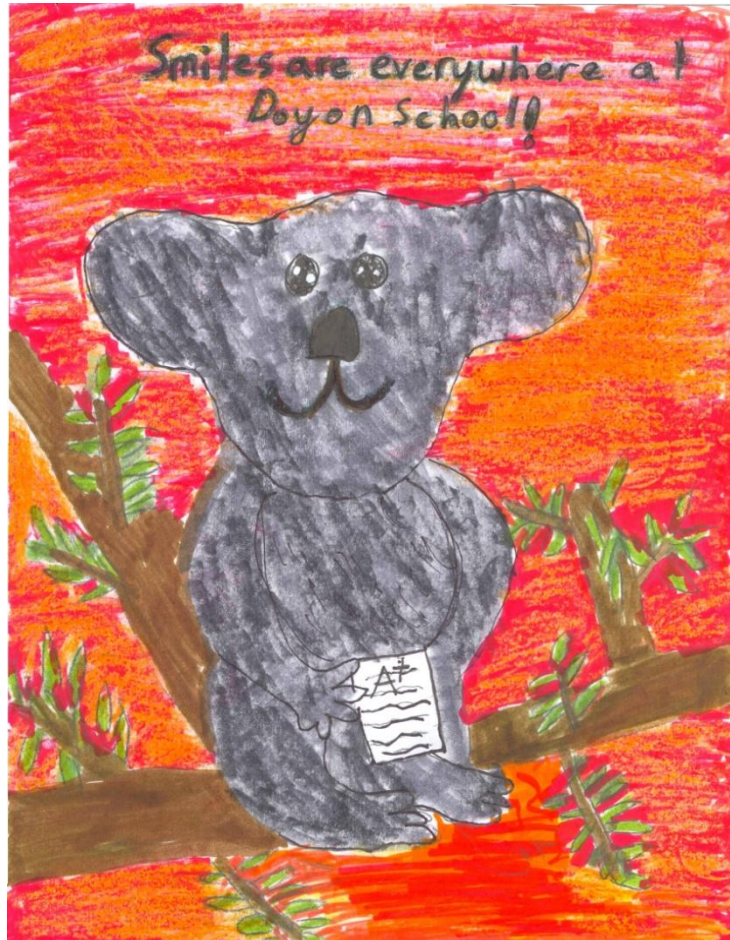


**Paul F. Doyon Memorial School
School Improvement Plan 2009-2010**



Doyon School Council Members

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Preparing for Life through Learning

Reflections

This document is a) an interim reflective *look back* at Doyon's progress to date toward the goals of a two-year School Improvement Plan spanning the years 2007-2009 and b) a visioning *look ahead* at priority goals, objectives and possible action steps related to a new School Improvement Plan for the school year 2009-2010.

There are two main sections in the attached School Improvement Plan: one focuses on Character Development and School Climate and Culture, while the second focuses on Academics. Each section begins with a summary of the previous years' goals, followed by a report highlighting a sampling of the actual activities and accomplishments, and ending with projected goals and objectives for 2009-2010.

The goal projections set out in this plan for 2009-2010, are *one-year* goals, in recognition of the transfer of leadership to a new Doyon School Principal, Mr. Dave Archambault, as of July 1, 2009. In view of this change, we have also included a separate "transition" goal.

Also included in this document is a current "status check" on other "Essential Priorities," and a copy of the implementation diagram summarizing our intended path for the 2009-2010 journey to come.

It is with pride that we report the significant progress in each of the goal areas of the 2007-2009 plan, and it is with energized anticipation that we look forward to moving forward to address the emerging challenges of new goal areas, which will be the focus of our endeavors during the 2009-2010 school year.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Doyon School Council,

Kenneth B. Cooper, Ph.D.
Principal, Doyon School

Character Goal

What follows is a summary of the character-related goals, objectives, and possible actions and activities identified as priorities for the 2007-2009 school years. This is followed by a reflective “Status Check,” noting progress made toward these goals during the two years of the plan.

I. Main Goal: To promote strong *Character* and build a positive school culture enlisting both students and parents as partners in the process.

The primary objectives of the Character initiative are as follows:

- a. To address priority concerns regarding student safety, protection from bullying and harassment, and promoting an orderly school environment
- b. To continue to support the Student Leadership Team
- c. To continue promoting the pedagogy of the Responsive Classroom
- d. To develop and implement activities and programs that build, promote and celebrate the joys of being a member of a vibrant learning community

Possible Actions and Activities:

- a. S.T.O.P program rejuvenated
- b. New SLT/Early Act mentors
- c. Responsive Classroom training for new faculty
- d. Special programs and assemblies to discourage teasing and bullying and to promote appropriate and respectful behaviors and positive character themes
- e. Safety programs including fire safety and Internet safety, possible use of “Second Step,” and a review of safety protocols including “Safe in Place” and our role as mandated reporters
- f. Assessment: informal and/or survey feedback

II. Status Check and Reflection: Character Goal

Student Safety and Orderly School Environment & Responsive Classroom

Many character-focused programs were in place during the two school years of this plan. To ensure student safety and promote an orderly school environment, we set the tone for the school years with opening day school assemblies emphasizing appropriate and respectful behaviors for all grades. Prior to the first day of the 2007-2008 school year, the S.T.O.P. (Stop, Think, Options, Proceed) song was distributed via CD to all classrooms and each classroom received a S.T.O.P. poster. The S.T.O.P. strategy was reviewed during the opening day assembly each year. A Doyon tradition continued each Monday morning, with Dr. Cooper sharing weekly “Good Citizenship” and “Positive Character” traits topics with students. Each topic was followed by a related quote from one of our cultural “heroes and heroines” whose portrait hangs in our cafeteria.

As the year progressed, we continued several student programs that have helped teach our students personal safety skills. After several years of whole school assembly style fire safety programs, for the two year period covered by this plan the Ipswich Fire Department presented classroom based, grade level sequential lessons in Fire Safety led by Ipswich Firefighter Keith Carson. The program allowed Firefighter Carson to target fire safety to each grade level. It should be noted that Firefighter Carlson was selected as “First Responder Community Service Hero” for Northeast Massachusetts by the American Red Cross in February 2009. Judging by his work at Doyon alone, we certainly agree that he deserved this award and congratulate him on receiving it. The DARE program addressed substance awareness, self-esteem and impulse control at Grade 4, while continuing with a safety-oriented “stranger awareness” program in Kindergarten. Both programs were presented by Ipswich Police Officer, Don Cole. Our electrical safety program continued with Mr. Ray Gouley presenting classroom-based grade level sequential lessons in electrical safety. Finally, our second and third Safe in Place lockdown drills took place on 1/28/08 and 11/10/08. These drills continue to go very smoothly without incident or anxiety. We are becoming more and more aware of the need to teach students and parents about Internet safety. Accordingly, for the past two school years the Netsmarts Internet safety program was presented by the District Attorney’s office to Grades 4 and 5 and to parents during a separate evening presentation.

During the school year 2007-2008, our Bully Busters program continued with the “Anti-Bullying Social Awareness” program funded by Help for Abused Women and Children (H.A.W.C.). Last year the program was presented to Grades 1 and 4 using a two grade per year approach to reach all students at least once during their Doyon years. Although the program was in its third year at Doyon, this program was unavailable this year due to a lack of funding. The FRIES (Friends of Ipswich Elementary Schools) came to the rescue, providing a well received “Wizards and Knights” bullying prevention program by known character educator Leslie Smith.

Although funding for professional development and staff training has been scarce, we have been able to provide some training in the area of Character Development. A Mandated Reporter workshop regarding our responsibilities under the 51-A provision of the Child Welfare Act was presented in October of 2007 to a joint meeting of all Doyon

and Winthrop staff by trainers from the District Attorney's Office. In 2007 our faculty was able to receive professional development in this area when The Second Step Violence Prevention Curriculum, (developed by the "Committee for Children," a non-profit group based in Seattle Washington), was acquired for all grades through a health grant. Using scenarios presented via large photographs, lesson scripts, video and discussion, students learn how to understand their feelings, empathize with the feelings of others and develop strategies for handling a variety of challenging social situations that they routinely encounter in their school or home life. Over the timeframe of this two-year plan, faculty members at each grade level have piloted this highly praised program. Finally, our commitment to the practices of Responsive Classroom continued with all new classroom teachers attending the one-day Responsive Classroom training session. These training sessions were funded using Choice and budgeted funding. A bullying prevention workshop attended last year by Dr. Cooper and Mrs. Sullivan discussed harnessing the power of bystanders and recommended the "Second Step" and "Responsive Classroom" programs currently in use at Doyon.

A new "Talking about Touching" unit, developed by the Committee for Children (the same group that developed the Second Step Program), was introduced this year. It was taught by Mrs. Stephanie Sullivan, our School Counselor, to our Grade 2 students over a period of six weeks. The program was preceded by a preview evening for parents. The program was well received, and Mrs. Sullivan plans on teaching it next year at the Grade 2 level.

Student Leadership Team

Participation in the Student Leadership Team continues to be strong with Grade 4 and 5 students' participation ranging between 75% and 80%. This year the number of mentors rose to a total of 16, which is the highest number of mentors in the program historically. The program was entirely funded by FRIES for the duration of this plan.

SLT Mentors Maureen O'Connell and Elyssa Brand introduced a new SLT project this year: Doyon Buddies. With Doyon Buddies, an SLT student is paired with another student in the school who will become his/her special buddy. Usually the buddy is a child who would especially benefit from having a special SLT friend because he/she may have a difficult home situation, or trouble with the academic or social aspects of school. The SLT Buddy does a variety of activities with the student ranging from playing games to helping with academic work or reading with the student. We've seen buddies' faces light up when their SLT buddies arrive for their time together. The project has had a very successful first year.

The *Early Act* program within the Student Leadership Team involves approximately 60 students in community service projects. This is in addition to their regular SLT activities. Continuing the model used for the past four years, Rotarians attend Early Act meetings at Doyon, and a representative group of Doyon *Early Act* students attend monthly Rotary meetings to share their projects with the Rotarians. This year our partnership with the Rotary became even stronger as we were invited to represent the Northeast District at two District-wide Rotary events. The first event, at the Sheraton Ferncroft in Danvers, was attended by approximately 40 5th-Grade Early Act Students in September 2008. Our students were flag bearers for the opening ceremony. After the ceremony, the students were available at the Doyon Early Act table for questions. Our students were able to describe some of their accomplishments to Rotarians from other towns who were thinking of starting an Early Act Program. They were also able to visit other exhibitors' tables and learn about Rotary youth programs in high school as well as their Foreign Exchange Program. This spring 10 Early Act students were able to represent the Doyon Early Act Program at the Rotary Northeast District Conference at the Hawthorne Hotel in Salem. Our students proudly presented a PowerPoint presentation describing our program and our accomplishments. Rotarians were impressed at the diversity of our projects, the successful fundraising efforts (approximately \$9,000 over 4 ½ years) and the enthusiasm of our group. The Doyon and Winthrop Early Act Programs are the largest and strongest in the District, serving as a model for others. Some of the service projects completed by the *Early Act* students over the past two years include the following:

Local Community Service Projects:

2007-2008: In the fall there was a food and supply drive for the Ipswich Humane Society. The students also collected over 400 Beanie Babies that were given to local ambulances and police officers to comfort children in difficult situations.

On Saturday, May 17, 2008, the Early Act students ran the 3rd Annual "Pit Stop." The Pit Stop is a car wash, bake sale event "and so much more"! For the second year in a row, the Rotary donated and staffed a hot dog stand with all proceeds going to the charity chosen by the Early Act Students. The Early Act students also worked in partnership with the Boston Bruins and raffled off items donated by the team. Last year the Early Act students overwhelmingly agreed to have all Pit Stop proceeds benefit Jessica Doktor's Bright Happy Power Foundation. The foundation was created by Jessie's parents and is designed to improve the lives of children living with cancer. The proceeds from last year's 3rd Annual Pit Stop have allowed the Early Act Students to donate more than \$2,195 to Bright Happy Power.

2008-2009: The Early Act Team was approached to help support the revitalization of Bialek Park. The students voted to have a "Pennies for the Park" fundraiser where a collection box was placed in each classroom. They raised approximately \$700. Students also voted to have one-half of the proceeds from this year's Pit Stop Car Wash benefit "Pennies for the Park."

National Service Projects:

2007-2008: In March, Early Act students placed a “Pennies for Patients” collection box in each classroom. “Pennies for Patients” is a fundraising program that benefits the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society is dedicated to funding blood cancer research, education and patient services. Jessica Doktor, a Winthrop student who lost her battle with Leukemia last fall, was chosen as the “honored hero” of the fundraising event. SLT students visited each classroom explaining the Pennies for Patients fund raiser and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. During the planning of this project, Doyon and Winthrop Early Act students got together to share ideas and create posters about the event. As a result, Winthrop Early Act students decided to launch their own Pennies for Patients drive. At the end of the one-month fundraiser, Doyon students donated over \$1,900 to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Winthrop students donated an additional \$900+.

Global Service Projects:

2008-2009: The Doyon Early Act team continued in its efforts to support Bright Happy Power. Mrs. Doktor attended a meeting where she described another way Early Act could help. In Haiti and Guatemala, people must travel great distances to the nearest hospital. When they arrive, they are required to provide their own supplies including bed sheets, toiletries, and food. Bright Happy Power is creating hospital bags that will be sent to Haiti and Guatemala to assist people in this situation. Doyon Early Act students supported Bright Happy Power by collecting over 200 items for these hospital bags.

Early Act students are knowledgeable about the world and aware of areas of need. At the beginning of each year, students brainstorm project ideas and vote on the cause that will be supported by the team’s major fundraising event, The Pit Stop. As mentioned earlier, one-half of the proceeds from this year’s 4th Annual Pit Stop will be donated to Pennies for the Park. The other half will be donated to an organization brought to our attention by an Early Act student: Moving Mountains. Moving Mountains provides high school scholarships to young girls in China who would not otherwise be able to further their education. While the average annual family income is \$266, one year of high school costs \$300. We hope to raise enough money to pay for one girl’s entire high school education. We continue to be amazed by our Early Act’s students’ empathy for the needs of others in the world, their confidence that they can make a difference and their enthusiasm throughout each project. Many a Rotarian has commented that the adults can learn much from these children.

Building a Vibrant Learning Community

One of the ways we build and preserve our learning community is by maintaining open communication with our students' parents regarding the education of their children. This begins with our Kindergarten Welcome and Orientation sessions that occur during the first week of school. Additionally, during the first months of the year each teacher invites parents to Grade Level Curriculum evenings to ensure they have a good understanding of the curriculum so they can have realistic but high expectations for their children. In September we also have a "New Families" evening program to introduce new families to Doyon's staff as well as our school culture.

Throughout the year various grade levels host events that encourage parent involvement in our learning community. Grade 3 has the Endangered Species Expo in March, Grade 4 has the States' Fair in June and the Grade 5 has the "Invention Convention" in March. Grades 1 through 5 each has at least one musical program for parents during the school year with instrumental components beginning with recorders in Grade 3. Doyon Family Dance Night, a relatively new Doyon tradition, brings families to the school for an evening of contra and square dancing with live music by Plum Crazy (an up and coming band whose talented members include Dr. Cooper, Paul Bedard, the music teacher Mrs. Healy and her husband). The Art Show in the spring is very popular and families fill the school to view the artwork that creates a gallery throughout the school. In May, we hold a "Volunteer Tea" that provides faculty with the opportunity to show their appreciation for everything parents do to directly support the learning that goes on in the classroom. Looking ahead to the following school year, we hold Kindergarten Information Night in the spring to welcome the families of those entering Kindergarten in the fall to the Doyon family. In June, we smile as the preschoolers graduate and watch proudly as the Grade 5 students "move on." Several activities occur in June to help Grade 5 students transition to the middle school and celebrate their Doyon accomplishments.

Since "We're All in this Together," we show appreciation for those outside of the school who contribute to our learning community. FRIES provides students with many materials and programs to enhance their learning. The faculty attends the first FRIES meeting as a demonstration of support and appreciation for their service to the school. A new Doyon tradition was created last year in the fall when the FRIES held the first Doyon Ice Cream Social. Last February they sponsored Doyon Devours Books, a new annual fundraiser where students collected pledges for the hours they spent reading (or being read to). The Doyonathon, a longstanding Doyon fundraising tradition, is also sponsored by the FRIES each May. Students have a great time running laps around the field behind Doyon to help their school. In April 2008 the Doyon/Winthrop joint FRIES fundraiser was held in the form of a comedy night/auction. This January, the FRIES also organized a sold-out Chinese New Year Celebration that was held at the Performing Arts Center. The aim was to promote interaction with and understanding of Chinese culture. The event featured the Chinese Folk Art Workshop whose performance included traditional folk arts like Dragon Dance, Lion Dance, Taiwanese drums, Chinese yoyo and folk dance. Attendees also had the great opportunity to meet with the performers to try and learn some of the dances or to attempt the yo-yo. Proceeds from ticket sales went towards various programs and activities at Doyon. Many of the programs described

within this reflection were funded by FRIES (or other outside organizations) and their efforts are greatly appreciated during these difficult financial times.

Our sense of community is never more evident than during our Grandfriend Lunches that occur in November for all grades. We welcome the Grandfriends to our school and they are proud to visit us. Our connection to the Ipswich community is confirmed each December and Valentine's Day, when every student in the school creates cards or writes letters to Ipswich senior citizens. Events that gather our students and staff, such as the holiday all-school sing-a-long, help reinforce our feeling of community. Staff social gatherings including retirement recognition, holiday party, and baby/wedding showers build personal relationships among the staff and enhance our working relationships.

Over the past two years several programs helped us to strengthen our learning community. Central Office funding enabled us to provide a *Parenting Wisely* program for Doyon and Winthrop parents. The program was offered to parents over five evenings. The goal of the program is to help parents help their children handle emotions, become effective problem solvers, build independence, and build positive relationships in their family. The "Good Grief" program, funded by the FRIES, was offered in April of 2008 to help parents help their children cope when someone close to them has died. Last year Joe Salah returned to Doyon to present an interesting program on Brain research to faculty and, separately, to parents.

The SLT Spirit Team also had special theme days that provided opportunities to show school spirit: "Pajama Day," "Ipswich Tiger Day," "Favorite Sports Team Day," "Freaky Friday," "Patriots Day" and "Red Sox Day" to name a few. Our school community is strong and opportunities to demonstrate its strength are always successful.

Faculty Survey

A faculty survey was conducted in the spring of 2008. A goal of the survey was to help us identify areas and topics for future School Improvement Plans. The results of the faculty survey were generally very positive. For example, 90% or more of the faculty felt that:

- They were encouraged to "discover and try new ideas."
- They were able to participate in decisions about teaching and learning.
- "We work together well, have good teamwork and goal setting."
- There was "a clear sense of what we are about."
- Faculty had a "positive attitude of interest and effort for students."
- They had "confidence" in our grade-to-grade academic plan.

There were also three areas where a substantial minority of staff felt that there was room for improvement:

- There is insufficient time for planning and preparation.
- There is a need for more cross grade planning time.
- We have insufficient support for students who were working behind grade level.

Student Survey

In 2009 a student survey was conducted where we sampled the opinions of 50 students drawn randomly from our Grades 3 through 5 (the number of students was evenly distributed across these grades). Many aspects of the results were very positive and encouraging where over 90% of the students felt the following:

- They “paused and thought about consequences” before acting.
- They set high standards for themselves.
- They kept trying to succeed if they failed at times.
- They did their “best” at their schoolwork.
- Students like this school.
- They felt “safe” at school.
- Adults in our school were supportive and helpful.
- In this school “there were places to go for help and advice.”
- They were confident about going on to the next “level” of their education.
- They felt that there were clear disciplinary rules and consequences at Doyon.
- The Ipswich Schools are providing students with a good education.

There were some areas of concern as well. These areas primarily center on student-to-student interactions and relationships as well as students’ willingness to communicate their feelings to adults. These results point to the need on our part for more focused work to develop empathy and mutual respect among and between students. For example, a significant percentage of students felt the following:

- They often did not talk to others about how they feel.
- They were not “respected” by other students.
- Other students would not speak up and stop bullying.
- Bullying is a problem in our school that needs to be addressed.

Further research has helped us determine that students define “bullying” as gossiping, teasing or being excluded from a group. Students told us that bullying is most common at recess and on the bus. This student feedback has helped us determine that bullying prevention should be the main focus of our Character Goal for the coming school year. We clearly need to address this issue with a broad program of intervention.

III. Character Goal: Where do we go from here?

School Climate and Culture

- Bullying Prevention:
 - Although we have already started to dig into this issue, we need to dig deeper to completely define the problem. Preliminary research and further discussions with students indicates that by “bullying,” students are primarily referring to
 - Teasing, name calling and being made fun of,
 - Being excluded from groups or from playground games at recess
 - Being the target of gossiping and rumors
 - Research and pilot programs that help to raise awareness of and help to build *empathy*.
 - Make sure expectations for behavior are clear and supervision is adequate (especially in areas where students have told us that bullying is most prevalent).
 - Work with staff, lunchroom and playground supervisors as well as bus company officials and drivers to ensure appropriate and consistent adult intervention is provided as warranted.
 - Toward this end, we must clarify and define behavioral expectations, then communicate these expectations to students while taking student complaints seriously, and following-through on interventions as needed.
 - Consider organizing games at recess.
 - Consider “bus monitors” and/or parent volunteers during recess.
 - We must determine a way to help involve and empower the peer “bystanders” as a positive force for discouraging all forms of teasing or bullying and/or reporting it. This is related to the need to encourage students to talk to us whether it is the victim, the bystander or the “bully.”
 - We must alert parents to the issue perhaps via Curriculum Nights or a memo at the beginning of the year so they understand that this will be a main focus area for us. Maintain ongoing communication and build partnerships with parents as to our efforts and progress, involving them in the process whenever possible.
 - We should continue to provide programs and assemblies to focus on empathy and anti-bullying strategies.
 - Explore the possibility of acquiring the anti-bullying program for Grades 3-5 which has been developed recently by the Committee for Children: “Steps to Respect.”
 - Contact H.A.W.K. to determine if funding for their anti-bullying programs has been restored.
 - Continue to reinforce S.T.O.P. (Stop, Think, Options, Proceed) program language.

Character Development

- The Student Leadership Team and Early Act models are so successful, providing more students with opportunities to do more in terms of service. We will seek funding that will allow us to maintain these successful programs. We will continue our partnership with the Rotary, strengthening our relationship each year. We look forward to the 5th Annual Pit Stop next spring.
- Second Step:
 - We will encourage classroom faculty to fully utilize the Second Step program (including role playing components) at all grade levels to build empathy and encourage mutual respect among students. At a recent faculty meeting, 12 faculty members spoke out in strong support of the spiraling curriculum in this program.
 - Provide Second Step training sessions to increase staff's level of comfort with the program.
- Art Class integration: Students could study faces to help develop interpersonal sensitivity and awareness of others' emotions.
- Remember that "It begins with us." We, as a staff, should always model appropriate interpersonal behaviors.
- We will continue to send new staff to introductory training on the Responsive Classroom methods. Other staff members who may want or need a refresher could be sent as well.
- Continue weekly "Good Character" topics message from the principal.

Safety

- We will continue to provide successful safety programs such as:
 - The Ipswich Fire Department's classroom-based grade-level fire safety instructional program
 - The DARE Program
 - The Netsmartz Internet safety program
 - Talking about Touching
- We will continue to refine our safety plan, emergency response procedures and building security protocols. We will practice the "Safe in Place" lockdown via drill at least once during the year with review for all staff prior to the activity.

Academic Goal

What follows is a summary of the academic-related goals, objectives, and possible actions and activities identified as priorities for the 2007-2009 school years. This is followed by a) a reflective “Status Check” noting progress to date and b) a “Where do we go from here” section listing upcoming activities and ongoing needs.

I. Main Goal: To develop, implement, and assess a high quality curriculum that is consistent across the grades and aligned with the State Frameworks, with a special focus on literacy, both reading and writing.

The primary objectives of the *Academic* initiative are as follows:

- a. To support efforts of the faculty as they move to implement year-long balanced literacy maps, revise and edit unit trajectories, and gradually launch Writers Workshop activities in year two
- b. To encourage discussion, increased consistency, and clarification regarding use of various language arts programs and assessments
- c. To facilitate and support academic activities in all subjects that reflects joyous teaching and joyful learning

Possible Actions and Activities

- a. Allow grade level, specialists, and special education teams opportunities to meet during faculty and curriculum meetings for communication, coordination and curriculum refinement and development, with possible connections between grades and/or schools
- b. Professional Development opportunities in all major subject areas with ongoing focus on literacy and attention to development of common approaches of teaching “vocabulary” and writing instruction including summer professional development days if possible
- c. Faculty meeting time devoted to discussions regarding roles and interrelationships between our key literacy instructional programs and how best to use our literacy-related assessment tools
- d. Acquisition of additional literacy instructional resources and sharing of resources through the book room
- e. Opportunities for faculty to share at staff meetings
- f. Possible other areas of focus and activity: Writing Committee, Trimester Study Group, NAEYC Accreditation
- g. Assessment: Summary of test results, writing samples, feedback from faculty, input from parents

II: Reflection: Academic Goal

Balanced Literacy: Reading Comprehension Trajectories **Time to MEET**

Upon successful completion of our three-year work with Tufts in the area of Balanced Literacy, Doyon has begun the task of implementing and revising reading comprehension trajectories in all classrooms. Each grade has developed a year-long plan and scope and sequence for reading comprehension instruction based on genre and/or comprehension strategy. During the 2007-2008 school year, we began actual implementation of these trajectories and in order to implement successfully, teams needed time built into the school year to meet and discuss their plans. Therefore, eight 2007-2008 faculty meetings were set aside for grade level and specialist teams to meet. A main focus during these grade level meetings was communication and coordination associated with the first year of grade level year-long reading comprehension plan implementation. In addition, one regular faculty meeting was devoted to teams meeting with grade level colleagues both “above and below” them to share year-long plans and unit focus areas for the purposes of coordination and consistency. This provided faculty with the valuable opportunity to see the comprehension skills and foundations built in the year before their grade level as well as the goals and future accomplishments hoped for in the year following their grade.

During the 2008-2009 school year, four faculty meetings were put aside for grade level teams to meet and collaborate regarding the second full year of implementation of their “Year Long Plans.” Judging from their feedback from staff in their Carnegie Goal self-assessments, grades are generally comfortable in use of their plans, have “tweaked” some aspects of the plans, have added more mentor-texts and are beginning to align writing instruction with reading. Upper grade faculty report that they are able to move more quickly in to the more sophisticated applications of the reading comprehension strategies now that the students coming to them have had primary grade comprehension instruction.

Professional Development

Given the lack of budget funding, this was a difficult area for much productivity. We were, however, able to fund 60 summer professional development days from Choice income during the 2007-2008 school year. These days were used by grade level teams, faculty, and staff to meet and put final touches on their year-long literacy plans. Additionally, teams were given time to develop other curriculum resources and instructional plans. In 2007 a group of teachers also met to begin piloting the “Study Island” math program designed to support in-class learning and MCAS preparation. Also in 2007 several teachers were able to attend a Rebecca Sitton spelling workshop and others plan to attend next year if funds permit. The Rebecca Sitton program is now being implemented at all grade levels and spirals spelling concepts as the years progress. Several faculty also attended a series of English Language Learners workshops. Seven faculty, representing all grades (1-5) as well as special education, attended the National Science Teachers Association conference which was held in Boston. This was funded by a grant.

During the summer of 2008, we funded more than 50 days of professional development with staff at virtually every grade level and most departments taking advantage of the quality time to meet, collaborate and plan. During the fall of 2008 semester, we also funded a number of outside workshops including (but not limited to the following): six staff attended a conference on building professional learning communities. Teachers who attended felt that this conference was outstanding. Their feelings were reinforced when it came to teachers needing time to collaborate and support each other. They also discussed looking at student outcomes and evaluating instruction by how well students learned the material.

Another workshop attended by 11 staff members was a “Sitton Spelling Seminar” workshop. Teachers who attended this workshop felt that it offered valuable information on how to implement this program and how it helps people learn to spell. Teachers also felt that they gained valuable knowledge about what it takes to be a good speller and how visual learning is so essential.

We also received funds from our Special Needs Grants and Golf money to make other trainings and workshops possible. Three staff members attended a workshop on Asperger’s Syndrome and Autism. Eleven staff members were recertified in CPI (Crisis Prevention Intervention) training. Four staff members attended a Singapore Math workshop.

Funds from a variety of sources made it possible for us to provide substitutes for staff to participate in a variety of other important professional trainings and activities. Eight staff members attended a training on using Kurzweil technology. Three staff members attended meetings of the Professional Development Committee. Six staff members attended MCAS analysis sessions, and three staff members attended MCAS Alternate training.

Nine staff members attended our SAC-related full day science focus, and four staff attended several meetings to prepare for NAEYC accreditation. Five staff members who attended multiple sessions of the Trimester Committee, and a number of staff participated in the Principal Search process including on-site visits to the districts of the finalists. There was an APW in March devoted to joint Doyon/Winthrop grade level meetings around progress in writing instruction. Also, approximately 10 staff members attended Study Island training during a TPW.

Assessment

In the area of literacy, Doyon currently uses many different forms of assessment. Across the grades, teachers use the Developmental Reading Assessment, the DIBELS (an assessment of reading fluency), the QRI, and the GRADE Assessment, which is the only norm-referenced, standardized assessment implemented at all grade levels in the fall and spring of each school year. Research on the GRADE assessment shows that information gleaned from test results is valuable in modifying instruction, addressing the needs of each individual student, and provides non-subjective data in the area of reading and comprehension. A survey of staff regarding the aforementioned literacy assessments was distributed in March. Faculty were given the opportunity to share thoughts and feedback about each form of assessment. Results of the survey provided an opportunity for discussions at several faculty meetings that has so far resulted in several changes which the staff felt would strengthen and bring greater validity to our literacy assessments overall. A set of formal recommendations were agreed upon by the faculty regarding use

specifically of the GRADE assessment. In the area of literacy, Doyon has used many different forms of assessment. Across the grades, teachers used the Developmental Reading Assessment, the DIBELS (an assessment of reading fluency), the QRI, and the GRADE Assessment, which is the only norm-referenced, standardized assessment implemented at all grade levels in the fall and spring of each school year. Research on the GRADE assessment shows that information gleaned from test results is valuable in modifying instruction, addressing the needs of each individual student, and provides non-subjective data in the area of reading and comprehension.

An Assessment Committee was formed to determine which assessments would give the most consistent, simple, and clear means of recording cumulative data concerning a student's reading profile. The committee proposed a schedule of consistent literacy assessments to be administered by classroom teachers in each grade from Kindergarten through Grade 5. Each student's scores and progress will be tracked on their Cumulative Literacy Record. This information will allow teachers:

- To gather information to determine students who are at risk for reading difficulties.
- To provide information to create a common language concerning reading performance for formative and standardized purposes.
- To gather data to document progress or lack of progress in assessing grade level benchmarks, answering the questions as to whether the child is reading at grade level and/or making effective progress.
- To aid in objective grading for report cards and referrals
- To provide common information concerning a child's reading profile throughout his/her elementary years and to aid his/her middle school transition.

The Doyon School Book Room

The Book Room is in its fourth year of existence, and many teachers continue to see it as a valuable resource when implementing their year-long reading comprehension trajectories. It houses multiple copy sets of trade books and valuable literature. These sets are leveled according to Fountas and Pinnell from A-Z, enabling teachers to access text that is right at a student's reading level.

Many new primary grade level texts were added to the collection in the 2008-2009 school year. In addition, the involvement of parent volunteers managing the check-out and return processes ensured that texts were returned and made reliably available in reading level order. This volunteer effort has contributed to greater use of the book room as texts and just-right levels can be located easily.

The Writing Committee

The Writing Committee is comprised of teachers and special educators from every grade level. This committee has met on numerous occasions with objectives regarding future writing endeavors. They discussed the various writing approaches and programs and began by polling the staff with a series of specific questions regarding their vision and needs within writing. Using the faculty responses, they formulated an idea to create vertical study groups based on authors that the entire committee felt were knowledgeable and relevant to the school's ideas, approaches, and needs. The following

four authors were selected by the Writing Committee as our “mentor authors”: Lucy Calkins, Regie Routman, Ralph Fletcher, and Katie Wood Ray. At the June 2008 faculty meeting, each of the aforementioned “mentor authors” was presented, with a focus on the theory and practice outlined in each text. Faculty members were asked to meet with their team members (although teams were not required to all select the same text) to choose an author study group that best fit their specific needs and interests.

This 2008-2009 school year teachers worked in writing groups to implement strategies of the mentor authors in our classrooms. They met in self-selected mixed grade groups to study and utilize the works of three key professionals in the field of writing instruction, Lucy Calkins, Ralph Fletcher and Katie Wood-Ray. There were four curriculum Wednesdays set aside for the study groups during the schools year. The teachers felt it was important to conduct and meet in study groups to reduce the isolation of teaching and put themselves in regular communication with a group of colleagues. They were able to come together to collaborate on objectives, share activities, concerns and reflect together on their teaching. They re-connected to the joys of teaching and to tangibly provide students with opportunities to enhance their joy of learning.

In May, each group reported on their experience in reading and applying their mentor texts into their classroom. The group that presented on Katie Wood Ray felt that it provided a good structure for students within writer’s workshop, offered text examples to use, and allowed students to be creative and write about their interests. On the other hand, the group felt it was not deep enough to serve as a writing program by itself; it would be a good support text. The group that researched Ralph Fletcher found that it was a very easy to use and that the text that was adaptable for every level of learner. It facilitated snapshots of writing for students to see and gave a scope and sequence that is built into lessons. On the flipside, some of the text examples he gave were unfamiliar and the lessons recommended for third grade seemed a bit intense. Overall, the group found this to be a valuable recipe-like resource, but not a standalone writing curriculum.

Lastly, the group that researched Lucy Calkins broke up into two sections: primary and upper elementary. Both sections felt like this can be an overwhelming resource with an abundance of information. They felt the writing kit should be placed in all classrooms so that teachers can have it at their fingertips. It should be considered one of the primary resources when writing a scope and sequence for the writing curriculum.

Where to go from here? Teachers are now looking for consistency of writing instruction at each grade level, vertical coordination between grades K-5, and alignment with both the State Frameworks/writing rubrics/reading comprehension trajectories. One option to discuss as a faculty in the fall is the decision whether or not to pilot Lucy Calkins at each grade using a grade level study group model. Teachers would then supplement with supporting texts such as Ralph Fletcher and Katie Wood Ray. Another piece that teachers may be looking for is a set of outcomes for each grade level for where they would like to see students be with their writing.

Trimester Option

This committee was formed to begin exploration of this option to increase the substantive nature of reports to parents while adding more efficiency to school-home communication. It was comprised of faculty and administration from both elementary schools, who met on multiple occasions in the fall of 2008. During the fall semester, the committee studied the trimester option and collected data regarding its use in Massachusetts. At mid-year, the Committee reached unanimous consensus that moving

to a Trimester grading schedule is a wise move in terms of both accuracy in reporting and efficiency in use of time; they also discovered that a great number of communities in Massachusetts (including most of the highest-MCAS scoring districts and a good number of local districts) had already made the move. The Committee consulted with and received support from both parents groups and both (i.e., Doyon and Winthrop) Councils, and then met with the superintendent, who was also very supportive.

The committee presented its proposal to the School Committee on February 5, and it was unanimously approved. Significant Accomplishment! A committee was formed in fall 2007 to begin exploration of the trimester option to increase the substantive nature of reports to parents while adding more efficiency to school-home communication. The committee:

- researched assessment options across the state;
- contacted surrounding communities for information about their assessment periods;
- collected data regarding district performance levels and assessment periods;
- analyzed the impact of a trimester option on special education communities;
- and considered the challenges of reporting for Quarter 1 with limited data.

The findings were presented to the School Committee in February 2009, resulting in acceptance of the proposal to implement a trimester assessment system, beginning in fall 2009. The new trimester calendar provides conference and report card assessments at the following times:

Late October / Early November

Individualized Parent / Teacher Conferences

December

First Trimester Report Card

March

Second Trimester Report Card

June

Third Trimester Report Card

NAEYC Accreditation

The Kindergarten Teams at Doyon and Winthrop are working together toward receiving NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accreditation of the two programs. Work toward NAEYC accreditation is required as part of our Kindergarten grant. This year we have been in the "self-study" phase of the process. During this phase, each Kindergarten teacher has prepared a portfolio of evidence demonstrating how her classroom meets each criterion within 10 different NAEYC standards. This evidence includes but is not limited to teacher created narratives describing components of our program, communication with Kindergarten families regarding the program, curriculum documents, lesson plans, photos, child work samples and teacher resource samples. The documentation required for these portfolios is extensive, and a significant amount of time has been necessary to research, compile and/or create the documentation.

The Self-Study phase also includes a 50-page candidacy application process and the compilation two portfolios (one for each school) for the overall Kindergarten programs at each school. These portfolios are in addition to the individual classroom portfolios. Like the classroom portfolios, they require extensive amounts of

evidence supporting program level criteria for each of the ten standards. We are nearing the end of the self-study period and our candidacy applications will be submitted by May 31. We anticipate having site visits in September or October of next year.

Technology

All of the faculty now have laptops. The school benefited from donations of computers from Phillips Exeter Academy and from New England Biolabs when both organizations upgraded their machines. These donations were made possible because of the efforts, energies and contacts of Doyon parents. A new Promethean Smartboard is being used in Mrs. Gregory's room thanks to a grant she wrote funded by New England Biolabs. This allowed the Grade 5 team to work on a project to record data of species found at local vernal pools and have students take an active role in recording data they found. Also, the FRIES have helped the school acquire a "Smart Music System" for instrumental music. As a new approach that would provide an economical way to allow all classrooms to have access to a color printer, a networked color inkjet has been installed on one classroom at each grade level that can be accessed by all grade level computers.

As we approach the end of the 2008-2009 school year, we are very appreciative of a donation from FRIES that will allow us to replace our existing server, as well as a private donation, which will provide a new state of the art projection system in the Doyon Media Center.

Overview of Special Activities: 2007-2009

2007-2008

Constitution Day was celebrated by Grades 3-5 gathering around the flagpole, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, singing *My Country 'Tis of Thee*, and reading the Preamble. The Bay Colony Educators came to visit Grade 5 again this year. They presented twice, giving students an overview of what it was like to live in the 18th Century. The Vernal Pool Evening was popular again this year, giving parents and students an overview of vernal pools and what to look for when going out to witness Big Night. Parents received maps (courtesy of a New England Biolabs grant) and packets with information, pictures, and data collection sheets for the event. The Invention Convention offered Grade 5 students a way to share their study of simple machines with the school community, family, and friends. After learning about all six machines, students researched an existing invention or created an invention that solved a real-world problem. They explained their invention and shared their log to all visitors.

The States Expo in Grade 4 was held in June. After completing a study on the 50 states, students selected a region to research and shared their projects with the school community, family, and friends. They also presented group research projects that spanned the entire United States. Funded by New England Biolabs, Grade 4 students were brought to their lab in Ipswich to participate in scientific DNA testing and crime-scene analysis, culminating with a presentation about the resolution of the "crime." This was a partnership with a program called Whiz-Kids, which offered Grade 4 and 5 students the chance to learn about various science topics from Boston University student

scientists and promoted natural scientific inquiry. During the Canine Security Training presentation, Grade 4 students watched police dog training in action.

During the Endangered Species Expo in Grade 3, students shared their project with the school community, family, and friends. After completing a unit of study on endangered animals, students completed a diorama of that animal in its environment. An Audubon representative visited with each Grade 3 class four times this year and took them into Willowdale State Forest to discuss topics such as plant life, pollination, and animal habitats. During the Puritan presentation, Grade 3 students met with a woman who portrayed herself as an Ipswich Puritan in the 1600s.

Grades 2 and 5 worked with author and illustrator Claire Walker Lesley on Nature Journaling. She spent time in each classroom working with students on recording information and scientific drawing. She also took each class out into the field to practice their scientific sketching. With the assistance of Bob Gravino, Grade 1 students planted a tree in front of the school in honor of Arbor Day.

Doyon was enriched by many band, orchestra, and chorus opportunities. Grades 1 through 5 participated in multiple chorus performances this year. Grade 3 included what they had learned on recorders this year in their performance. Grades 4 and 5 had a chorus, band and orchestra performance and a play performance this year.

Scholastic and Banbury Cross offered book fairs in the library this year. Sponsored by FRIES, the Doyon Devours Books reading motivational program and fundraiser, occurred this winter. Students received booklets to record how many minutes they read in an allotted time period. Dr. Cooper had a school-wide assembly to kick off the event. Classrooms began with some reading time to get them started. Once students got their pledges and read their minutes, they received a complimentary bookmark. This was an incredibly successful fundraiser. The annual Doyonathon was another successful fundraiser. Students received pledge books to collect sponsors for each lap they ran. Once they completed their laps, they turned in their lap cards and enjoyed their new water mugs (sponsored by FRIES).

MCAS tutoring continued this year, funded by ICE and grant support. All tutoring started with a 1:1 meeting between student and teacher. After this valuable intake of information, students met in small groups twice a week with the teacher. Tutoring sessions consisted of Grade 3 Reading, Grade 4 Language Arts, Grade 4 Math, Grade 5 Language Arts, and Grade 5 Math.

In addition to these activities, each grade level participated in many enriching field trips. A sampling of these trips includes the Doyon Pre-K's trip to Marini's Farm, Kindergarten trips to Applecrest Orchard, Museum of Science, Parker River; Grade 1 trips to the Butterfly Place and Tide Pools, Grade 2 trips to the DeCordova Museum, Grade 3 trips to the Harvard Museum, Ipswich Wildlife Sanctuary, and a Local History Walking Trip; Grade 4 trips to the Ipswich Wildlife Sanctuary, local Salt Marshes, the Addison Gallery, Phillips Academy, and the Peabody Essex Museum; and Grade 5 trips to the Harvard Museum, Vernal Pool trips, and the New England Sports Museum.

2008-2009

In addition to many of the activities of 2007-2008, several new activities were added in 2008-2009. The organization Historical Perspectives provided a one-man show about the life of Abraham Lincoln for all grades in April. The actor performed and discussed scenes from Lincoln's life. Professional tracker Bob Metcalfe conducted nature tracking with Grade 5 students in January. In order to connect their Simple

Machines unit with local history, Grade 5 students visited the Essex Shipbuilding Museum in October and visited Saugus Ironworks in November. Grade 5 students also traveled to Minuteman Park in Concord as part of their study of the American Revolution. In June fifth-graders will attend a tour of Fenway Park as well as a boat tour of the Charles River. Grade 2 students attended a presentation of *Alexander the Terrible* at the North Shore Music Theater and attended a tour of the historic Crane Estate in May.

III. Academic Goal, Where do we go from here?

Academics: The Future

- Allow grade-level, specialists, and special education teams opportunities to meet during selected faculty and curriculum meetings for communication, coordination, reflection and curriculum refinement and development, with possible connections between grades and/or schools. Ongoing projects include the following:
 - First year implementation of the new Assessment Schedule
 - First year implementation of the Trimester Reporting Schedule
 - On-site visit of NAEYC accreditation team in Kindergarten
 - Ongoing exploration of enriching our grade level writing instructional program while continuing to align writing instruction with reading comprehension year-long-plans
 - We should attempt to provide a set of the appropriate Calkins materials for all teachers of literacy to use as a resource, while making multiple copies of the key books of Ralph Fletcher, Katie Wood-Ray and Regie Routeman available from our professional library.
 - We should attempt to facilitate via substitute coverage the option of peer observation, modeling and sharing especially in the area of writing instruction.
- Development of clear elementary grade-level writing outcomes for consistency among all classes at the same grade level across the district, and for spiraling coordination between grade levels
 - This project should be conceptualized, coordinated and led by the Language Arts SAC with faculty input.
- Other possible Ad Hoc Committee work to revisit existing professional agreements make recommendations in the following areas as time, energy, and resources allow:
 - Project Read and Sitton Spelling—should we continue to support use of these program and how do they “fit” and relate to each other
 - Handwriting
 - Vocabulary

Leadership Transition Goal for 2009-2010

A transition team will be formed to support Mr. Archambault as the incoming Doyon principal in an effort to mentor and assist him in his new role. Areas of support to be offered will include, but not be limited to the following:

- Hiring new staff
- Building and Grounds
- Budget Development
- Nurturing a collegial work environment
- Working with parents and our FRIES organization
- School Council
- Key areas of the curriculum
 - Professional Agreements
 - SAC's and their role

Monthly School Council meetings will be utilized for discussion and feedback providing ongoing communication regarding specific school issues. Ms. Sheila McAdams, the Winthrop School Principal, will serve as a “mentor” to Mr. Archambault. In addition, Dr. Ken Cooper will be available on an on-going basis to serve as a resource to familiarize Mr. Archambault with the town's history and culture.

Other Essential Priorities

The following are essential priorities in support of our school improvement objectives.

➤ **Class Sizes**

Class sizes are a crucial variable in student achievement and should be kept as low as possible. Our average class size is presently about 21, but that includes several classes of 23-24 projected for Grade 4 next year and Kindergarten classes that will be about 24 and which we accept only as the preferable option to half-day sessions. This year we came close to having to cut a classroom teacher, which would have resulted in class sizes in Grade 5 next year of 27. We were fortunate not to have to do so, but as long as budgets remain tight, reasonable class sizes are likely to be *at risk*.

➤ **Professional Development**

While this should continue to be a priority even in lean budget years, all of our regularly budgeted professional development funding has once again been cut in next year's budget. All funding for professional development substitutes has also been cut, making it virtually impossible for us to organize even "in-house" professional development activities unless we receive outside funding. It has always been our assumption that organizationally, one is either moving forward or slipping backward—that "stasis" is an illusion. Depriving the schools of the funding that fuels improvement is inconsistent with the expectations held for us by the community and the School Committee.

➤ **Teaching Assistants**

Teaching assistants make an invaluable contribution to our educational program and must continue to be supported.

➤ **Budget**

This is the seventh budget cycle that has seen a reduction of services and programs to children. In the past seven years at Doyon we have lost our Extended Learning Program for highly-able students, our technology assistant, a portion of a custodial position, several classroom teachers, the summer Reading Tutorial program, summer library hours, all funding for technology, all funding for professional development programs and a decrease of about 40% in educational supplies and instructional materials. It is difficult to run a "high quality" school with these constraints.