



**Pollard Middle School  
School Improvement Plan  
September 2015- June 2018  
Updated 2016/17  
Needham Public Schools**

***Presented to the Needham School Committee***

***School Council Members:***

Andrew Barnett, Student  
Merle Berman, Community Representative  
Tamatha Bibbo, Principal and Co-Chair  
David Blake, Teacher  
Elizabeth Bloom, Parent  
Marcy Cheifetz, Parent  
Maria DelVecchio, Teacher  
Eunice Flanders, Teacher  
Brook Hoffman, Teacher  
Kevin Keane, Parent  
Jennifer Sexton, Parent and Co-Chair  
Matthew Sexton, Student  
Grace Yonchak, Student  
Anne Weinstein, Parent

*\*Please refer to "A Glossary for Pollard Middle School Parents/Guardians and Community Members" for definitions of abbreviations and terms.*

## **Pollard Middle School Statement of Purpose**

*We dedicate ourselves to cultivating academic excellence, civic responsibility, and the personal growth of each member of our community.*

### ***We Know:***

Students enter Pollard Middle School at a critical phase of their development. They experience rapid physiological and emotional changes, an emerging sense of self, and an increased need for self-assertion. Cognitively, middle school students move from concrete toward abstract thinking. Middle school students strive for self-acceptance and a sense of belonging which shapes their behavior and perceptions. Healthy connections with adults and peers are crucial. Adult recognition reinforces students' sense of worth and their ability to balance extreme and competing developmental needs.

### ***We Believe:***

- All students can learn, and it happens at varying rates through multiple learning styles.
- Active learning requires taking risks, and mistakes are valuable for learning.
- Learning through a broad-based curriculum and exposure to different perspectives is integral to educating the whole child.
- Learners should feel safe, cared for, and valued.
- Learning requires a partnership between school, home, and the community.

### ***We Work To Provide:***

- A student-centered curriculum that is experiential, interdisciplinary, and exploratory.
- A staff that plays multiple roles in fostering student growth as they share knowledge, serve as role models, and respond to each individual's needs.
- A middle school environment that stresses civic and global awareness and each student's role as a member of a family, a community, and society at large.

### ***We Strive To Develop:***

- Creative and critical thinkers.
- Confident and open-minded risk-takers.
- Responsible and thoughtful decision-makers.
- Articulate and reflective communicators.
- Collaborative and socially conscious contributors to the community.

### ***The Improvement Process:***

Pollard Middle School is committed to an improvement process that addresses both the short and long-term needs of all students in their middle school years. Our *School Improvement Plan*, which is aligned with the *Needham Public Schools' District Goals*, establishes requisite strategies and actions that manifest themselves through our work and priority areas to support student achievement. We believe that it is necessary for staff, parents, students, and community to be involved and to work together in this process.

## ***Pollard Core Values***

***All members of the Pollard community will:***

- be curious, confident, and independent learners
- act with compassion, integrity, and inclusivity
- strive for personal growth

District Goal 1: **Advance Learning for All Students.** To refine and continue to put into practice a system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that enables each student to be engaged in challenging, creative, and rigorous learning experiences that are grounded in clearly defined standards.

District Goal 2: **Develop the Social, Emotional, Wellness & Citizenship Skills.** To ensure students develop the knowledge and skills that empower healthy, resilient, and culturally proficient global citizens who commit to act with integrity, respect, and compassion.

District Goal 3: **Ensure Infrastructure Supports District Values and Learning Goals.** To build and implement a sustainable plan for financial, building, technological, and human resources that enables our learning goals and is responsive to student and school needs.

<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Strategies Employed</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	<b>Impact on Students</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
District Goal 1: <b>Advance Learning for All Students.</b>	To refine and continue to put into practice a system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that enables each student to be engaged in challenging, creative, and rigorous learning experiences that are grounded in clearly defined standards.			

<p>1.1 Use common assessments to evaluate current effectiveness of current instructional strategies and writing skills.</p>	<p>Use collaboration time to share best practices and successes; Develop benchmarks; Collect and analyze data from assessments.</p>	<p>Curriculum Coordinators</p>	<p>Students will be held to high expectations across all curricular areas.</p>	<p>December 2018</p>
<p>1.2 Integrate enhanced literacy understanding and practices across all curricular areas.</p>	<p>Maximize literacy coach and coordinator to provide PD classroom instruction that reflects disciplinary literacy skill development.</p>	<p>Principal and Literacy Coordinator</p>	<p>Students will improve disciplinary literacy skills in all content areas (not just ELA).</p>	<p>June 2018</p>
<p>1.3 Enhance special education and regular education collaboration/ co-teaching.</p>	<p>Explore co-teaching model; Use collaborative time to share best practice.</p>	<p>Principal and Special Education Coordinator</p>	<p>Students' learning community will be inclusive and differentiated to support diverse learners.</p>	<p>June 2018</p>
<p>1.4 Improve and enhance differentiation in all course offerings.</p>	<p>Invest in differentiated texts, tiered instruction, and personalized assessments; Make learning goals explicit; Use iPad to differentiate.</p>	<p>PATM</p>	<p>Students will benefit from personalized/ individualized instruction.</p>	<p>June 2018</p>
<p>1.5 Evaluate effectiveness of the current Language Based Classroom (LBC).</p>	<p>Assess current program and determine needs and best practices.</p>	<p>Principal and Special Education Coordinator</p>	<p>Students will be better able to access curriculum and receive appropriate supports to meet their needs.</p>	<p>June 2018</p>
<p>1.6 Implement student feedback for teachers, and staff feedback for administrators.</p>	<p>Develop annual survey that will be administered to students (teachers) and staff (administrators). Administer the survey and reflect on results; develop future goals.</p>	<p>Principal and PATM</p>	<p>Students and staff will be able to provide feedback and reflect on their growth and learning. They will use the data to determine future goals and areas of focus.</p>	<p>June 2018</p>

<p><b>District Goal 2: Develop the Social, Emotional, Wellness &amp; Citizenship Skills.</b></p>	<p>To ensure students develop the knowledge and skills that empower healthy, resilient, and culturally proficient global citizens who commit to act with integrity, respect, and compassion.</p>			
<p><b>2.1 Cultural Proficiency: actively create and maintain an environment in which students' diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths and challenges are respected.</b></p>	<p>Invest in PD/ in-house workshops; Send teachers to IDEAS; Form affinity groups; Continue Hot Chocolate/ Hot Topics; Investigate curricular choices, hiring practices, instructional practices, communication; Include cultural proficiency focus in various curricular and advisory instruction; Evaluate and adjust the Power and Privilege units in Grades 7 &amp; 8.</p>	<p>PATM</p>	<p>Cultural proficiency creates a community of acceptance and safety for all students.</p>	<p>June 2018</p>
<p><b>2.2 Provide equitable and diverse opportunities for students beyond the school day.</b></p>	<p>DC trip for all students; PR trip expansion; Global partnerships- shared classrooms (China); CSL and experiential experiences.</p>	<p>Principal and Assistant Principals</p>	<p>Explore full class trip; Create equal access for students (financial and individual needs); Build capacity for all students.</p>	<p>DC trip: Fall 2017 June 2018</p>
<p><b>2.3 Develop digital citizenship skills and social media identity.</b></p>	<p>Focused instruction in advisories and/or health classes, and in all curricular areas incorporating technology.</p>	<p>Curriculum Coordinators and Advisory Team.</p>	<p>Students will be empowered and able to use technology responsibly.</p>	<p>June 2018</p>
<p><b>2.4 Evaluate and refine the transition process for students. (6-7; 8-9)</b></p>	<p>Create process for feedback from all; Make appropriate adjustments from feedback.</p>	<p>Assistant Principals</p>	<p>Students' anxiety or concerns will be reduced and addressed regarding transitions.</p>	<p>December 2017</p>

<p><b>2.5 Implement SEL competencies and benchmarks in all areas (from DESE's CASEL 2017).</b></p>	<p>Communicate the 5 competencies and identify opportunities for students to demonstrate and practice these skills.</p>	<p>Principal/ PATM</p>	<p>Students will be able to self assess and understand the 5 SEL competencies.</p>	<p>June 2018</p>
<p><b>District Goal 3: Ensure Infrastructure Supports District Values and Learning Goals.</b></p>	<p>To build and implement a sustainable plan for financial, building, technological, and human resources that enables our learning goals and is responsive to student and school needs.</p>			
<p><b>3.1 Increase and enhance communication efforts.</b></p>	<p>Update websites; Use social media, explore use of electronic portfolios.</p>	<p>Principal and Main Office</p>	<p>Create transparency and enhance school-home communication.</p>	<p>December 2017</p>
<p><b>3.2 Explore new ways/ models of expanding family involvement.</b></p>	<p>Student-led portfolio conferences; Internships; Guest speakers; Cluster-based conferences.</p>	<p>Principal and Assistant Principals</p>	<p>Increase family-school partnership.</p>	<p>June 2018</p>
<p><b>3.3 Review and modify the current technology offerings to enhance and make effective use of the 1:1 program.</b></p>	<p>Incorporate and create electives that reflect innovative and useful apps, programs, etc. (social media, coding, gaming...)</p>	<p>Principal and Director of Media and Technology</p>	<p>Students will be provided relevant opportunities to develop technology skills to enhance their learning.</p>	<p>June 2018</p>

## **A Glossary for Pollard Middle School Families and Community Members**

### **Translating Educational Jargon**

We use many terms and acronyms in school on a daily basis that may be unfamiliar to people outside the field of education. We hope that this guide provides you with a greater understanding of what these terms mean and how they apply at Pollard Middle School.

#### **1:1 Program:**

All middle school students are provided an iPad at Pollard. A 1:1 (one student-one device) program allows for differentiation and personalization in their academic program.

#### **Advisory:**

A daily period designed to connect students to students; a small group of 12-14 students to an adult; and an opportunity to enhance SEL competencies. It is also a time to provide a home base for students where they feel safe, supported, and connected to/by staff and peers.

#### **ALICE:** Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate

A new process and procedure to respond to an armed intruder in our schools.

#### **Common Core Standards:**

The Common Core Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students in Massachusetts are expected to learn, so teachers and parents can instruct and guide them appropriately. The standards are designed to be relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.

#### **CPR:** Coordinated Program Review

The CPR focuses on Civil Rights, English Language Education, and Special Education programs at each school, which is conducted by the State.

#### **CSL:** Community Service Learning

A program for Grade 7 and Grade 8 students to help them become more responsible citizens of the school and the community. Students are involved in hands-on learning and service projects. Students in Grade 8 will perform a minimum of six hours of service and will earn a grade for this work that will appear as a separate item on their report cards.

#### **Launching Scholars:**

A program created to narrow the opportunity gap by increasing the participation of marginalized students, in advanced math classes from grade 7 thru grade 12.

#### **MCAS:** Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

State assessments that measure how well students and districts are doing in understanding and implementing, respectively, the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks/ Common Core Standards.

#### **METCO:** Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO, Inc.)

A state-funded, voluntary busing program, begun in 1966, that brings students from Boston to over 30 participating suburban communities. METCO enriches the diversity in participating school districts while offering an opportunity for students from Boston to attend suburban schools.

**NCE:** Needham Community Education

This office runs programs including Adult Education, SAT Preparation, Summer Explorations, and the Summer Skills and Thrills Program. Needham Community Education offers after-school enrichment classes and athletics at Pollard Middle School. High Rock students are also able to take some of these classes that are held at Pollard along with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

**OSOB:** One School... One Book

All Pollard students and staff read the same text over the summer and engage in multiple lessons/ activities in order to build community and a common reading experience. Each year a different book is selected that is focused on developing the social/emotional skills of our students.

**PARCC:** The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

The new Massachusetts state standardized assessments that measure student competency against Massachusetts Common Core standards.

**PTC:** Parent Teacher Council

The parent-run organization that supports school activities and provides opportunities for community gatherings, home/school communication, and much more.

**PATM:** Pollard Administrative Team

Principal, Assistant Principals, curriculum coordinators in ELA, Literacy, Science, Math, Social Studies, and Special Education.

**SALSA:** Students Advocating Life without Substance Abuse

A presentation and leadership skills program for high school students, which promotes healthy, drug-free lifestyle choices while encouraging students to excel in school.

**SEPAC:** Special Education Parent Advisory Council

A self-governed organization comprised of Needham parents and caregivers of children with special needs. The SEPAC provides a forum for parents and caregivers to share information and promote understanding, respect for, and support for all children with special needs in the community.

**SEL:** Social and Emotional Learning

Needham is committed to making social and emotional learning an essential part of education. SEL is based on the pioneering work done at CASEL, a not-for-profit that works to advance the science and evidence-based practice of social and emotional learning (<http://www.casel.org>). Through SEL, we are working to ensure that children feel safe and supported in order to be able to learn most effectively.

**SIP:** School Improvement Plan

The report produced by the Pollard School Council. It includes goals for the school as well as indications of progress toward meeting the goals.

**SST:** Student Support Team

Faculty group members come together on a regular basis to support their colleagues in the responsibility of meeting the diverse needs of their students. This forum provides an opportunity to share expertise and make decisions about how best to meet the needs of individual learners.

**STA-Day:** Students Take Action: A Day of Sensitivity, Tolerance, and Awareness

This day is focused on human and animal rights and social justice themes. The goal of the “conference” is to educate and increase students’ awareness and sensitivity to a range of social issues that impact people’s lives. Subject matter covered relates to content that is taught in a number of curriculum areas across the grades. Students are asked to reflect on and write about their experiences on this day and to make a long-term commitment to making a difference in their school and community.