

SOUTH SHORE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

STRATEGIC PLAN 2007-2010

REWRITE JUNE 11, 2007

After reviewing the faculty, staff, and parent feedback to the draft of the South Shore Charter Public School Strategic Plan for 2007-2010, several key themes emerged. These have helped us define where we are as a school as well as how to proceed into the future to attain our primary goals.

The three main goals of the 2007-2010 Strategic Plan are:

1. The School will continue to focus on its mission of being an institution of outstanding academic excellence for all students.
2. The School will become a seamless single K-12 School with one mission.
3. The financial viability of the School will be secured.

These three goals for the School are a huge undertaking. It will require the School staff, its leadership, and its parents to address many areas of operation that need to be reworked, redesigned, coordinated better and newly initiated.

GOAL 1: The School will become a seamless single K-12 school with one mission of inspiring .

When South Shore Charter (Public) School was founded in 1995 it was a small organization with one vision, one founder, and a core group of parents who supported what the School stood for. As the School grew and spread throughout Hull, however, the distance of the various levels from one another precluded good communication and coordination of program and philosophy. What worked in the lower grades didn't necessarily work in the upper grades. Staff in one area of the School didn't necessarily know or interact with those two miles up the beach at another portion of the School. Consequently the School grew in disparate ways.

When the move came in 2004 to Norwell one of the big challenges was how a school that had never existed in one building or with a well-honed integrated communication system could learn to live and work together and form one school in a single facility. Some issues that arose quickly in Norwell included:

- Having one principal for thirteen grades,
- Having a unified K-12 curriculum,
- Equalizing teacher/student contact hours,
- Keeping high school students "away" from younger students,
- Smaller students "bugging" larger students,

As the School addresses life as a single institution, we have been examining the curriculum of the different subject areas one at a time. Because we also needed to align our curriculum with the demands of MCAS and the increased testing for graduation and

the state curriculum frameworks, we realized there was a good deal of adjustment that needed to happen. In 2004-2005, after reviewing the mathematics curriculum, we implemented the Singapore Math program in grades K-12. In 2005-2006, as a result of studying the English/Language Arts curriculum we tightened up reading lists and expectations in all grades. This year (2006-2007) the faculty is examining the science curriculum and is making appropriate adjustments. This process of curriculum review needs to continue on a rotating basis.

Creating a seamless K-12 program for 540 students is a complex and challenging task. Three years after moving to Norwell, we still have some work to do to make the K-12 program as seamless as it should be. Transitions from one level to another still need some refining. With the small class sizes in the School the faculty should be preparing every student for the greatest success in the succeeding grade. The demands on students from one grade to the next need to be better sequenced. Projects and workshops, Exhibitions of Mastery, writing skills, and other core elements of an SSCPS education should be highly coordinated between levels. Skills and requirements should be sequentially organized for the fullest academic growth of the students. In addition, there should be a safety net in place for all students who have difficulty achieving proficiency at each grade. We need to reaffirm the *triangle of support* that includes teachers, parents and the student in a unified approach to fostering each student's growth. Our mission states that the School *inspires students in academics, career and life*; we need to better address all three of these areas at all levels. Improving academic expectations, accountability and achievement for all students at all grades, better guiding students in exploring the world of options for their futures, and more thoroughly creating respectful, responsible and civilly engaged citizens are tasks that will occupy the School for this strategic plan and beyond.

GOAL 2: The School will continue to focus on its mission of being an institution of outstanding academic excellence for all students.

The academic program of the School has helped many young people to gain strong foundations in learning and preparing for the future. Over the years students have been able to progress through the School to their high school graduation and head off to college. There have been varied rates of success with some students being admitted to highly selective colleges and universities. Our goal is to give each graduate the widest range of options for future education and help them to be admitted to and arrange for financial aid and merit scholarships that will enable them to go to and succeed at challenging colleges and universities.

The preparation for college begins at the youngest grades. The School is committed to using the Core Knowledge Curriculum sequence. In tandem with that, the School will develop a coordinated and consistent system of teaching reading and writing skills that will help each student to be at grade level communication skills by grade 3.

The School needs to create a culture of high expectation and achievement for students and to stand for academic excellence. We will work tirelessly to help all students achieve their fullest potential in all grades. In that process the School needs to look at before and after-school programs of support, resiliency support programs, and tutoring programs at all levels. In addition, the School needs to develop programs to support

students who join the School in high school grades and come to SSCPS with a record of underachievement. With the staff developing study skills and other programs that show success with the entire range of students the School enrolls, it would not only help our own students, but SSCPS would be able to disseminate these models for other schools to adopt.

Since its founding, SSCPS's curriculum has had projects and workshops as a cornerstone. We need to give closer scrutiny to this element of our program. All projects and workshops must have measurable learning outcomes that document the value of the experiences that students have during this learning time. The School should look at the need to have theme threads of project subjects across the grades. In addition, there should be common life skills that students achieve at all grades regardless of in which project or workshop they are enrolled or which teacher they have.

GOAL 3: The financial viability of the School will be secured.

The School does well with the financial resources it has. Relying on the state's funding mechanism to provide the monies needed to run the School and budgeting as conservatively as possible the School is able to meet its basic educational needs reasonably well. This however, isn't a great way to run an educational program.

Other resources need to be found to supplement those from the state. Fundraising at the School over the years has been focused on going to the parent body with various fund drives and events to solicit additional money. The Annual Fund generally raises about \$25,000; the parent-led Auction takes in about \$25,000; the art auction raises about \$4,000. These activities can be counted on to be about the same each year.

Over the next several years, SSCPS needs to develop a network of foundations, businesses, and individuals who believe in what the School is doing for its students and are willing to support that activity with their financial resources. The School needs to develop a "case statement" for itself that helps prospects to understand what the School does and how well it does it. With a clear mission and documentation of the success of the School's program the Board and others need to solicit support from others for the work that SSCPS is doing with its students.

In addition, there are untapped revenue opportunities now that SSCPS has moved to a building of its own in Norwell. The School should look at alternative revenue sources such as summer programs, adult education, and after-school programs.

In this effort to obtain greater support for the School, the School and the Foundation must look at the need for a professional who can coordinate the efforts of the board, the administration, the faculty, the parents and the students. The School along with the Foundation must develop a coordinated and integrated plan of advancing the School's needs with the greater South Shore community.

The goals and objectives of this three-year plan will focus on the broad themes discussed here. There will be work for all stakeholders in the school and together we will reach 2010 a stronger school, with higher student achievement, a more coordinated program and better resources than we have today.

