

# SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION

**SUPERINTENDENT: Paula M. Talty, Ed.D.**

**EVALUATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Evaluated by the Cromwell Board of Education**

**DATE: June 2, 2016**

## 1. Develops and Implements Vision that Inspires Action and Commitment

<p>1.1 Works with the board of education to develop an ambitious vision that puts improving teaching and student learning at its core and reflects the community's value, beliefs and highest aspirations for its children.</p> <p>1.2 Articulates to all stakeholders the importance of achieving the vision</p> <p>1.3 Secures commitment from all stakeholders to act upon the vision of what the district must become</p> <p>1.4 Creates urgency for action and consensus around key solutions, catalyzing action when consensus is unlikely</p> <p>1.5 Continuously signals in communication and personal practice the importance of achieving the vision</p>	<p>1A Leaders ensure that the creation of the vision, mission and goals establish high expectations for all students and staff.</p> <p>1B Leaders ensure that the process of implementing and sustaining the vision, mission, and goals is inclusive, building common understandings and commitment among all stakeholders.</p> <p>1C Leaders ensure the success and achievement of all students by consistently monitoring and refining the implementation of the vision, mission and goals.</p> <p>4A Leaders ensure the success of all students by collaborating with families and other stakeholders.</p> <p>4B Leaders respond and contribute to community interests and needs to provide high quality education for students and their families.</p> <p>6A Leaders improve the broader social, cultural economic, legal, and political contexts of education for all students and families.</p>
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**Summary:** We continue to work to create a tighter connection between the schools and the community. Our students have volunteered at many community events such as Halloween on Main, and Pick of the Litter. The schools have welcomed opportunities to have students perform at community events such as the Veterans' Day recognition at Town Hall. The partnerships we have formed continue to support our students, TaTT will be in its third year in 2017 and residents from CVOC continue to help out at our schools. A Teacher Advisory Group was formed this year to allow for increased communication and dialogue regarding district and school initiatives and changes. The group is comprised of former and current Teachers of the Year. Additionally, our FIRE Academy teachers have made sustainable change in instructional practice through the expeditionary learning initiative and mindfulness practice. Greater outreach and communication was achieved this year through the implementation of the Thoughtexchange project. Additionally, working collaboratively with Town officials we began a dialogue regarding the conditions of both the ECS and CMS facilities. This conditions study will be used by the community and the town to begin to formulate strategic plans for the possible upgrading of these buildings.

## 2. Develops and Implements a District Leadership Theory of Action that Guides Decision Making

<p>2.1 Articulates and acts upon an overarching theory of action that communicates the underlying rationale for how the district will achieve its vision.</p> <p>2.2 Articulates and test theories of action for all major aspects of the district's improvement work</p> <p>2.3 Executes a district leadership theory of action to build district coherence and alignment</p>	<p>1B Leaders ensure that the process of implementing and sustaining the vision, mission, and goals is inclusive, building common understandings and commitment among all stakeholders.</p> <p>1C Leaders ensure the success and achievement of all students by consistently monitoring and refining the implementation of the vision, mission and goals.</p>
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**Summary:** Coherence work at the district level resulted in the identification of 5 "critical" skills for all students to leave Cromwell Public Schools with. Our continued focus on these critical skills and alignment of teacher/administrator goals with these skills has resulted in increased articulation of curriculum particularly in literacy and mathematics. The building leaders continue to maintain a focus on the special education population. This year we added Literacy Action plans at ECS and WIS following a review of the literacy data wherein it was determined that students who were below grade level were making limited progress. The reading action plans engaged the entirety of both schools' faculty and further emphasized that all students were everyone's responsibility as detailed in our mission statement. The data obtained through Thoughtexchange indicated that parents need increased understanding of our curriculum and how it relates to the Common Core State Standards. This will be a focus next year as we continue to align our educator accountability and student accountability systems. Our changing designation to DRG C is both a recognition of our accomplishments and a call for additional focus on providing our students with an outstanding education.

\*Note: Section headers and goals throughout this document are taken from the goals and Strategic Plan of the Cromwell Public Schools. Numbers correspond to the Connecticut Superintendent Leadership Competency Framework.

### 3 Aligns Resources to Drive a District-wide Strategy for Improving the Performance of All Students

3.1 Examines a wide range of data to determine root cause of areas of concern related to improving teaching and learning	2A Leaders develop a strong professional culture which leads to quality instruction focused on student learning and the strengthening of professional competencies.
3.2 Involves key stakeholders in developing strategy to address areas of concern	2B Leaders understand and expect faculty to plan, implement, and evaluate standards-based curriculum and challenging instruction aligned with Connecticut and national standards.
3.3 Focuses on a small number of high leverage strategies aligned with the theory of action	2C Leaders use assessments, data systems, and accountability strategies to improve achievement, monitor and evaluate progress, and close achievement gaps.
3.4 Leads a budget development process that results in systems and support for integrated district improvement initiatives	4A Leaders ensure the success of all students by collaborating with families and other stakeholders.

**Summary:** A focus for this school year was to address the needs of our students who are performing well above grade level. A parent information meeting was held, well attended by many, and a collaboration with the CT Association for the Gifted was begun. As a result, we have revised our identification procedures and have also begun to address a need to support teachers in working with students who need enrichment. Our partnership with CCSU continues to provide us with resources to support all students. Additionally, partnerships with CVOC residents resulted in additional reading support for our K – 2 students. Cromwell received grant support to expand our Preschool program, security, and technology programs. These will further support our students. STEM programming has expanded to include WIS and the Elementary Task Force will begin to investigate world language programming at the elementary level. Cromwell continues to serve as a leader to other districts; this year our faculty presented at the Teach to Lead conference, the State Sponsored Coherence Conference, and Reading conference. We continue to partner with both the State Dept. of Education and the Louisiana Dept. of Education.

### 4 Demonstrates a Results and Improvement Orientation that Addresses both Accountability and Capacity-Building

4.1 Guides leadership teams to develop and attain meaningful and measurable goals for professional practice and student learning at the district and the school level	1C Leaders ensure the success and achievement of all students by consistently monitoring and refining the implementation of the vision, mission and goals.
4.2 Establishes an aligned, district-wide improvement cycle based on diagnosis, planning, implementation and monitoring	2C Leaders use assessments, data systems, and accountability strategies to improve achievement, monitor and evaluate progress, and close achievement gaps.
4.3 Establishes accountability for improvement at the district, school and classroom level	

**Summary:** The Elementary and Secondary Task Forces continue to provide parents, faculty and administration with a vehicle to examine curriculum and programming that supports all students. The special education department has begun to develop an extended school year program and other innovative programs. These innovations are the direct result of capacity building initiatives begun throughout the district providing opportunities for our faculty and administration to come together to develop programs to meet varied student needs. The Thoughtexchange process was a first step in gathering real time data from our constituents about programs and our schools. Collected data indicates a need for more thoughtful communication around curriculum and instruction. Future areas of work include the continued capacity building of our central office and building based leadership teams in the use of student work, student data (including demographics) and an improved understanding of instruction and assessment.

### 5 Demonstrates Leadership Grounded in Collaborative Governance

5.1 Works with the board to establish goals and systems and process for monitoring progress over time	1.1 Develops an ambitious vision that puts improving teaching and student learning at its core and reflects the community's value, beliefs and highest aspirations for its children
5.2 Works in cooperation with the board of education to engage and inform of progress toward goals	2C Leaders use assessments, data systems, and accountability strategies to improve achievement, monitor and evaluate progress, and close achievement gaps.
5.3 Works with the board of education to regularly assess and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board and Superintendent in the areas of policy and management	4.1 Guides leadership teams to develop and attain meaningful and measurable goals for professional practice and student learning at the district and the school level
5.4 Demonstrates strong public support and advocacy for board approved district goals	6C Leaders engage policymakers to inform and improve education policy.

**Summary:** Increased outreach to both community and business supported the establishment of a Business Leaders Advisory Group, a Parent Editors Group, and increased presence on Facebook. A focus of increasing communication and collaboration with the community through parent meetings at the four schools, expanded partnerships with CVOC and the Cromwell Merchants Association and having our students perform/attend many community wide events has allowed our schools and students to have increased visibility. The continued push for increased transparency about the work in our schools will require additional opportunities for dialogue with community members beyond parents to deepen overall understanding of the impact of state and federal mandates on curriculum and programming. The furthering of our mission to place students first will require additional innovation in the arts, STEM, world language and support services for advanced learners. Work begun this year to review existing conditions of the ECS and CMS facilities resulted in further opportunities to work collaboratively with members of the Town Council, Board of Finance, and the Long Range Planning Committee. The leadership team is currently working to strategically align resources to support this vision. That work will result in a need for innovative communication.

## 6 Establishes Structures and Processes that Sustain a Culture of Continuous Improvement and Accountability

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| 6.1 Holds all district leaders responsible for developing and sustaining a strong professional culture characterized by shared responsibility, mutual accountability, a strong sense of individual and group efficacy, and a focus on student learning. | 1C Leaders ensure the success and achievement of all students by consistently monitoring and refining the implementation of the vision, mission and goals. |
| .2 Invests in developing the capacity of teachers and leaders to improve performance over time.   | 2.1 Articulates and acts upon an overarching theory of action that communicates the underlying rationale for how the district will achieve its vision      |

**Summary:** The Leadership Team continues to endeavor to increase teacher capacity through providing opportunities for faculty to become involved in developing programs, shared decision making and working with data. As a result each school has key faculty helping to provide leadership and support to their colleagues. The high school administration engages facilitators in walkthrough visits to strengthen awareness of effective instructional practices. The FIRE Academy teachers met with success this year in developing and implementing program changes by way of Hot Blocks, Expeditionary Learning, and Mindfulness training. FIRE Academy teachers received both district and state recognition by presenting to faculty and presenting at the CT State Teachers of the Year conference. Our continued partnership with CCSU enabled us to establish a second Teacher Leader cohort with courses being provided to faculty here in district. Focused work for the 2016-2017 school year will be to provide training to “critical friends” – teachers having an 092 certification – to establish a cadre of Master Teachers who will provide additional support to new teachers. Additionally, the leadership team will focus on using the established data team models to recommend changes or revisions to existing programs and curriculum. At the secondary level the emphasis on moving towards a mastery based learning environment will be a predominant theme for the next year.

## 8.4 Purposely Aligns Systems and Structures that Support the District Theory of Action and Strategic Operating Plan

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| 7.1 Develops and oversees a comprehensive approach to human capital that aligns to district vision, strategy and goals | 3B Leaders distribute responsibilities and supervise management structures and practices to improve teaching and learning. |
| .2 Establishes and implements a strategic approach to resource allocation and budget management                        | 3C Leaders establish an infrastructure for finance and personnel that operates in support of teaching and learning.        |
| .3 Ensures effective management of core functions, of the district.  |  |

**Summary:** The Central Office Leadership Team (COLT) continues to provide insight into effective use of limited district resources. The district was able to maximize services for students through the hiring of a BCBA and adding the Smart Start classroom to our preK services. The leadership team was able to develop a budget with minimal overall increase while still adding an additional needed music position to the high school. Using the strategic staffing model the district has been able to expand programs and services to students in the arts, science and technology, and special education. The COLT team has identified the need for an additional speech/language therapist to provide additional instruction in the development of early literacy and language skills to students in grade K – 3. Due to efforts achieved by the COLT and Leadership Teams to identify savings in personnel and grants the additional position will be hired at no additional cost to the district. Efforts to gather additional funds through grant development will be sought in the coming school year. Building leaders continue to work collaboratively with staff to identify potential savings throughout the budget process and through careful reviews of spending patterns.

## 8.4 Personal Leadership Competencies Associated with Effective District Leadership

<p>8.1 Belief.</p> <p>Demonstrates belief that every student can achieve at high levels and demonstrates an urgency to improve student achievement</p>	<p>1B Publicly advocates the vision, mission and goals so that the school community understands and supports equitable and effective learning opportunities for all students.</p> <p>5B Advocates for and acts on commitments stated in the vision, mission and goals to provide equitable, appropriate and effective learning opportunities.</p>
<p>8.2 Manages Change and Resistance.</p> <p>Manages resistance to change and engages in difficult conversations to maintain a consistent focus on high levels of achievement.</p>	<p>1C Identifies and addresses barriers to achieving the vision, mission and goals</p>
<p>8.3 Relationship Building.</p> <p>Builds trusting, respectful relationships to improve student learning.</p>	<p>4A Uses a variety of strategies to engage in open communication with staff, families and community members.</p> <p>4B Demonstrates the ability to understand, communicate with, and interact effectively with people.</p>
<p>8.4 Equitable Practice.</p> <p>Explores how identity and life experience have shaped assumptions and unconscious biases. Works to increase self-awareness to have a positive impact on the staff, members of the board and community and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>5A Uses professional influence and authority to foster and sustain educational equity and social justice for all students and staff.</p> <p>5B Models respect for diversity and equitable practices for all stakeholders.</p>
<p>8.5 Resiliency and Perseverance.</p> <p>Effectively anticipates and responds to challenges and remains focused on the vision of high expectations when faced with adversity.</p>	<p>5B Overcomes challenges and leads others to ensure that values and beliefs promote the school vision, mission, and goals needed to ensure a positive learning environment.</p>
<p>8.6 Advanced Communication Skills</p> <p>Uses consensus building and negotiation strategies and conflict resolution skills to lead authentic stakeholder engagement</p> <p>Demonstrates political savvy and respectful engagement across all stakeholder groups</p>	

**Summary:** Significant accomplishments this school year include the expansion of community connections, collaboration with the Long Range Planning Committee at the town level, coordination of the ECS/CMS conditions study work, and the achievement of significant grant funds to support existing and new programming. The Thoughtexchange project has enabled me to provide a vehicle for our entire community to share honest and open feedback which is then used to strengthen our work while simultaneously shedding light on areas which can be improved. Cromwell continues to receive recognition for our work as evidenced by the invitation to present at the State Dept. of Education Coherence Workshop, the CABA/CAPSS Convention, and the State Teachers of the Year Conference. Each of these presentations involved faculty and administration from the schools to showcase the work that was being done at our schools to support our mission statement. Additionally, I continue to serve on the state Professional Learning Advisory Council and chair the Small Districts Subcommittee for CAPSS. This year I was invited to participate in a Think Tank hosted by CCSU and focused on building teacher and leader capacity which will result in additional resources for our district. Staffing continues to be an area in which focused attention is needed to support the number of new teachers we have in our district. New teachers benefit from the opportunity to work with colleagues at their level thus a new directive to the building principals is to coordinate afterschool professional time (designated in the teacher contract) to better facilitate articulation of curriculum, sharing of best practices, and opportunities for personalized professional learning. I look forward to the challenges of supporting our administrators as they work towards creating a more dynamic curriculum and learning environment for students through program expansion in the arts and sciences.

The Board continues to be impressed with Dr. Talty's performance as Superintendent. Her initiatives over the past year have embodied the District's mission to put students first. She continues to build open communication lines with parents, businesses, and other members of the community. In addition, she encourages and challenges teachers to develop innovative and effective learning methods. As a result of Dr. Talty's efforts (and, under her direction, the efforts of administration, teachers, and staff), Cromwell continues to be a leader to other school districts in Connecticut.

The Board commends Dr. Talty for the District's achievements over the past year. Here are a few examples of the District's many recent accomplishments. ECS and WIS have begun developing Literacy Plans for students in need of reading assistance. Through the creation of FIRE Academy (which has received statewide recognition), teachers have implemented program changes in the form of Hot Blocks and Expeditionary Learning. The District has continued to support the arts by increasing course offerings for choral and musical instruction. Finally, through the newly implemented Thoughtexchange, the District now gathers, in real time, thoughts and information from the community about the schools and programs.

Dr. Talty has acknowledged that, through information obtained from Thoughtexchange, parents desire an increased understanding of the District's curriculum and how it relates to Common Core State Standards. In the coming year, the Board encourages Dr. Talty to continue fostering communication with the community in order to address this desire and other questions from the community, as appropriate.