

KATONAH-LEWISBORO UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Rethinking Our Schools

Katonah-Lewisboro Schools for Tomorrow

A Long Range Plan Overview: School Years 2010-2015

**Presented to the Board of Education
On Behalf of the Entire Administrative Team**

By

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Katonah-Lewisboro Schools for Tomorrow A Long Range Plan: School Years 2010 - 2015

District Goal

By June 30, 2010, the administration will present the Board of Education with a recommended long-range education plan. The plan will describe how graduates of Katonah-Lewisboro Schools will be prepared to be successful in higher education, to contribute to our democratic society, to live successful lives, and to lead within a global society.

Rethinking Our Schools

By traditional standards, Katonah-Lewisboro schools are excellent. Our students excel in academics, athletics, and the arts. Collectively, the teachers, administrators, staff, students, families, and community are responsible for the District's long-established outstanding reputation.

There exists, however, compelling evidence that those standards which previously indicated success may be outdated and may fall short of international demands. We live in a rapidly changing world, one that is different than 50, 25, or even 10 years ago. It is time to rethink the kinds of schools we want for our students. Our schools must develop in our young people the skills which will enable them to ask and answer complex questions, think analytically, and communicate effectively. As a community, we need to address what it means to be an educated adult in this rapidly changing world.

During this school year, the District will craft a long-range education plan – one that will describe how our graduates will be prepared to live successfully, learn continuously, and even lead in this global community in which we live. We are committed to providing multiple opportunities for students, parents, community members, and staff to provide input as the plan is developed.

Beyond the Requirements of the New York State Education Department

While it is expected that all graduates of the Katonah-Lewisboro School District will have met the requirements of the New York State Education Department, it is the position of the administration that such requirements are not sufficient to prepare students to be successful in a global society. For this reason, the final version of the proposed Long-Range Plan will likely present graduation requirements that extend the traditional requirements, reflect our values, and provide flexibility to meet varying student needs. These requirements will be in addition to the state requirements and will enhance our students' overall educational experience.

Understandings:

- Elements of the plan contained herein may change subject to review and discussions with constituencies.
- Costs associated with elements of the plan will be considered after further study.
- Some elements, after review or further deliberation, may reveal contractual conflicts to be addressed.
- In the development phase, there will be opportunities for structured participation by various groups.
- The recommended plan will be presented to the Board of Education in the spring of 2010.
- The final plan will extend from July 1, 2010 through June 2015. Once a plan is adopted by the Board of Education, annual goals/targets will be identified to move the plan forward annually.

Influences on our Thinking

The plan results from educational research and national trends in education, combined with our experience. It is influenced by the Katonah-Lewisboro Strategic Planning Mission Statement, Administrators' Statement of Moral Purpose, the work of Public Schools for Tomorrow, and Tony Wagner's survival skills from the Global Achievement Gap.

Student Survival Skills: (The Global Achievement Gap by Tony Wagner)

In addition to the acquisition of content knowledge, students attending the Katonah-Lewisboro Schools can expect educational experiences at all levels to include the following:

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration across networks and leading by influence
- Agility and adaptability
- Initiative and entrepreneurship
- Effective oral and written communication
- Accessing and analyzing information
- Curiosity and imagination

What follows represents the various elements anticipated by the administration to be included in a plan to be recommended to the Board of Education in June 2010. The framework for the plan is informed by what Dr. Tony Wagner (The Global Achievement Gap) describes as the new 3 R's: Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships.

1.0 Rigor

To reach the goal that all students graduate and are prepared to live, learn, and lead in our global society, the following long-range goals are established:

1.1 Student Assessments

Beyond the required state assessments, the District will minimize the time students spend participating in traditional paper/pencil assessments.

- The high school will reduce Regents examinations to only those required – five (5) exams (A majority of students will have fulfilled the mathematics and science Regents examination requirements in grade 8.).
- Alternative assessments will replace non-required assessments for courses currently defined as Regents courses (The courses themselves will reflect greater rigor than Regents level courses.).

1.2 High School Graduation

- Successfully passing required New York State Regents Exams and the completion of the New York State course requirements of 22 credits
- Additional course requirements – in mathematics, science, and/or humanities
- One semester of internship

1.3 High School Course Offerings

We see students studying beyond the boundaries of the high school, including but not limited to the following options:

- College Level Courses: Over the five year plan, there will be a reduction in Advanced Placement courses and a corresponding increase in the development of college level courses offered through partnerships with area colleges and universities.
 - Students will have the opportunity to complete the equivalent of at least one year of college level and credit bearing courses through such partnerships. The acceptance of these courses for credit would be dependent upon the guidelines set by individual institutions of higher education.

- Online Courses: Students will have an opportunity to take online courses to be counted toward graduation requirements.
- Partnerships with area high schools: Efforts will be made to gain partnerships with other high schools to share elective offerings. Some of these partnerships may be virtual or hybrid models.
- World language offerings will be expanded with an effort to include additional Western languages as well as non-Western languages and American Sign Language. As in the previous bullet, some of these offerings are likely to be virtual or hybrid models.
- The Cambridge Pre-University Program will be reviewed as a possible option for our students.
- Classroom practices will shift to include a greater emphasis on the workshop model, constructivist approaches, and authentic, hands-on student engagement in which students regularly assess their progress and set learning goals.
- Coursework will provide opportunities for students to develop digital portfolios across disciplines.
- Concepts of sustainability will be integrated into school-wide practices.

1.4 Middle School

- Grade 8 students will take Regents level math and science courses. The majority of those students will be expected to take and pass the Regents exams.
- Middle school students will have the opportunity to take classes offered at the high school.
- Students will receive instruction around positive digital citizenship as they come to understand their legal and ethical responsibilities related to the use of technology.
- As students who have participated in the FLES program reach the middle school level, world language offerings will be expanded to include additional Western languages as well as non-Western languages and American Sign Language.

- Planning for all courses will reflect knowledge of multiple intelligences with opportunities for students to both work within a strength area and develop areas for which they are less inclined.
- Coursework will provide opportunities for students to develop single disciplinary, multi-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary digital portfolios.
- A sustainability curriculum will be implemented and concepts of sustainability will be integrated into school-wide practices.

1.5 Elementary Schools

- Classroom instruction will focus on project-based, experiential learning.
- Classroom practices will support the development of multiple intelligences.
- All students will participate in world language programs.
- Students will have opportunities to conduct age appropriate research using a multi-dimensional research process.
- Students will confer with teachers, reflect on progress, and set goals for learning at all grade levels.
- A sustainability curriculum will be implemented and concepts of sustainability will be integrated into school-wide practices.

2.0 Relevance

Tony Wagner states that “opportunities for students to explore their questions and interests are a driving force for learning....Learning is hands-on and more personalized..., with the result that students perform real-world tasks and produce public products that reflect who they are-what they believe and care about.”

2.1 Curriculum Development

- Over the five (5) year period, curriculum development will occur in all areas, with an emphasis upon Wagner's Seven Survival Skills.
- Sustainability is a prevailing theme in curriculum development.
- Classroom practices will reflect an interdisciplinary approach and will include quality research as well as project-based and experiential learning.
- Students will have opportunities to interact with people of diverse cultures, both in person and digitally, related to academic objectives.

2.2 Technology

The skills we value will be supported through an updated long-range technology plan that will include or address the following:

- Multi-media centers which will provide rich opportunities for our students to develop media literacy skills in an academic context
- Opportunities for students to conduct quality research using various technologies
- Student experiences with video and web conferencing, virtual communities, and other learning in a digital context
- Opportunities for students to make local, regional, national, and international connections with peers and experts in various fields
- Availability and use of digital content, online resources, and Web 2.0 tools
- Introduction or re-introduction of programming and engineering courses at the high school
- Instruction which will assist students in analyzing and evaluating data
- Electronic blackboards and/or online courses
- Identifying what a classroom of the future with significant student engagement might look like at the elementary, middle, and high school level
- Means to provide students with remote access to the school network 24/7
- Identifying ways all students can use digital devices to support learning, i.e., the consideration of a 1:1 laptop program

2.3 Health and Wellness

- Recommendations in the plan will take into consideration the desire for our students to acquire lifelong health and wellness habits. We anticipate the inclusion of programs related to physical, emotional, and mental health.

2.4 Project Learning/Experiential Learning

At each level of instruction, teachers and students will participate in project learning/experiential learning. Such opportunities emphasize:

- Student to teacher and student to student collaboration
- Student and community partnerships
- Independent projects and presentations
- High school internships

2.5 Growth Model Assessments

In addition to the implementation of growth model assessments (anticipated from the state), the District will develop assessments designed to focus upon demonstrated student achievement. These standards based assessments will be both formative (to inform instruction) and summative (end of course).

2.6 College and Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA) - - Value Added

The high school will begin administering the CWRA on an annual basis in both grades 9 and 12. The CWRA is an assessment designed to measure higher order skills (critical thinking, problem solving, etc.)

- Using the CWRA, freshmen students are tested in the fall and seniors in the spring. This assessment provides at the end of the first year a measure of change between freshmen and senior years and by following the freshmen for the remaining three years, schools may track the progress of each successive freshman class. Most importantly, the CWRA allows you to compare the value-added results from your school to results at other, similar institutions and to college freshmen in our national sample of colleges and universities.
- The CWRA can be conducted with all the students in a small school or with representative samples in larger schools and allows you to gauge where and when the greatest gains are occurring, both taking a cross-sectional look at the relative performance of different grades

that year and tracking the performance of individual students over time. (Extracted from Council for Aid to Educations: www.cae.org/content/pro_collegework.htm.)

3.0 Relationships

Relationships between and among students, adults, and the environment are critical to the development of the total child/student. When teachers and students know each other well, relationships are nurtured and student growth and achievement are enhanced. The administration strongly supports the notion that every student should be able to identify with an adult.

The following elements will be considered to enhance relationships:

3.1 Teacher/Student Advisory - - Secondary Schools

Faculty and administration will study the feasibility of establishing a student advisory system in grades 7-12. The advisory system is intended to identify an adult who is assigned to a limited number of students over extended years.

3.2 Small Schools- - High School

The high school principal and faculty will examine ways in which a structure can be created to enable “small schools” to exist within the high school, including the creation of academies within the high school.

3.3 Extended Time with Guidance Counselors

Administration recognizes that one of the most difficult transitions for students occurs between grade 8 and grade 9. To support students through such transition, we will explore the value of “looping” guidance counselors from grade 8 to grade 9 and return to grade 8 after two years with students.

3.4 Extended Time with Teachers - - Middle School

We will explore the feasibility of “looping” teachers in grade 7 and 8.

3.5 Extended Time with Teachers - - K-6

We will explore the feasibility of “looping” teachers or having multi-age classrooms K-6.

3.6 Compensatory Support for Students - - One size does not fit all

The administration recognizes that students' learning styles and rates differ. To assure that support to compensate for such differences is addressed, the administration is committed to reviewing the need for compensatory support to students as the proposed changes in instruction are addressed. Such support includes but is not limited to:

- Special Education and related services
- Social work services
- Reading services
- Guidance services

3.7 Faculty Team Planning Time

While all teachers have individual planning time within their schedules, middle school teachers have the benefit of an additional team planning period daily; elementary teachers do not. A task force will be convened of administrators and elementary teachers to explore ways in which at least one period weekly can be found to enable team planning between and among elementary grade level teachers.

4.0 Structures that Support Innovation

4.1 Student Day

- Revisit the feasibility of changing student “start” times at each level to be consistent with research.
- Explore flexible scheduling at each level.
- Investigate staggered student and staff days to allow for flexible scheduling for students to accommodate athletics, extra-curricular activities, internships, and work experiences.

4.2 High School Student Schedule

- Create non-traditional high school course schedules that parallel college schedules (courses that meet for longer periods on fewer days, for example)
- Create time for campus wide advisory periods through the use of different scheduling options
- Beyond the class period schedule, examine scheduling opportunities to include but not be limited to:
 - Block scheduling options
 - “Semestering” courses

4.3 Middle School Configuration

- A feasibility study will be conducted to determine if Grade 5 can be included (physically) within the middle school. A grade 5-8 middle school has the potential to strengthen the instructional design and have greater connectedness to grade 8 exit assessments.

4.4 Elementary School Structure

- Implement full day kindergarten for all students
- Review advantages and disadvantages of a grade K-4 elementary school in terms of instructional opportunities

4.5 Professional Development

The Long-Range Plan described above cannot be successful if a corresponding Long-Range Plan is not implemented to provide for faculty and administrator professional development. While the Professional Development Team will ultimately determine the staff development best suited to support faculty, the following areas are noted as priorities for such development:

- Sustainability: Incorporating sustainability principles within the instructional process
- Seven Survival Skills: Infusing the seven skills into the instructional process
- Learning Time: Teaching within a framework of flexible and various teaching periods
- Technology
- Engaging students
- Leadership Development

4.6 Professional Development: What is Quality Instruction?

There exists considerable evidence that educators do not agree upon what is meant by quality instruction. Over the duration of the Long-Range Plan, all teachers will be trained in the principles of Learning Walks. Upon training, teachers will routinely participate on teams in Learning Walks - - and through this process “examine” the instructional practices of:

- Methods of differentiation
- Characteristics of student engagement
- Methods of assessing student learning
- Matching instruction to curriculum

The following provides some of the texts referenced earlier in the document as influences on our thinking.

The Purpose of Schooling

The administration embraces the following purposes of schooling:

America's democracy rests on the foundation of public education, one which has served the nation well. For over 200 years, education has been the great informer, the great stimulator, the great equalizer. Today, however, our schools must meet challenges that could not have been foreseen in a simpler agricultural and industrial world.

In the emerging global community, politics, economies, and societies intertwine. America's continued pre-eminence depends on our individual and collective capacity to address both new and age-old problems: the threats of environmental disaster, terrorism, economic displacement; the scourges of poverty, disease and intolerance.

These challenges will require every citizen in our democracy to be informed, involved, productive. Nurturing individual talent, our schools must develop the more advanced abilities that are required for success: a capacity to think analytically, to identify and solve complicated problems with no clear answers, to express oneself effectively, for instance.

In a world where the sheer number of people – and of educated people – is rising rapidly, Americans are a small percent of the total. We must make up in quality what we lack in quantity. To do that, we must commit ourselves as a nation, as states, as local schools and as individuals to empower each child to make a difference and to keep our country strong. We must design schools for tomorrow that meet these challenges.

(Public Schools for Tomorrow:
Dr. Thomas Sobol, President)

Strategic Plan Mission Statement

The mission of the Katonah-Lewisboro School District, a student-inspired community-based center of educational excellence, is to ensure that each student has a passion for learning and defines and achieves individual success in a dynamic, competitive global society through a system distinguished by:

- highly motivated active learners who continuously assess their progress and feel joy in their accomplishments;
- faculty and staff dedicated to the success of all students;
- rigorous curricula and innovative approaches to instruction that honor the uniqueness in each student;
- collaboration among school, home, and community to create a stimulating learning environment.

Administration's Moral Purpose:

The administrators enthusiastically share herewith a statement of moral purpose. Such purpose was influenced by our readings of Dr. Michael Fullan's work, heavily influenced by the work of Professor Tony Wagner and informed by the need for purpose/vision as reflected in the "Great Place to Work" focus group report.

The Katonah-Lewisboro District and School Administrators believe that:

Our ethical responsibility is to create a nurturing, respectful, inclusive environment in which students are able to learn about themselves, others and the world around them in order to become ethical, nurturing, respectful and inclusive individuals prepared to live, contribute and lead within a global society.

Drawing from the above Purposes of Schools, Strategic Plan Mission Statement, and the Administration's Moral Purpose Statement, the elements intended to be included in a proposed Long-Range Education Plan are provided below. The reader is encouraged to review the following with the understanding that the elements in the plan may change between the release of this document and the final document to be presented to the Board of Education as a recommended plan in June 2010. Such changes may result from further study of the elements and/or input from the various school community constituents.