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# District Strategy: Process & Overview

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

May 20, 2021

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## Timeline/Process



### Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Long-Range Strategic Plan

**Vision:**

*To provide high-quality educational opportunities that inspire a community of learners*

**Values:**

- **Wellness** - We partner with families to prioritize social emotional wellness, which is necessary for learning and developing resilience
- **Equity** - We ensure all students have equitable access to programs and curricula to reach their potential
- **Engagement** - We provide engaging educational opportunities where students develop passion and joy for learning

**Mission:**

*To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships*

**Goals:**

1. Understand and respond to our students' social-emotional needs.
2. Our students will have equitable opportunities and tools to learn.
3. Our students will have access to safe and effective learning environments.

### October 2017

- SC Adopts LR Strategic Plan
- Mission, Vision, Values
- 3 Overarching Goals
- Annual District Goals focused on these areas



# Timeline/Process

July 2018 - New Superintendent (Me)

- Entry Plan
  - Community Input/Data/Observation



**Introduction**

I arrived at the Luther Conant Elementary School early on September 4, 2018 in time to meet one of our incoming kindergarten classes as they entered school for the first time; these children will graduate from our schools in June 2021. The next thirteen years for this group of students and their families will pass in the blink of an eye. These thirteen years are also the time we have to provide each of these children, and each of the more than five thousand students who will attend our schools every day, a world-class education that will serve them well for the remainder of their lives.

Jan 2019 - [Report of Entry Findings](#) - Overarching Themes:

- I. How can we manage tension that has arisen from increasingly diverse cultural perspectives about education and the purpose of schools, and leverage this diversity into increased opportunities for students?
- II. How can we continue to expand our Strategic Plan in order to increase focus on the teaching and learning process, and more fully articulate our vision for student learning?
- III. How can we manage tension between greater district-wide strategic coherence and the rich traditions of individualism and autonomy that have developed in the various schools?
- IV. How can we foster an increased culture of inclusivity and best leverage resources in order to support an increasingly diverse student population (with regard to learning profiles, race and socioeconomic status) in a more inclusive environment?
- V. How can we be more proactive in meeting the needs of a fast growing population of students with increasingly complex and acute social and emotional needs?
- VI. How can our Leadership Teams most effectively employ the characteristics of High-Performing Teams to support the work of the schools and district?

# Timeline/Process

Feb-May 2019

- Work with SC and Leadership Team to identify top priorities from Entry Plan

June-Oct 2019

- Leadership Team takes priorities and Develops into Draft Strategy
- Development of Beliefs Statement to Guide Implementation

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	#	MEAN	MED	MODE	
<b>I. Cultural Diversity</b>																
a. Values/priorities of different cultures			10		15	20		3				4	12	12.5	IN/A	
b. Connections with students and families		10					3		10	10		4	8	10	10	
c. Enrollment discrepancies	15			10				3				4	12	12.5	IN/A	
d. Strategic Plan capitalize on diversity								3	50			2	27	26.5	IN/A	
e. Anti-bias education							3		5			2	4	4	IN/A	
f. Leveraging diversity for global citizenship	10	5	10		15	20	10	3		5		8	10	10	10	
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>II. Teaching &amp; Learning</b>																
a. LRSP reflect inherent value of TEL			10		10			10	7		10		5	9	10	10
b. Consensus: what is success, how to measure		10	10		10			5	7		5		6	8	8.5	10
c. Increase instructional coherence/outcomes	10	5	10	20	5		10	6		10		8	10	10	10	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	

## Timeline/Process

Spring 2020

- Process paused due to pandemic



## Timeline/Process

March 2020 - March 2021

- Pause/Slow-Down development during pandemic
- Consultation with Mid Atlantic Equity Consortium (MAEC)

April 2021

- Solicit Feedback from DEI Family Advisory

May - June 2021

- Additional School Committee Feedback
- Final Revisions
- School Committee Adoption



# Other Prior Public Discussions of Goals and Strategy

## 2019-20 School Year

9/19/19 - District Strategy Update to Full School Committee

11/21/19 - District and Superintendent's Goals - First Read

12/5/19 - Superintendent's FY20 Goals - Second Read and Vote

1/25/20 - Budget Saturday - Budgetary Vision and Alignment

3/5/20 - Superintendent's Mid-Cycle Goals Review

5/21/20 - FY20 Superintendent's Evaluation - Final Report on Goals

6/2020 - Published information provided at Town Meetings

## 2020-21 School Year

12/3/20 - FY21 Goals - First Read

12/17/20 - FY21 Goals - 2nd Read

1/7/21 - FY21 Goals - 3rd Read and Vote

5/6/21 - School Committee Workshop

5/20/21 - Presentation at School Committee

# Organization of Strategy

## Mission

Our mission is to provide high-quality educational opportunities that inspire a community of learners

## Vision

Our vision is to develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships

## Core Values

- **Engagement:** We provide engaging educational opportunities where students develop passion and joy for learning.
- **Equity:** We ensure all students have equitable access to programs and curricula to reach their potential.
- **Wellness:** We partner with families to prioritize social-emotional wellness, which is necessary for learning and developing resilience.

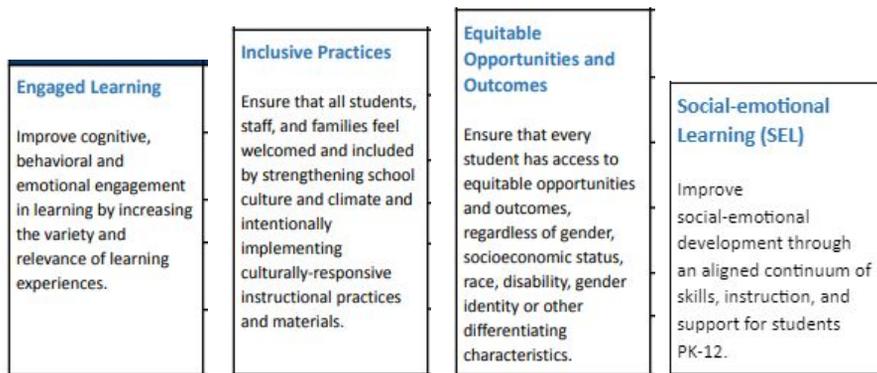
# Organization of Strategy

## Beliefs

- Every student has the right to be loved, valued, challenged, and supported by the adults across our school community.
- Learning must be meaningful and engaging for every student.
- Each educator is responsible for every student's learning and social-emotional well-being, and every ABRSD employee contributes to supporting the social, emotional, and intellectual growth of all students every day.
- By building relationships and trust with students, families, and colleagues, it is safe to make mistakes and learn from others.
- Student characteristics that include race, socio-economic status, disability, ethnicity, or any other part of their identity should not be an indicator of access or outcomes; and the language we use to talk about students and families shapes the culture of our schools and district.

# Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objectives are the 4 overarching outcomes we wish to see



# Engaged Learning

<b>Engaged Learning</b>  Improve <b>cognitive, behavioral and emotional engagement</b> in learning by increasing the variety and relevance of learning experiences.	1.1 Involve school and community stakeholders to develop a unified vision of the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind to prepare students for life after high school.
	1.2 Implement instructional programs, courses, and curricula aligned with the District's PK-12 unified vision in order to increase and expand the variety and relevance of learning experiences.
	1.3 Implement instructional, assessment, grading, and course leveling practices aligned with the District's unified vision in order to promote increased cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement for students.
	1.4 Identify and utilize best practices, including digital tools, from remote learning to improve student engagement.
	1.5 Expand learning opportunities for all students in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics.

# Engaged Learning

## Key Ideas:

**Cognitive Engagement** - "investment aimed at comprehending complex concepts and issues and acquiring difficult skills. It conveys deep (rather than surface-level) processing of information whereby students gain critical or higher-order understanding of the subject matter and solve challenging problems."

**Emotional Engagement** - "Affective engagement connotes emotional reactions linked to task investment. The greater the student's interest level, positive affect, positive attitude, positive value held, curiosity, and task absorption (and the less the anxiety, sadness, stress, and boredom)"

**Behavioral Engagement** - "Conveys the presence of general "on-task behavior." This entails effort and persistence along with paying attention, asking pointed questions, seeking help that enables one to accomplish the task at hand"

From: Creating Opportunity to Learn; Boyken and Noguera, Ch. 3 Engagement; 201; [ASCD](#)

## Inclusive Practices

<b>Inclusive Practices</b> Ensure that all students, staff, and families feel welcomed and included by strengthening school culture and climate and intentionally implementing <b>culturally-responsive instructional practices and materials.</b>	2.1 Strengthen school culture and climate by strengthening relationships between and among students and adults within the schools, with an emphasis on students from historically underrepresented groups. 2.2 Ensure that all staff engage in ongoing professional learning to implement culturally responsive and inclusive practices. 2.3 Ensure that educators in all schools and classrooms employ curricula, instructional practices and materials that are responsive to the diversity of our students and families. 2.4 Expand the diversity of our leadership and educator workforce to better reflect the students we serve. 2.5 Engage stakeholders to better understand how students and families from underrepresented groups experience our schools and District and to help provide guidance for improving inclusive practices.
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## Inclusive Practices

“Culturally Responsive Teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning.”

Aspects of Culturally Responsive Teaching:

- Positive perspectives on parents and families
- Communication of high expectations
- Learning within the context of culture
- Student-centered instruction
- Culturally mediated instruction
- Reshaping the curriculum
- Teacher as facilitator

~ [The Education Alliance at Brown University](#)

## Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes

<p><b>Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes</b></p> <p>Ensure that every student has access to equitable opportunities and outcomes, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, race, disability, gender identity or other differentiating characteristics.</p>	3.1 Develop and implement an aligned, districtwide PK-12 multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for students in literacy, mathematics, social-emotional and behavioral learning.
	3.2 Ensure effective evidence-based screening, instruction, and assessment in literacy, mathematics, social-emotional and behavioral learning in all general education classrooms PK-12.
	3.3 Ensure equitable access to early education by implementing tuition-free all day kindergarten.
	3.4 Identify and implement practices that result in more equitable representation of students in advanced coursework.
	3.5 Review and revise disciplinary processes to employ restorative justice and responsive classroom approaches where appropriate, and ensure all students, including students from various subgroups, are treated fairly and equitably.

## Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes

### World Health Organization on Health Equity:

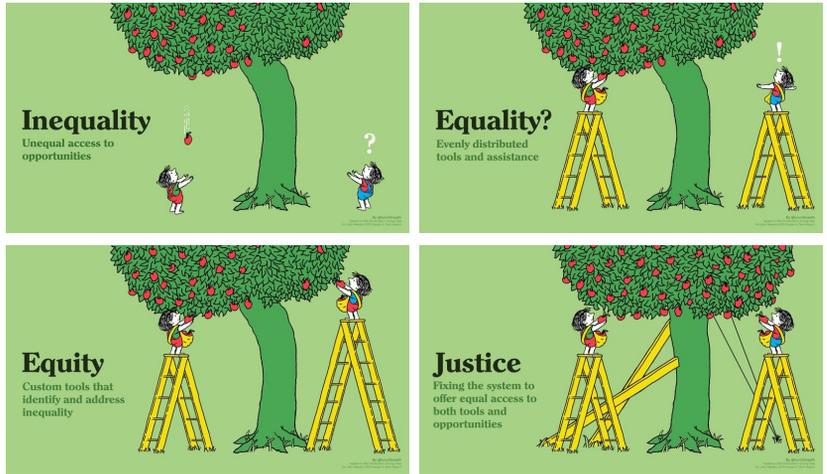
*Equity* is the absence of **avoidable or remediable differences** (*emphasis added*) among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically, or geographically. *Health inequities* therefore involve more than inequality with respect to health determinants, access to the resources needed to improve and maintain health or health outcomes. They also entail a failure to avoid or overcome inequalities that infringe on fairness and human rights norms.”

Source: World Health Organization  
<https://www.who.int/healthsystems/topics/equity/en/>

# Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes

Equity *does not mean* that all students will have the *same* outcomes. It does mean that all students should have access to programs, curricula, supports and interventions designed to eliminate *predictable, "avoidable or remediable"* differences.

**Why outcomes?** If we want to measure progress in student achievement in math or reading, we need to discuss students' outcomes. If we want to focus on providing all students with equitable opportunities, we need to focus on their outcomes as well.

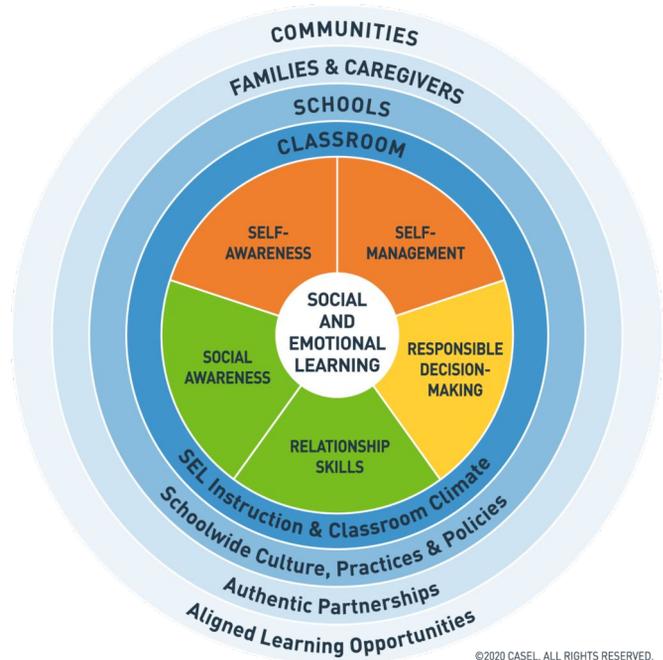


*Illustration by Tony Ruth*

# Social Emotional Learning

<p><b>Social-emotional Learning (SEL)</b></p> <p>Improve <b>social-emotional development</b> through an aligned continuum of skills, instruction, and support for students PK-12.</p>	<p>4.1 Identify and communicate core social-emotional competencies that students will develop from Pre-K-12 as part of the district unified vision of the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind to prepare students for life after high school. (1.1)</p>
	<p>4.2 Embed and integrate instruction across general education classrooms PK-12 that is aligned with the core SEL competencies and which allows teachers to more proactively address social, emotional, and behavioral needs at the universal level.</p>
	<p>4.3 Create and implement a unified vision of social, emotional and behavioral services and programming at the district level that includes a continuum of services to follow across grades and levels.</p>

# Social Emotional Learning



## Next Steps

Tonight

- Presentation of Strategy to School Committee

By June 2021

- SC Adopts Strategy

Spring 2021 - Fall 2022

- School Improvement Plans developed that align with overarching objectives and initiatives

# Next Steps

Fall 2021

- Annual District Goals presented to SC
- SIPS shared with SC/ Approved by Superintendent
- Continued build out of Strategy
  - Key Metrics for Success in each Objective
  - Objective/Initiative-specific Action Plans (as we undertake initiatives)