

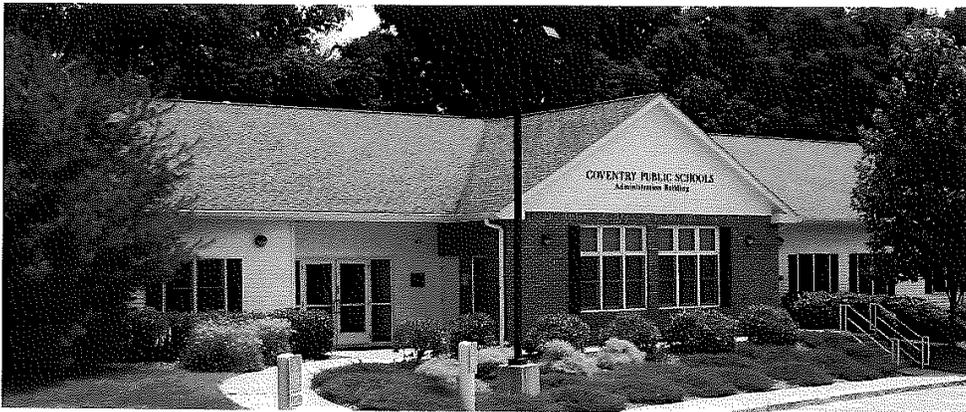


## EDUCATION

*Above: New bleachers and press box at CHS football/soccer field.*



*Annual Report of the  
Coventry Board of Education  
and  
Coventry Public Schools  
2009 – 2010*



**2009-2010 Annual Report**  
**Coventry Board of Education and**  
**Coventry Public Schools**

**Board of Education**

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**Superintendent of Schools**  
**Dr. Donna Bernard**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Coventry Public Schools is to provide all of its students with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to learn as well as to contribute and to participate in a culturally diverse, rapidly changing society and to live a productive life. By working in concert with the family and community, an educational partnership will assist all children to achieve these skills and knowledge.

We work to ensure that all children will reach their individual potential with an appreciation of the lifelong learning process. We support the premise that learning is challenging, rewarding, and fun. We encourage teachers to provide opportunities for participation in the democratic process and the development of democratic values and ideas. We encourage family and community involvement in support of our schools.



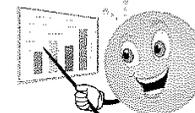
**District-wide Goals, Annual Objectives and Subsequent Achievements 2009-2010**

**1. Improve outside resources, partnerships, and revenues, consistent with district goals.**

- 1.1 Expand the implementation of Coventry High School's Project Opening Doors.
  - Coventry High School continues its work with our ever-increasing Advanced Placement program. Coventry staff members serve in leadership positions in this statewide effort. In addition to increasing the numbers of advanced placement courses offered, we have also increased the number of staff members involved in advanced placement training and the number of students enrolled in these courses.
- 1.2 Collaborate additionally with Police, Fire, and Town agencies to improve our emergency responsiveness.
  - Coventry Public Schools continues to improve its multi-agency emergency preparedness. Regular meetings with all agencies are held with school staff representatives. Plans and coordination procedures are ongoing. Coordinated emergency exercises involving school and district personnel continue to be held. Radio systems are coordinated, emergency identification lanyards have been purchased for staff, and interdepartmental cooperation is much more apparent.
- 1.3 Collaborate with EASTCONN, the State Department of Education's agency, in improving student achievement on district assessments (CALI).

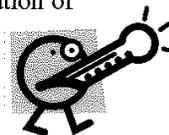


- Extensive work has been undertaken this year in working with the Connecticut Assessment and Learning Initiative (CALI). All schools have coordinated their efforts with Coventry's Regional Educational Service Center (RESC), EASTCONN. Staff and administration are to be commended for their diligence in attending to very complex and exhausting work.
- 1.4 Use American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus funds to develop programs and training to assist students with autism spectrum disorders and related special needs.
    - Pupil and Staff Support Services (PSSS) has developed expanded programs and practices internally to better address the growing needs of students with autism or autism spectrum disorders. Utilizing stimulus funds, the special education department has trained staff and coordinated with outside resources to further enhance educational services in this area. Staff has been reassigned and reorganized within PSSS to better meet student needs.
  - 1.5 Work with outside agencies including the town to address preschool student needs and program development.
    - We continue our work with the Coventry Early Childhood Center and house our combined efforts at the First Congregational Church. Our School Readiness Council coordinates its efforts with the Coventry Grammar School principal to enhance services to youngsters prior to their kindergarten experience. In addition, this year, the staff is to be commended for its exceptional efforts in applying for a Graustein Memorial Discovery Fund grant. Their collaboration and quality interactions with the staff of the Graustein Foundation should serve us well through this application evaluation process.
  - 1.6 Collaborate with outside safety compliance resources, including the National Incident Management System (NIMS), to ensure that critical safety procedures are developed and followed.
    - School administrators have completed the NIMS series 100, 200, 700, and 800 training and are officially certified. Their continued coordination with many outside compliance agencies is an extensive effort to be commended. The liabilities related to compliance and legalities continue to grow exponentially.
  - 1.7 Initiate student services with Lincoln Academy to better provide for special needs students.
    - Our original agreement with the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) and the Lincoln Academy (a regional collaborative of 16 towns) is being modified during the 2009-2010 school year. We have used this alternative outside placement in East Harford for students requiring its services. When students cannot be served within the district, other resources must be used. These services will be purchased on seat by seat basis for 2010-11.
  - 1.8 Share information regarding the district's strategic plan for increasing efficiencies, including presenting a seminar at the CABE/CAPSS Convention.
    - Staff presented a well received seminar at the CABE/CAPSS Convention last November. This particular situation served the system well in its continued focus on delivering more service with reduced outside resources, so evident in this climate. Beyond the many venues in which our staff provides evidence of Coventry School efficiencies, Coventry staff is always analyzing programs and practices looking for the next opportunity.



- 1.9 Train staff to interrelate with an ever increasing number of outside compliance agencies.
- There are many levels of training occurring in the school district. Administrators and many other staff members work with other employees to be sure that their reporting and language use with outside entities are effective and accurate. The economic, political, and legal climate is demanding ever greater levels of training and accuracy.

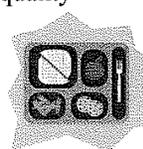
- 1.10 Work in collaboration with a complexity of medical agencies in preparation for H1N1.
- School and district staff, without additional resources again, spent an extraordinary amount of time dealing with outside agencies related to the regional coordination of H1N1 services. Regional coordination is necessary in some areas, and not in others. This particular effort needed to be regional and multi-agency in nature. However, the seriously reduced local staff engages in these planning and service implementation projects in addition to their regular responsibilities. We are very pleased to report that the coordinated effort was effective and the potential more serious medical situation did not come to pass.



**2. Promote efficient functioning and consistent refinement of subsystems within the larger organization.**

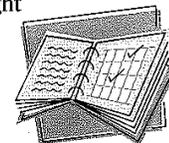
- 2.1 Analyze Effective Schools survey results by building and make relevant recommendations.
- The Administrators use all data, including the Effective School surveys, focus groups, staff meetings, alumni surveys, and student assessment measures to modify their programs and practices to increase results. The administrators have agreed that even with their reassignments to different leadership positions for the 2010-2011 school year, these initiatives will be continued.

- 2.2 Implement redesigned Food Service operations to improve quality and reduce costs.
- The Food Service Department was extensively reorganized to provide for better quality services at reduced costs, in order to forestall significant financial challenges. Despite the large scope of the required changes, Coventry Food Service staff is to be hugely commended for its radical improvements. Staff took on different roles and responsibilities as they worked collaboratively with new teams to modify the way business was conducted. Early returns on these large scale systemic changes are very positive.



- 2.3 Improve substitute teacher orientation and training procedures.
- In addition to administrators and staff members further focusing on substitute teacher preparedness, extensive research has been conducted in the area of on-line training opportunities for substitutes. Fortunately (and unfortunately), the country's economic condition is resulting in the best pool of substitute teachers we have had in years. The availability of qualified substitutes serves Coventry well. The financial conditions have put a delay on purchasing online support systems.

- 2.4 Implement grades 6-12 schedule coordination and redesign.
- Staff is to be seriously commended for its efforts on behalf of the 6-12 schedule alignment project. Execution of this new schedule had its glitches, but the new design and implementation was executed as well as any change of this scope might have been expected. Staff and administration, as well as the Technology Resource Team, collaborated to make this happen and the students were well served. The future potential of grades 6-8 and 9-12 integration and coordination is very significant, and this schedule alignment is seen as essential given these economic conditions.



- 2.5 Implement processes and practices that further increase academic achievement.
- Currently our advanced placement initiatives lead the way in increasing rigor for students. However, our Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) programs at the Capt. Nathan Hale School and the G.H. Robertson School also continually focus staff on curriculum and instructional practices that improve academic rigor for students. Teachers are individually and collectively addressing program changes and adjustments made necessary by the annual administration of the Connecticut Mastery Test and Connecticut Academic Performance Test. The extensive work executed on behalf of the ABC curriculum coordination project is a large part of increasing instructional efficiencies. Beyond that, our curriculum work at the preschool and grammar school has served as a point of focus for staff resulting in classroom decision making that improves the level of inquiry and complex thinking.

- 2.6 Implement refinements in the Strategies that Get Results (SGR) focus including the Response to Intervention (RtI) programmatic improvements.
- The State of Connecticut and the Federal Government mandates continue to result in a need for deliberate attention by staff and administrators of Tier I, II, and III interventions. The further development of the Response to Intervention (RtI) practices is making very large scale changes in Coventry Public Schools. Administrators are working in teams developing compliant student interventions, assessments, and record keeping as they manage their progress. Coordination of these efforts with the schools and Pupil and Staff Support Services is ongoing and very extensive. The speed of the changes, as well as the complex implications, is so critical.

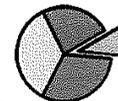
- 2.7 Increase utility use efficiencies.
- Our staff, under the skilled guidance of Physical Plant and Facilities, is making serious inroads in the area of utility efficiencies. Once again, crisis level economic times are driving the efficiency agenda like never before. Older buildings, in this colder climate, continue to be a challenge as well. Having the resources to implement some cost savings measures is critical. The continual cost/benefit analysis and the historical trending work being done by Physical Plant and Facilities are exemplary.



- 2.8 Improve and expand environmentally friendly “green” activities.
- Thanks to the efforts of Physical Plant and Facilities, in coordination with various student groups and staff initiatives, Coventry Public Schools is “greener” than ever. The disposable cafeteria trays at all schools have been replaced by non-consumable trays. The district saves money and the environment by its ever expanding recycling program. Our participation on the town’s energy committee has resulted in a better “green” integration with student science and curricular programs. Student groups participated in the town’s Energy Fair as well as many other initiatives.

**3. Provide clear and regular communication to all constituencies, building a support base for school programs.**

- 3.1 Further the collaboration between town Finance and school Fiscal committees.
- The collaboration between the Town Finance and Board Fiscal committees continues to provide information between the groups like never before. The administration has been challenged with a very short-staffed Business Office. In



addition, the demand for information has catapulted. Despite the staff shortage, the remaining staff members are to be commended for “stepping up to the plate” to provide accurate and timely information.

- 3.2 Expand Board and public information regarding department and school goal achievement.
  - We continue to provide informational bulletins of various kinds. Group meetings serve as a main source of dialogue and program explanation. This is the third year of our *Community Conversations*, hosted by the Superintendent in her home. Parents and other interested residents are invited to discuss topics of interests related to developing young people. The Superintendent again hosted the *Heartfelt Thanks Event* at her home. Members from throughout the community recommend supporters of Coventry Public Schools to attend a Superintendent-funded catered evening event. This year over 70 people shared social time and connected as supporters of school programs.
- 3.3 Present staff evaluation procedures to the Board.
  - The presentation of staff evaluation procedures is scheduled for an April Board meeting following the agenda complexities of the school budget season. As the first group for review, staff will examine the evaluation procedures and requirements of teachers.
- 3.4 Ensure that the town has facilities’ needs information.
  - Extensive work was accomplished this year with a revised capital improvement plan procedure. Once again, in conditions unlike any seen in decades, leadership and staff worked to provide information in a very detailed way, resulting in a capital improvement plan that was published by the town. In addition, serious efforts were expended regarding the capital needs of the schools as they relate to roof repair/replacement. Currently, the school roofs are under evaluation and the results will be presented at a public meeting.
- 3.5 Continue development of our user-friendly district website, including parent information regarding website resources and e-mail response options.
  - The collaborative efforts of many parties came into play in order to enable such a significant and rapid improvement of our website. The “Mini-Web Masters” at all the school sites and at the district level assist with this development. Teachers are becoming more involved in the development of the school websites as well as integrating the websites into their curricular practice. The feedback from parents has been quite positive as the district has exponentially increased the level of information on the site. The newly developing addition of preschool and birth-to-five information is an important initiative. 
- 3.6 Expand school programs and opportunities serving as resources for parents.
  - Technology is dramatically changing the ways in which information flows in all organizations. Within this culture, parent organizations as well as individual parents see the schools as a major resource for their child’s development. Although conferences with teachers continue to be an important vehicle, the use of our [abalancedcurriculum.com](http://abalancedcurriculum.com) website and our [Mygradebook.com](http://Mygradebook.com) website is ever-increasing. Many meetings were held to assist parents with their very important role as caregivers and school collaborators. Over seventy-five parents attended a parenting seminar titled, “Raising Children and Having Fun.” Presenter John Reardon presented the workshop for parents to learn new parenting techniques.
- 3.7 Improve public information regarding school budgets and financial transactions.

- This is another area of exponential growth and change this year. The Business Office and the Fiscal Services Director are to be commended for their timely and responsive operations as they have provided to the public more and more financial information.
- 3.8 Improve parent information regarding student progress by implementing Mygradebook.com.
- As another new change at the high school, this parent communication and student monitoring system caused concern in its implementation. This effort requires a level of technological sophistication by staff as well as time and effort with increased expectations for student assessments and grade recording. Our staff is to be commended for its [mygradebook.com](http://mygradebook.com) management in this first year. Although implementation refinements will be ongoing, this was a solid first-year effort.
- 3.9 Improve timely notices to parents by implementing Alertnow.com.
- Yet another new initiative without additional resources, this is an absolutely correct program for implementation at Coventry Public Schools in these times. Parents can now immediately be alerted regarding emergency notices. The response has been favorable in this first year. Once again, staff is to be applauded for working with their changed roles and responsibilities.
- 3.10 Provide family seminars to assist with child development.
- The biggest jump in informational seminars continues to be the live televising of Board of Education meetings. More people are watching these Board meetings than one might have ever projected. In addition, many Coventry Pride sessions have been videotaped and provided as information to our public. We have modified our channel 17 procedures as we coordinated with town staff to increase variability and reduce redundancy. Another Informational Seminar was also taped for television use. This latest edition was about the ABC curriculum alignment project.



**4. Implement programs and practices that improve student educational performance, ensuring that such practices align with state standards.**

- 4.1 Implement Response to Intervention (RtI) programmatic improvements.
- Tier I, II, and III interventions are the work of all instructional staff members at this time. The further development of the Response to Intervention (RtI) practices is making very large scale changes at Coventry Public Schools. Administrators are working in teams developing compliant student interventions, assessments, and record keeping as they manage their progress. Coordination of these efforts with the schools and Pupil and Staff Support Services is ongoing and very extensive.
- 4.2 Implement revised world language program at the Capt. Nathan Hale School.
- The need to seriously modify the middle school world language program to provide a much more comprehensive curriculum was years in the making. The administration and staff are to be commended for finally taking on this project which was enabled by the change in the 6-12 schedule. The staff, parents, and students have been quite positive about this change. The program will continue to undergo related modifications as a result of this first year implementation.



- 4.3 Improve the use of site data teams in modifying programs as connected to results.
- Collaboration within and outside the system has been extraordinary. Student data teams focus on student achievement results as they relate to state standards and clearly

defined objectives. The attention to improving student achievement can be seen in the improvement on district student assessment results at many levels. Our major strides in curriculum development also assist with these data team procedures.

- 4.4 Expand efforts in academic rigor including programs such as Future Problem Solvers.
  - With the implementation of Project Opening Doors, the middle school accelerated math program, and the extension of Future Problem Solvers activities, the district is making tremendous advancement in assessing and developing higher level programs. The Future Problem Solvers teams are award winning. In addition, the middle school and high school coordinated efforts have resulted in improved levels of curriculum development between the schools. The curricular coordination efforts at all schools between teams of teachers increases the probability of students learning at more competitive levels.
- 4.5 Increase development, monitoring and the student achievement results of our Academic Assist Programs.
  - The Academic Assist Programs are receiving site-based focus and assessment. Service delivery and staff attention to student results continue to improve. Building principals work with the staff and the school superintendent to review these programs and make continuous progress adjustments for each succeeding year.
- 4.6 Provide more program alternatives for students, including online coursework and distance learning opportunities.
  - The high school continues to develop its distance learning opportunities for students. We continue to provide an Advanced Placement Art Appreciation Course that is not only online, but taught by one of our teachers in the Art Department. Coventry High School belongs to the EASTCONN Virtual High School Connecticut Consortium. The virtual program is currently being integrated into the high school's tutoring center, providing flexibility to students and increasing efficiencies for staff.
- 4.7 Refine the web based IEP and pilot RtI Direct programs in order to effectuate efficiencies within educational programs.
  - Staff has been assigned to further work with web-based protocols for special student needs. This was the first year implementation for the RtI software system. The complexities and mandates, all validated through software, are taking educational services where they have never been before. Staff is on a huge learning curve and is to be commended for their positive attitude in taking on this intervention.
- 4.8 Continue to improve curriculum alignment coordination between classroom offerings, grades and departments, and state standards through A Balanced Curriculum program.
  - We continue to refine our ABC curriculum coordination project, which turns out to be one of the best initiatives of this administration. The initial response from parents has been VERY positive. Grade level teams and departments across the district are refining their curriculum, identifying issues of curricular duplication or absence, and making instructional and curricular modifications to further attend to state standards. This is a complex and demanding project that is comprehensive and extraordinary in its scope and ramifications. The staff is to be commended for their diligent and focused efforts as we continue to approach the ever moving target of student achievement standards.
- 4.9 Increase transition efforts between schools (Pre-K to K, 2nd to 3rd, 5th to 6th, and 8th to 9th) in order to enhance resource utilization and student achievement.



- This collaborative goal continues to be a focus for the district's administration. The design and development of the ABC curriculum coordination project demands and gets much improved coordination among staff members from each of our school sites. Teachers are regularly visiting with other teachers to address curricular complications and issues. Within the conversations regarding alignment, staff and administration are regularly addressing curriculum and instructional preparedness of students transitioning from one school to another. The school to school transition procedures have seriously improved, especially at the 6 through 12 level, with joint faculty meetings, joint goals, and joint staff development occurring. In addition, collaborative projects at the Pre-K through 5 level are evident and increasing.

4.10 Implement gifted education refinement initiatives, including fifth grade assessments.

- The Challenge and Enrichment Program (CEP) is only one of the focus points for improving student programs. The related goal of higher level programs integrated into our classrooms is a byproduct of this gifted initiative. Although additional Challenge and Enrichment staff would be beneficial, staff is making progress on all fronts. The new assessments have been implemented at fifth grade at the G. H. Robertson School and staff is continually being used as a resource for classroom teachers with higher performing students.



4.11 Implement new Connecticut Department of Education Learning Disability guidelines.

- This RtI Direct Project is a huge undertaking and significantly changes the ways in which student progress and program development are implemented. The RtI software is being used at three schools in this first year. Training was provided and a core team of key personnel was established to facilitate this new direction. Coventry is once again leading in this area and is sharing the implementation with other districts. Our professional learning community is assessing student progress and making curricular decisions as teams rather than as individuals.

**5. Improve the implementation and use of educational and administrative technology systems.**

5.1 Increase the integration of curricular technology projects and district technology support systems.

- Teachers are making significant strides in integrating technological requirements into their students' class projects. The school system continues to be responsive not only to the ever increasing demands of technological literacy for our students, but also to the ever increasing capabilities of our students as they move up through our system. Research is validating that the use of smart boards and other assistive technology devices are correlated to improvements in student test results, if the engagement of students is objective-based.

5.2 Implement three-year Technology Plan to begin in the 2009-2010 school year.

- With the coordination of our Technology Specialist and representatives from all sites, our Technology Plan is in compliance with the State of Connecticut mandate. The committee is collaborating to move forward with the development of technology support programs and systems here in Coventry.

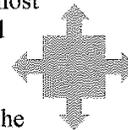
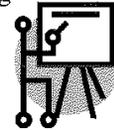
5.3 Improve computer access for grades K-5 students, including the development of computer lab programs at the Coventry Grammar School.

- The development of the computer lab at the Coventry Grammar School has, for the first time, allowed for computer access for those students.



Parents, staff, and students are most enthusiastic about this new opportunity. Beyond the Coventry Grammar School, the continuous upgrading of hardware and software is essential and a work in progress. Staff reductions are of concern in all areas, including computer labs, where support staff work with students on their customized projects.

- 5.4 Increase efficiencies and hold rising costs through a newly developed transportation bid package.
  - This is the first year of the new district transportation contract. It is currently under mid-year review and analysis for its performance. The initial reaction from staff and parents has been very positive. The end of first year extra costs need to be carefully scrutinized. However, M&J administration appears to be exceptionally cooperative.
- 5.5 Further develop Disaster Recovery systems to back up district software.
  - The district staff worked with the town on our town-wide technology committee to address issues of disaster recovery. It was decided to purchase an off site back-up system in addition to the nightly back up procedures that are already in place. This off-site back up system is currently in phase one implementation.
- 5.6 Increase the use of instructional technology, including computer labs, in-classroom technology, and smart boards, in order to enhance student achievement.
  - Across the district there has been a continuous increase in the use of instructional technology, including computer labs, in-classroom technology, and smart boards, in order to enhance student achievement. There is a huge learning curve happening as staff works with administration to ensure that these educational innovations are used in a very tightly coordinated way. Their use will really enhance student achievement results if the lessons are aligned to state standards. It is worth the use and focus as properly engaged students learn and retain more information in their long-term memory.
- 5.7 Implement new student portfolio system at Coventry High School that is more consistent with expectations for student learning.
  - The revised portfolio system at the high school focuses on furthering the quality of the student work collected. The high school staff has modified its procedures and practices related to student portfolios. The students will continue to showcase their work at a “portfolio night” as a part of their graduation requirements. This portfolio project is a model for other high schools.
- 5.8 Use technology developed data to track and be better informed regarding utility and facility expenses and usage.
  - Several reports were provided to the Board of Education this year in this area. Physical Plant and Facilities continues to use data to implement changes in utility and facility related operations and is to be commended for its expertise and commitment to this area. The ever-moving target of room use and equipment requests is most complex; however, the partnership between the Capt. Nathan Hale School and Coventry High School has really improved some of the challenges that were previously faced. Further recommendations regarding the charges related to facility use are being developed by administration for presentation to the Board’s policy committee.



For further information about any of these Coventry Public School programs and practices, please contact the Superintendent at her Office at 742-7317, by email at [dbernard@coventryct.org](mailto:dbernard@coventryct.org), or at a “Donuts with Donna” session.