10. Adria Steinberg, *Real Learning, Real Work: School-To-Work as High School Reform* (NY, Routledge, 1998). Note: Six A's of Designing Projects featuring authenticity, academic rigor, applied learning, active exploration, adult connections and assessment practices. Visit Jobs for the Future website ([www.jff.org](http://www.jff.org)), focused on dual agenda of high achievement and high student graduation rate.
11. *New Hampshire ICT literacy Standards for K – 12 Students*. NHDOE Office of Education Technology, October 2005.
12. *NESDEC, Long-Range Facilities Planning: Timberlane Regional School District* (NESDEC, Marlborough, MA., November, 2008).
13. *L/BPA, Existing Conditions Assessments: Timberlane High School and Middle School* (L/BPA, Manchester, NH, November, 2008).
14. *Report of the NEASC Visiting Committee for Timberlane Regional High School*, pp. 48-51.
15. *TRMS Staff and Community NEASC Self-Evaluation Study* (Plaistow, NH, 2008).

## RESOURCES

Between December 2007 and December 2008, three teams, under the direction of the Strategic Planning Committee, collected a large amount of quantitative and qualitative data through surveys, archival achievement data, documents, observations, and a focus group. This information is on file in the Superintendent's Office.

### Sample Goal/Strategy Implementation Worksheet

DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree (formerly National Educational Service).

DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & Many, T. (2006). *Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities at work*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Marzano, R., Pickering, D., & Pollock, J. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Marzano, R., Norford, J., Paynter, D., Pickering, D., & Gaddy, B. (2001). *A handbook for classroom instruction that works*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

National Association of Secondary School Principals. (1996). *Breaking ranks: Changing an American institution*. Reston, VA: Author.

National Association of Secondary School Principals. (2004). *Breaking ranks II: Strategies for leading high school reform*. Reston, VA: Author.

National Association of Secondary School Principals. (2006). *Breaking ranks in the middle: Strategies for leading middle school reform*. Reston, VA: Author.

State of New Hampshire Department of Education. (2007). *New Hampshire's vision for redesign: Moving from high schools to learning communities*. Concord, NH: Author.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE of the TIMBERLANE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Michelle Auger	Principal of Pollard Elementary
William Baldwin	School Board Chair, Atkinson
Charles Coker	Director of Secondary Education
Amy Dailey	Teacher at Pollard
Kristen Dalphond	Para-educator at Pollard
Kathie Dayotis	Principal of Atkinson Academy
Kate Delfino	Parent
Christine Dube	Para-educator at Danville Elementary
Angelo Fantasia	Athletic Director
Winfried Feneberg	Assistant Superintendent
Jo-Ann Georgian	Principal of Sandown North Elementary
Nancy Hart	Principal of Danville Elementary
Michael Hogan	Principal of Timberlane Regional Middle School
John Holland	Technology Director
Anne Isenberg	Parent
Krista Johnson	Teacher at Atkinson
Kelli Killen	Director of Elementary Education
Elizabeth Kosta	School Board Member, Plaistow
Richard Lalley	Consultant
Richard La Salle	Superintendent
Laura Lipfert	Parent
Doug Rolph	Principal at Sandown Central School
Nancy Stafford	Guidance Counselor at Sandown North Elementary
Jennifer Suech	Budget Committee, Atkinson
Dennis Tardif	Consultant
Donald Woodworth	Principal of Timberlane Regional High School