

**FREMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
(School Administrative Unit #83)  
Fremont, New Hampshire**

**STRATEGIC PLAN OUTLINE  
December, 2008**

**NESDEC Project Team**

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## I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

On August 12, 2008, representatives from the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) met with Superintendent Normand Tanguay and the Fremont, SAU # 83, School Board to discuss a proposal for a Strategic Planning Project that had been submitted by NESDEC at the request of Superintendent Tanguay. It was agreed after that meeting that NESDEC would consult with the Superintendent and School Board on the strategic planning process. (It was also later agreed that NESDEC would assist in the search for a new principal for Fremont after the strategic planning process was completed.)

On September 3, 2008, Dr. Baker met with the Superintendent and two principals, Dawn Lewis and William Marston, to review the planned process. A timeline was developed for that process, including:

- reviewing or developing a District Mission Statement
- developing a Profile of the Present District
- leading three focus groups on the issues the District should address, completed on November 11 and 12
- developing an outline of a strategic plan based on the focus group meetings, including strategic targets and goals and objectives for the District

The Mission Statement and District Profile were presented to the Superintendent and School Board on October 14, 2008.

The Strategic Targets, Goals and Objectives were presented to the Superintendent and School Board on December 9, 2008 in accordance with the timeline.

## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS

The consultant, Dr. Baker, met with three focus groups: the School Board and Administration; the School Staff; and the Community, especially parents. All three groups focused on the question: *What issues or concerns do you think the school district should address in the next few years?*

The process began with brainstorming in which comments were recorded. Participants were then asked to prioritize all the comments individually and the priorities were combined to determine the total group's highest priorities. The highest priorities of all three groups were combined to determine what were the most frequently mentioned high priority items across all three groups.

Six Strategic Targets were identified through this process: Communications; Curriculum/ Student Achievement; Staffing and Staff Development; Student Expectations, Academically and Behaviorally; Facility/Space Needs; and Grade and Administrative Organization.

Specific goals were generated for each Strategic Target based on the comments in the focus groups. A total of 16 goals were proposed. Each goal has three measurable objectives designed to clarify and implement each goal as well as assuring that there is an accountability procedure for each goal.

It is expected that the District management will assign responsibility for each goal to members of the staff. Deadline dates will also be established for each goal in which the progress on that goal will be reported to the Superintendent and/or School Board.

### III. PROFILE OF THE PRESENT STATE OF THE DISTRICT

#### The Town of Fremont

Fremont is a small, rural town, with 17.2 square miles, located in southeastern New Hampshire. It is about midway between Manchester to the west (about 22 miles) and Portsmouth to the east (about 23 miles). It is about 15 miles north of Haverhill, Massachusetts.

It was incorporated as a town in 1764. In July, 2007 the population of Fremont was 4,074. The population had grown 15.9% since 2000. About 98% of the population is white, non-Hispanic. The top four ancestries of the town are Irish (27.3%), French (23.4%), English (13.4%) and French Canadian (12.2%). Nearly 19% of the population, 25 years and over, have bachelor's degrees or higher.

#### The Fremont School District (School Administrative Unit # 83)

In March of 2006, Fremont formed its own SAU with its own superintendent. Before that, Fremont had been part of SAU 14 with the towns of Epping and Chester. The school district consists of Ellis School for pre-school to grade 8. It had an enrollment of 545 students in the spring of 2008, a 29% increase since 1996.

The Ellis School is divided into an elementary school program for grades pre-K to 4 and a middle school program for grades 5-8. Each program has its own principal. The New England League of Middle Schools did a study of the middle school program a few years ago that led to some recommendations. This year, the middle school program is being led by an interim principal. All Fremont high school students now attend Sanborn Regional High School in Kingston, NH. The Ellis School staff has been working to assure that the Ellis School curriculum is coordinated with the Sanborn Regional High School curriculum.

#### The Present State of the School District

As a relatively new school district, Fremont is still in the process of adjusting to its single town status. The School Board established Board Goals for 2007-2008 that included a long-range school facilities plan developed with the New England School Development Council (NESDEC). That was completed in March, 2008. The plan addressed the need to increase school capacity and to rehabilitate or replace school spaces which do not support 21<sup>st</sup> century educational programs. Five options and criteria for judging the options were offered. The District is now studying and considering those options.

New programs that were initiated in 2007 were:

- Kindergarten, with a curriculum that prepares students for first grade
- The Gifted and Talented Program, which offers challenging programs for all students, especially for children with special ability and talents
- The PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Support) Program
- The Standards Based Reporting System

The school has met all requirements for making Adequate Yearly Progress in accordance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Special staff training in math, reading, and writing is being offered to make further progress. The school has qualified as a Follow the Child school, a program sponsored by the New Hampshire Department of Education to promote student achievement through personalized learning and assessment.

In addition to the above initiatives and accomplishments, the School Board has goals for 2007-2008 that include improving communication and dissemination of information to the public and updating, maintaining and revising Board policies and procedures.

The Board also has the following long-range goals: developing an adult/community education program, developing an education plan for the district, and reviewing and updating the ten-year district plan.

Finally, the Board has contracted with NESDEC to "Develop a strategic plan for the District so that the highest quality education will be available to all students." The Board also decided to coordinate the development of that plan with the search for a permanent middle school principal to begin in the 2008-2009 school year.

#### IV. MISSION STATEMENT

(This draft of the Fremont School District's Mission Statement is based on documents produced by the Fremont School District. They include: the Mission Statement in the Special Education Program Approval Case Study Report, the Student/Parent Handbooks for both the Ellis School Elementary Program and the Middle School Programs, as well as the educational aspects of the 2007-2008 Fremont School Board Goals. As of December, 2008, this Mission Statement had not been formally approved by the Fremont School Board.)

*Our school district strives to have community schools in which learning for all is our primary purpose. Our schools are centers of learning for our children, parents, citizens, teachers and staff. All teachers will take active roles in their own learning as well as the learning of others. Their learning will be self-directed and life-long.*

*Our schools will provide a curriculum that is aligned with New Hampshire's Frameworks and Grade Level Expectations and which meet all requirements of Adequate Yearly Progress. That curriculum will offer equal and full access for all to a wide range of opportunities and activities including educational experiences that promote individual progress academically, emotionally, socially, physically and through special talents.*

*Throughout their education in Fremont, students will be expected to be respectful, be responsible and be prepared.*

## V. STRATEGIC TARGETS

The following strategic targets came from the input received at the three focus group meetings with:

- the School Board and administration held on November 11, 2008
- the staff of the school held on November 12, 2008
- the community also held on November 12, 2008

The question related to the strategic planning process that was asked was:

*What issues or concerns do you think the school district should address in the next few years?*

The strategic targets were determined by combining the responses to the question above which were the top priorities from each of the three focus groups. Highest priority issues leading to strategic targets were those that were repeated or are similar in two or three of the focus groups.

In analyzing the responses from the three focus groups, there were just a few topics that all three groups had in common that were among the highest priorities. One was related to communications (communications between the administration and staff, between the district and community, and between teachers and parents). Another was concerned with curriculum or student achievement. Staffing and staff development was a third area mentioned as a high priority in all three focus groups.

Not mentioned as frequently, but still a high priority in all three groups, was facilities or space needs. Clarifying student expectations, both academically and behaviorally, was referenced fairly often and was a high priority in two of the groups. Grade and administrative organization was a high priority in one of the groups and was mentioned in the other two groups.

Therefore, six strategic targets are recommended for this strategic plan. They are listed below in priority order.

- 1. Communications**
- 2. Curriculum/Student Achievement**
- 3. Staffing and Staff Development**
- 4. Student Expectations, Academically and Behaviorally**
- 5. Facilities/Space Needs**
- 6. Grade and Administrative Organization**

## VI. MANAGEMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals for each strategic target are based on comments at the focus group meetings that were given high priority. They help clarify what needs to be done to effectively address the area of concern represented by title of the strategic target. Each of the goals has three measurable objectives designed to clarify, implement and make accountable each of the goals. The completed goals and objectives will include who will be responsible for implementing each goal and objective and the completion dates for each objective, to be determined by the Superintendent and/or the School Board.

### **Strategic Target I: Communications**

#### 1. Goal: Seek support of the community through communications

Objective 1.1: Survey community regarding the perceptions of and support for the school system

Objective 1.2: Develop plans for addressing areas of concern revealed in the survey, with an emphasis on positive activities and accomplishments at the school

Objective 1.3: Ascertain when there will be a follow-up of the survey to measure improvements in the community's perceptions and support

#### 2. Goal: Define and develop a "community school"

Objective 2.1: Include in the above survey what features the community would like a community school to have

Objective 2.2: Form a committee of professional staff and parents to develop plans for implementing the features that were identified in the survey that are regarded as most desirable and feasible

Objective 2.3: Determine the date the chairman of the committee would report to the School Board on the implementation of the features that were identified

#### 3. Goal: Clarify what children need to know and be able to do

Objective 3.1: Form a committee of staff and parents to clarify what children at different stages in their schooling should know and be able to do, especially in the basic academic program, based in part on research literature

Objective 3.2: The committee chair will report on the list of knowledge and skills children need to the School Board on a specified date

Objective 3.3: Determine what assessments have been and will be done to measure in the above report

4. Goal: Improve communications between the administration and staff

Objective 4.1: Survey staff on ways administration's communications could be improved and be more consistent between administrators

Objective 4.2: Superintendent meets with administrators to put together a feasible plan based on survey results to improve communications and consistency with staff

Objective 4.3: Survey staff members again after a one year trial of the above plan to determine if they think there has been progress in communications between administration and staff

5. Goal: Find time for discussions about curriculum among the staff

Objective 5.1: Staff meets with administration to determine if time can be found for the staff to meet to have discussions about curriculum

Objective 5.2: Superintendent proposes to School Board time blocks for staff to meet to discuss curriculum issues

Objective 5.3: Staff reviews with administration and School Board what was accomplished in curriculum discussion time blocks within one year of their inception

6. Goal: Improve communications between the school and parents

Objective 6.1: Representative staff and parents meet to address ways to improve communications between staff and parents

Objective 6.2: A report is submitted from the principal(s) to the superintendent proposing specific means of improving communications between the staff and parents

Objective 6.3: Within a year's time of the beginning of the new means of communicating between staff and parents, parents are asked to indicate whether the communications has improved since before the start of the new program

## **Strategic Target II: Curriculum/Student Achievement**

(Goals 3 and 5 under the Communications Strategic Target above also are related to this Curriculum/Student Achievement Strategic Target)

### 1. Goal: Fremont students attain and improve on Annual Yearly Progress (AYP)

Objective 1.1: Analyze results from AYP testing to determine how well Fremont students are doing on it and report results to the School Board

Objective 1.2: Identify areas of weakness and excellence in student performance and develop a curriculum and instructional strategy for each area of weakness and a student recognition program for areas of excellence to be implemented in the next school year

Objective 1.3: Analyze results from the latest AYP testing and report results to the School Board, specifying areas of progress or no progress

### 2. Goal: Implement the Follow the Child Program

Objective 2.1: Review the 10 commitments and 8 conditions that are requisite parts of the Program and assess the extent to which they are being met in the Fremont School District

Objective 2.2: Develop strategies for addressing the areas of relative weakness in Fremont with regard to the Program commitments and conditions

Objective 2.3: Review the progress in the areas addressed in one year and report the results of the review to the School Board

### 3. Goal: Assess the Curriculum sequence and coordination

Objective 3.1: Form staff curriculum coordination committee to review and revise the vertical and horizontal curriculum, K-8, for logical sequencing

Objective 3.2: The curriculum coordination committee presents the updated coordinated curriculum to the Administration and School Board

Objective 3.3: The standing curriculum coordination committee reviews the curriculum annually for changes and improvements that have been made and review implications for related curriculum

### Strategic Target III: Staffing and Staff Development

#### 1. Goal: Attract a Strong Staff

- Objective 1.1: Administration reviews and develops procedures and strategies for recruiting a strong staff to Fremont, stressing what is appealing to staff about the Fremont School District
- Objective 1.2: Administration reports to School Board about the above plan
- Objective 1.3: New staff members asked to report on their experience in the recruiting process, what has been the quality of their first year experience on the Fremont staff and what could have been done to make it better

#### 2. Goal: Improve Professional Development for Staff

- Objective 2.1: Survey staff on professional development programs they need, e.g. direction on three-year certification program
- Objective 2.2: Administration develops professional development plan responsive to the needs the staff has expressed
- Objective 2.3: Follow above procedures on an annual basis

#### 3. Goal: Review Administrative Staffing

- Objective 3.1: Superintendent and School Board review administrative staffing especially the number of Principals, a Director of Special Education and a Director of Curriculum, including part-time and shared positions (e.g. teacher/administrator)
- Objective 3.2: Superintendent and School Board explain rationale for their decisions regarding administrative staffing to the staff and public
- Objective 3.3: Any changes in the decisions regarding administrative staffing should also be explained to the staff and public

#### **Strategic Target IV: Student Expectations, Academically and Behaviorally**

(The following goals from the previous Strategic Targets (STs) are also related to this Strategic Target: ST I, Communications - Goal 3: Clarify what children need to know and be able to do; ST II, Curriculum/Student Achievement – Goal 1: Fremont students attain and improve on Annual Yearly Progress; Goal 2: Implement the Follow the Child Program)

1. Goal: Review PBIS as a disciplinary program

Objective 1.1: Survey staff regarding: (1) the extent to which they understand and (2) support the principles and procedures of the PBIS program and (3) the extent to which they think it is being implemented

Objective 1.2: Survey parents on the same three issues on which the staff is surveyed

Objective 1.3: Review PBIS at least every two years and report the results to the Superintendent and School Board

2. Goal: Implement a consistent zero tolerance policy for student misbehavior

Objective 2.1: Have staff discussion on whether such a policy is feasible in school and on busses

Objective 2.2: Have Principal(s) discuss this issue with parents

Objective 2.3: If it is determined by staff and parents that they can support and implement such a policy, put a plan for doing so in place under the supervision of the Principal(s)

#### **Strategic Target V: Facility/Space Needs**

1. Goal: Review and systematically implement the most favored options presented in the March, 2008 NESDEC report, *Long-Range School Facilities Planning*

Objective 1.1: Have all Fremont stakeholders who are committed to solving the school space problems review the NESDEC report and determine which presented option they individually favor

Objective 1.2: Survey all stakeholders to see which of the options is generally favored

Objective 1.3: Develop a timely and persuasive warrant article that will meet space needs and present to the town

## Strategic Target VI: Grade and Administrative Organization

### 1. Goal: Determine what grade levels should be unified under one principal

Objective 1.1: Assign appropriate staff members to review relevant research literature on grade configuration, focusing on the general positive and negative attributes of the various options ( e.g. K-4, 5-8; K-6, 7-8; K-5, 6-8; K-8)

Objective 1.2: Determine which of the options is supported most by staff and parents

Objective 1.3: Develop a pragmatic plan to implement the option favored by more than the other options

## VII. ASSIGNMENT OF PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE AND DEADLINES FOR EACH OBJECTIVE

This plan needs to include the assignment of people who will be responsible for making sure that progress is made on each goal and objective. Dates should also be established when the people responsible will report to the Superintendent and/or School Board on the status of the goals and objectives.

Some of the questions that may be answered in the reports are:

- What activities were carried out, on what dates, to make progress on this goal/objective?
- Who was involved in those activities?
- How much progress was made?
- What facilitated progress?
- What were impediments to progress?
- Has the objective been completed successfully?
- If so, provide evidence of successful completion?
- If not, what needs be done to continue to work toward completion?
- What resources are needed to facilitate successful completion of the objective?

## APPENDIX A

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### SOURCES FOR THE PROFILE OF THE PRESENT STATE OF THE DISTRICT

Fremont School District Board Goals, 2007-2008

Fremont Ten Year Plan, 2003-2004

School District Reports in the 2005, 2006 and 2007 Annual Reports for Fremont, New Hampshire

Ellis School Elementary School Program Student/Parent Handbook, 2008-2009

Ellis School Middle School Program/Student Parent Handbook, 2008-2009

New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval Visitation Case Study Compliance Review, Fremont School District, Summary Report, 2006

School Administrative Unit #83 Organizational Report

Long-Range School Facilities Planning, Fremont NH, NESDEC, 3/08

PBIS: Evaluation & Preliminary Recommendations, 11/13/07

SAU #83 Web Site

NH Department of Education District Data Profiles

NH Economic & Labor Market Information Web Site, 8/13/07

City-Data.com; Fremont NH Detailed Profile

Seacoastonline.com: "Fremont's Ellis School ready for 2008-2009 school year"

## APPENDIX B

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### COMPLETE LIST OF COMMENTS FROM THE BRAINSTORMING OF EACH FOCUS GROUP

#### School Board and Administration Focus Group, November 11, 2008 (8 participants)

1. Focus on communications
2. How to attract a strong staff
3. Attain Annual Yearly Progress (AYP)
4. Support from the community
5. Facility needs
6. Implement Follow the Child Program
7. Define a "community school"
8. Address inequity in Sanborn High School tuition
9. Cost effectiveness
10. Work with community on what children need to know and be able to do
11. What grade configuration is best for Fremont (e.g. grade 5 in elementary or middle school)
12. Foreign Language throughout the grades
13. Develop standards-based curriculum
14. Determine whether middle school meets state standards
15. Align curriculum to the Sanborn High School curriculum
16. Develop adult/community education program
17. Use data to improve instruction
18. Improve public perception of Fremont education

*The following items mentioned in the brainstorming did not receive any points in the prioritizing process:*

- Full-day Kindergarten
- Uniformity between the elementary and middle school levels as appropriate
- Tracking Fremont students at the high school
- Teacher and administrator mentoring programs

#### Staff Focus Group, November 12, 2008 (19 participants)

1. Communications (administration to staff)
2. Consider two schools (instead of one)
3. Space problems
4. Special Education Director
5. Professional Development (especially more direction on the three-year certification plan)

6. Differences between administrators K-8, need for collaboration for one message
7. Time for curriculum discussion among staff
8. Curriculum sequence
9. Curriculum Director
10. Emphasize positives of the Ellis School with the community
11. Need for science experiments and practical arts, i.e. hands-on curriculum
12. Help students prepare for the high school experience, i.e. have parallel support systems
13. Security
14. Give earlier notice of staff projects, need prep time

*The following items mentioned in the brainstorming did not receive any points in the prioritizing process:*

- Discipline consistency
- Foreign language
- Coordination with Sanborn High School curriculum
- School-community communications
- Provide for Fremont students as is provided for students in other towns

**Community Focus Group, November 12, 2008 (30 participants)**

1. Re-focus on the basic academic program (e.g. reading, math, science, history, foreign language, technology) not exploratory programs
2. Emphasize academic excellence, improve test scores
3. Discipline
4. School-parent communications
5. Strong leadership
6. Respect for all in district from the top down
7. Review PBIS as a disciplinary program
8. Zero tolerance for misbehavior, in school and on busses
9. Safety
10. District parent communications
11. Space
12. Review standard reporting
13. Restore honor roll
14. Make teachers and students accountable
15. Control costs and waste
16. Expand music (e.g. band)
17. Clarify behavior expectations
18. Establish balance between regular education and special education
19. Clarify mission statement (should be visible throughout District)
20. Train teachers for standard-based education
21. More challenging courses
22. Implement anti-bullying program

23. Establish consistence from class to class
24. More communications to parents re: grades, ranks
25. School ranking vs. other schools in state

*The following items mentioned in the brainstorming did not receive any points in the prioritizing process:*

- Criteria for special education students leaving classrooms
- Cleanliness and organization of building
- Policy for “going green”
- Review cafeteria time etc.
- Review “Everyday Math”
- Review recess policy (e.g. the number of recesses at every level)

## APPENDIX C

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### **ANALYSIS OF PRIORITY ORDER RANKINGS OF COMMENTS FROM EACH FOCUS GROUP FOR EACH STRATEGIC TARGET**

#### **1. Communications**

Board/Administration Focus Group Rankings: 1, 4, 7, 10, 16, 18

Staff Focus Group Rankings: 1, 7, 10, 14

Community Focus Group Rankings: 4, 6, 10, 17, 19, 24

(Total Rankings: 16, Highest Priorities: 1, 1, 4)

#### **2. Curriculum/Student Achievement**

Board/Administration Focus Group Rankings: 3, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

Staff Focus Group Rankings: 7, 8, 9, 11, 12

Community Focus Group Rankings: 1, 2, 12, 13, 16, 18, 21

(Total Rankings: 21, Highest Priorities: 1, 3, 7)

#### **3. Staffing and Staff Development**

Board/Administration Focus Group Rankings: 2

Staff Focus Group Rankings: 12 (mentioned in brainstorming)

Community Focus Group Rankings: 3, 7, 8, 14, 17, 22

(Total Rankings: 7, Highest Priorities: 2, 4, 5)

#### **4. Student Expectations, Academically and Behaviorally**

Board/Administration Focus Group Rankings: 3, 19

Staff Focus Group Rankings: 2, 3

Community Focus Group Rankings: 3, 7, 8, 14, 17, 22

(Total Rankings: 10, Highest Priorities: 3, 3, 12)

#### **5. Facility/Space Needs**

Board/Administration Focus Group Rankings: 5

Staff Focus Group Rankings: 2, 3

Community Focus Group Rankings: 18, 23

(Total Rankings: 4, Highest Priorities: 2, 5, 11)

6. Grade and Administration Organization

Board/Administration Focus Group Rankings: 11

Staff Focus Group Rankings: 2, 4, 6, 9

Community Focus Group Rankings: 18, 23

(Total Rankings: 7, Highest Priorities: 2, 11, 18)