

## **Helen Mae Sauter School Council Report 2009-2010**

### **District Mission Statement**

It is the mission of the Gardner Public Schools that each student achieves high levels of academic performance at each grade level as defined by state and local standards. To achieve this mission the Gardner Public Schools will provide settings that enable each student to master challenging curricula with Gardner Public Schools support and assistance. Students will think critically, communicate effectively, learn independently, and work collaboratively within a safe and nurturing school. The Gardner Public Schools will provide an environment in which each student will develop skills to become a responsible, contributing member of society. To this end the Gardner Public Schools will provide collaborative opportunities among students, parents and community to achieve this shared educational mission.

### **Helen Mae Sauter School Mission Statement**

It is the mission of the Helen Mae Sauter School to provide a supportive learning environment that encourages students to take academic risks and become socially responsible. To achieve this, the Helen Mae Sauter faculty and staff will implement challenging curriculum, based on state and local standards. Diverse teaching methods will provide equal opportunities for all students to meet grade level expectations and encourage life long learning. The Helen Mae Sauter staff encourages communication and active involvement with parents, guardians and community members. The school community will demonstrate mutual respect for all members. To this end, students, staff, and administrators will strive to develop a sense of ownership and pride in their individual and collective achievements.

### **Educational Needs of Students**

The Helen Mae Sauter School provides a comprehensive education that is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. We also provide additional programs that are based on educational research and data. These supplementary services include, , Lexia Computer Program, Accelerated Reader program, Study Island Math, Title I Services in Reading and Math, Foundations Reading Program, the After School Program, and Interventions for ELA and Math. In addition we have a school wide reading incentive program, which encourages students to read each night for at least fifteen minutes. We use the following tools to help us to make decisions about instructional practices, MCAS Tests, DIBELS, STAR Reports, Lexia Reports, Study Island Reports, Galileo ELA and Math, Harcourt Theme Tests, and teacher observation and evaluations. We have developed a successful Response to Intervention Program at HMS. After looking at the data described above in the fall we prescribe a three tier approach to intervention to meet the needs of our students. The first tier is the solid core instruction offered in the classroom by the classroom teacher to all students. Tier two students are those who fall just slightly below the bench mark for grade level status in reading. They

are given thirty extra minutes of support each day in a small group setting in reading strategies. This support is delivered by para professionals who have been trained to use the Foundations Program and the Interventions Program which is part of the Harcourt Reading Series. Tier three students are those who are significantly below the bench mark for grade level status in reading. They also receive thirty extra minutes of support in reading in a small group setting. These services are provided by Title One tutors who are trained in isolation of skill deficits and remediation of those deficits. Our students who are indentified with special needs are provided with an Individual Education Plan which meets their needs in special education classrooms as well as in inclusion classrooms. The computer lab and classroom computers have equal access to all software programs provided by the school system. We have teachers in each grade level who have been trained in the use of the MELA-O assessments of limited English proficiency. We have a part time ELL tutor who meets the needs of our students who speak English as a second language. We have 11 staff members who have started the four ELL category trainings required by the DESE. Our literacy program the Harcourt Trophies Series focuses on the five components of reading instruction, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. We have established an uninterrupted 90-minute reading block for each grade level. We currently use the Sadlier-Oxford Math series. Weekly TASC (Teachers Assisting Students in the Classroom) meetings are held to develop strategies for students who are under performing. Parents are invited and are given Tip Sheets to use at home to work on skill deficits. Monthly grade level meetings are held to discuss best practices in instructional strategies.

### **School Budget**

The school council was appropriately involved with the formulation of the 2009-2010 HMS school budget. Program needs and building issues were reviewed and prioritized. Although the council suggested the need for a librarian and a computer lab teacher due to the financial issues surrounding the school budget these needs were not put into the budget.

### **Impact of Class Size on Student Performance**

The average class size is less than 25 students in each grade. As of this writing, the numbers for grade one are 20 per class, grade two 21 per class, and grade three 20 per class.

### **Professional Development**

Professional Development opportunities this year focused on the Lexia Computer program for reading, Smart Board training, best practices in reading instruction and CPR certification. Teachers met by grade level to map out the essential concepts for math and a time line for mastery. Teachers have worked on ELA benchmarks and developing power standards. Our Lab classrooms have focused on reading comprehension and open response strategies. HMS has continued to refine the Response To Intervention Program which helps meet the needs of struggling students in both reading and math. Teachers

meet monthly in grade level meetings to discuss best practices in instruction and share successful learning strategies.

### **Parent Involvement in the School**

Organized opportunities for parent involvement include the following:

1. Parent/Teacher Organization- The HMS PTO raises funds each year to provide enrichment opportunities for the students. These activities include field trips to see the Theater at the Mt. Production, a trip to Olde Sturbridge Village, Worcester Art Museum, and the Roger Williams Zoo. The PTO sponsors an annual book fair, a holiday gifting program, a pasta dinner and a spring fair. They volunteer weekly to put together our Friday Folders, which contain all notices for the week as well as the school newsletter. They also volunteer in classrooms to assist teachers in a variety of ways. For the past three years we have had a group of parents who have volunteered to keep our Library open and well organized to provide weekly classes for all students.
2. School Events- The following school events are held each year to give parents the opportunity to visit the school. These events include: The All School Gathering, Open House, Mother-Son Bowling, Pasta Dinner, the Art Show, the Spring Fair, Father – Daughter Dance, Invention Convention, Field Day, and Music Programs for all three grades and Parent/Teacher Conferences.
3. Use of Facility- Twice a year an after school program is held at Helen Mae Sauter School. These program are held twice a week and include activities such as cooking, exercise classes, Lego building, games, arts and crafts,
4. School Council- Parents and community members meet monthly as part of the HMS School Council. The council participates in the formulation of the school budget, student handbook, crisis-plan, multi-hazard plan, time on learning, and other matters relating to the efficient management of HMS. This year we sent out a school survey and the results are attached to this report.
5. Placement- Parents and guardians are given the opportunity to request a particular teaching approach with regard to their student's placement in grades 1, 2, and 3. Forms are sent home in late April encouraging parents to write letters to the principal about their student.
6. Communication- Helen Mae Sauter school sends out a weekly newsletter to parents communicating the events which take place at the school. Monthly a school calendar and a large newsletter are sent home. This larger newsletter contains information from the guidance counselor, music teacher, art teacher and physical education teacher. All notices and written communication are sent home in Friday Folders which are stuffed and delivered to classrooms by a committed staff of volunteers. We have discovered that this method helps parents to keep track of the information being sent home and to know that each Friday there will be information from the school to read. The monthly calendar and school newsletter are posted on the HMS web site.
7. Homework- Teachers provide students with weekly homework packets which are sent home each Friday. This allows parents the opportunity to work on homework assignments during the weekend should the week ahead provide a busy schedule for

their student. Many of the homework assignments are in the form of projects such as time lines, leprechaun traps, inventions, or creative writing assignments.

### **Safety and Discipline**

The staff at HMS takes seriously the need to develop the whole child. In an effort to help teach appropriate social behaviors we have several on-going programs. The “Second Step” program is being taught in all three grade levels. Helen Mae Sauter developed a school wide code of conduct, which is referred to as the Helen Mae Way. The code consists of safety, honesty, responsibility, courtesy, and respect. We have also developed rules of expected behavior on the playground and in the cafeteria. In an effort to best utilize the paraprofessional support that has been allocated to HMS we have two paraprofessionals on playground duty for each of our three recesses. All discipline and monitoring of behavior plans is conducted by the principal. Character Education classes are taught to the whole school once a month using parts of the Heartwood Curriculum. The past two years we have invited community members to come and read the Character Education books to our students. The following people have been gracious enough to accept our invitation, Mayor Hawke, Senator Flannagan, local author Lawrence Carey, Rep. Robert Rice, and the GHS Football team. The student handbook is reviewed annually to reflect current law and to assure a positive school environment. Helen Mae Sauter maintains strong community contacts with HOPE, Battered Women’s Resource, Gardner CAC, and counseling agencies within the city.

### **Establishing a Welcoming School Environment**

The HMS School faculty and staff encourage a warm and inviting school environment. The following procedures have been established to maintain this.

1. Kindergarten Visit- Kindergarteners from WSS come to visit their first grade teachers in June before school ends. Kindergarteners visit their classrooms, have a tour of the school, and meet with peers. The school is open during the summer for tours and information for those students who are new to our community.
2. All School Gathering -The day before school begins an All School Gathering is held from 6:00-7:00. A letter is sent home inviting parents and students to come and meet their teachers. The PTO has an information booth set up to encourage new members and allow for parents to sign up for assistance with the many PTO sponsored activities.
3. New Students- New students entering HMS during the school year are greeted by the administrator and given a school tour. Parents and guardians are made aware of school policies and given an opportunity to meet the classroom teacher.
4. School climate and Activities – Helen Mae Sauter takes pride in their commitment to being a community of virtue. HMS strives to be a school where moral and intellectual qualities such as good judgment, best effort, respect, kindness, honesty, and citizenship are modeled, upheld, and celebrated. We conduct an annual food drive to benefit the Gardner CAC. Guidance classes are held every week to help students to develop the characteristics of a good citizen. A “Caught being Good” program celebrates catching students doing the right thing. Under the direction of

Debra Withtelin our guidance counselor we offer a comprehensive anti-bullying program to all students.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

Twice a year a six- week after school program is offered at Helen Mae Sauter. The program offers classes in knitting, computer, exercise, cooking, crafts, animal studies, and games.

### **Meeting the Diverse Learning Needs of all Student**

Helen Mae Sauter offers several programs to meet the academic requirements of all students. Title I programs offer services to improve students math and reading ability. Currently we have one full time and one half time tutors to meet these needs. We have two resource rooms to provide for students who are on IEPs. We have two inclusion classrooms one in grade two and one in grade three. The Accelerated Reader program and the Lexia program allow students to progress at their independent level in areas of reading. The Study Island program provides math skill development and enrichment to students in all three grade levels. We have one ELL paraprofessional who provides services to our ELL students. We have provided parents with access to the Lexia and Study Island programs to use at home. Parents are also encouraged to use the Sadlier-Oxford web site which correlates with the math program used daily at HMS.

### **Helen Mae Sauter School Council**

Cherie McComb- Principal

Debra Whitelin-Grade two teacher recently appointed guidance counselor

Andrea Barry- Parent of grade 1 and 3 student

Bridget Flick- Parent of grade 1 student

Ruth Anne Nevard- Community Member