



## Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment – Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Overview

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Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment

### Key Areas of Budget Responsibility

- I. Providing curriculum materials, including textbooks, trade books, workbooks, math manipulatives, science materials, etc.; providing digital curriculum resources, including online texts, interactive applications, etc.
- II. Ensuring instructional leadership and support of strong teaching practices, with primary supervision of Department Directors, Curriculum Coordinators, and Reading Specialists who work across multiple schools, and secondary supervision of those roles assigned to an individual school
- III. Coordinating state and local assessment systems, including state MCAS testing, English Language Education state ACCESS testing, and district-based formative assessments (such as the Star assessment)
- IV. Facilitating district professional development offerings, including working with the Professional Development Committee regarding offerings on professional development days and early release days; necessary training for implementation of new curriculum and instruction (such as the new K-6 literacy program); planning and implementing the Summer Professional Development Institute; etc.

### Key Budget Investments for Fiscal Year 2025

Textbooks/Curriculum Materials

Key investments of \$310,000

Included in this category are:

- \$250,000 to complete the investment in new K-6 literacy program materials (total cost \$500K, with the other half coming from a competitive grant for high quality curriculum materials through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)

- \$60,000 to purchase new textbooks/curriculum materials for the SHS Social Sciences courses in World Civilization, U.S. History I, and U.S. History II

Reading Specialists

Key investment of \$100,000

Included in this category is:

- 1.0 FTE additional Reading Specialist position to be assigned to the middle school level to address student reading instruction; estimated salary of \$100,000 for experience and level of education and training

English Language Education Coordinator

Key investment of \$115,000

Included in this category is:

- 1.0 FTE new English Language Education Coordinator position to address needed capacity for state-mandated screenings, assessments, and program support; this position would also supervise and evaluate ELE teaching staff; estimated salary of \$115,000 for experience and level of education and training, plus coordinator stipend for leadership role including 10 additional work days

### Efficiencies Through Use of Grants or Alternative Funding in Fiscal Year 2025

Grant or alternative funds used for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Professional Development include:

- Federal entitlement grants ~\$330K
- DESE High Quality Materials grant of \$250K for literacy materials
- Federal Covid grant funds (ESSER-3; amount TBD, this year ~\$190K)
- Access to the ST Math interactive digital math program for K-4 students worth ~\$50K through a DESE-sponsored program with the One8 Foundation
- DESE- sponsored programs to provide access to Mass Tiered Literacy and the Instructional Prioritization group, which enables us to access consultant support at no cost, worth ~54K
- Use of Professional Development tuition revolving account to fund the Summer Professional Development Institute ~\$88K (tuition paid by Shrewsbury and Westborough educators)
- **Estimated total use of grants/alternative funds in FY25: ~\$962K**

### Other Examples of Efficiencies in Fiscal Year 2025

Other Examples of Efficiencies for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Professional Development include:

- Repurposing leveled readers for use in text sets to supplement the new literacy program, worth ~\$138K
- Donated / discounted supplies ~\$1K
- **Estimated total of value of other efficiencies: \$139K**

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Amy Clouter

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To: School Committee

Re: Fiscal Year 2025 Budget for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

## Context

The purchase of new curriculum materials for foundational literacy, together with the addition of reading specialist support has improved the district's capacity to support students in need. At the same time, students who did not have the benefit of these supports sooner - and particularly students in Grades 4-6 that experienced disrupted schooling during the pandemic - will require more time to close academic gaps.

Educators continue to use screening assessments and technology tools to align supports to students, to monitor progress and to differentiate instruction. Professional development and ongoing training play a big part in this work - as do the members of the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment team. The adoption of new curriculum materials for all educators in Grades K-6 next year will require continued investment in the structures that support both teacher and student learning.

## Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Overview

### I. Key Areas of Budget Responsibility

Shrewsbury Public Schools' motto is "empowering learners" and the budgets for curriculum, instruction and assessment are aligned with that purpose in mind. Our expenditures are closely tied to the district's strategic priorities and goals and the resources needed to meet them.



*"Of all the things that matter for having good schools, nothing is as important as the teacher and what that person knows, believes and can do." (Jon Saphier)*

The excerpts from our strategic plan below show our chief areas of focus from 2023-2027:

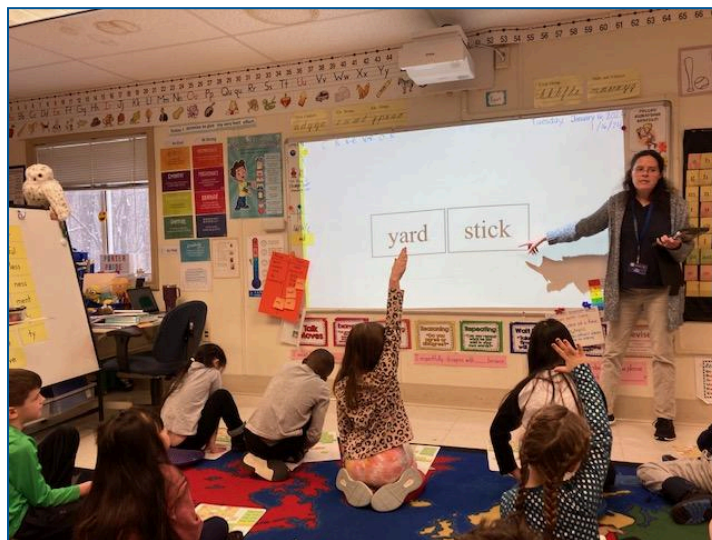
2023-2027 Well-Being Priority 1		
Ensure a Safe and Inclusive Culture: Foster welcoming, safe, and inclusive learning communities where we honor and celebrate diversity, create connections and a sense of belonging for <b>all</b> , and support and engage <b>all</b> students, staff, and family members.		
Strategic Goals for 2023-2024 School Year	Action Steps 2023-2024	Staff Responsible
<p><b>1.1:</b> Continue to provide access to targeted professional development focused on inclusive and culturally proficient practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide professional development for paraprofessionals regarding understanding and responding to bias</li> <li>• Complete the three-year professional development cycle of providing the <i>Becoming an Equitable Educator</i> course during early release days to those professional educators who did not take the course in years one and two</li> <li>• Provide monthly professional development for District Leadership Team members regarding ways to promote instructional equity, counter bias and foster inclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, &amp; Assessment</li> <li>• Members of the District Leadership Team</li> <li>• Designated Educators and Paraprofessionals</li> </ul>

As depicted above, the results our students achieve are tied to the investments we've made in developing strong instructional practices, securing powerful tools and maintaining effective systems of support for students and families. Accordingly, providing high quality professional development for educators and district leaders alike is a key responsibility of the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment team.

Professional development should be sustained over time to be effective. For the past three years we've centered professional learning opportunities on three common focus areas including Universal Design for Learning; Belonging, Diversity, Inclusion and Equity; and deeply understanding new curriculum standards for specific grade spans and/or content areas. For example, the World Language Department has worked to integrate new expectations for oral proficiency into their instructional plans. More recently, educators in Grades K-6 have learned about the Science of Reading and worked to integrate the teaching of foundational reading skills into their practice. In the next few years we will continue to focus on strengthening literacy practices.

Related goals are captured in detail below:

2023-2027 Educational Excellence Priority 1		
Ensure High-Quality Teaching and Learning: Provide all students access to high-quality learning experiences in every classroom every day by developing and committing to districtwide expectations for high-quality teaching.		
Strategic Goals for 2023-2024 School Year	Action Steps 2023-2024	Staff Responsible
<p><b>1.1:</b> Implement the next phase of the PreK-Grade 6 literacy initiative in order to provide all students with the research-based instruction and high-quality materials necessary to support reading and writing achievement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to shift literacy instruction in PK-6 classrooms by providing robust professional development, start implementation of a foundational reading skills curriculum, and begin adoption of the new literacy program with at least one "early adopter" classroom per grade in each K-6 school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, &amp; Assessment</li> <li>PK-6 Principals, Assistant Principals, Preschool Director, Special Education Directors</li> <li>Instructional Coaches/Curriculum Coordinators &amp; Reading Specialists</li> <li>All PK-6 General and Special Educators who teach reading/English language arts</li> <li>All PK-6 Paraprofessionals who provide tutoring or support for reading/English language arts</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.2:</b> Develop collective expertise of PK-Grade 12 instructional leaders to identify and provide feedback on key elements of effective, high-quality teaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide professional development opportunities at no fewer than six District Leadership Team meetings focused on instructional leadership strategies that promote students' access to appropriately challenging assignments requiring high levels of student thinking and engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, &amp; Assessment</li> <li>Members of the District Leadership Team</li> </ul>



Already we are able to see that the supports put in place last year are making a difference in academic outcomes. However, it's also evident that new supports are needed to address the needs of our older students. The chart below depicts the total

percentage of students receiving different types of support for reading by grade over time:

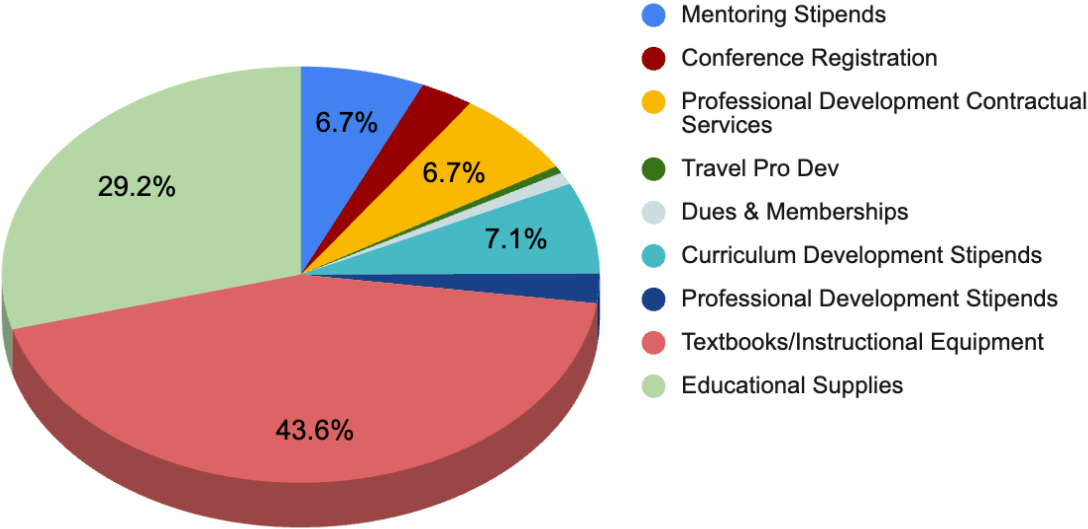
**Fall to Winter Comparisons of % of Students Designated for Reading Support (based on Star Reading assessment data)**

Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Fall	N/A	55%	37%	38%	35%	44%	46%	21%	21%
Winter	45%	34%	26%	24%	22%	40%	43%	21%	21%
Change		-21%	-11%	-14%	-13%	-4%	-3%	0%	0%

Of course, the Curriculum budget must cover the ongoing costs of providing students and teachers with a wide range of instructional materials. Funds for math workbooks, digital subscriptions, student manipulatives (like magnetic letters, base ten blocks and sound cards) and text books for older students are appropriated annually as well. Overall, the budget for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment is made up of nine categories. You can see how the cost of materials compares to other expenses in the pie charts below.

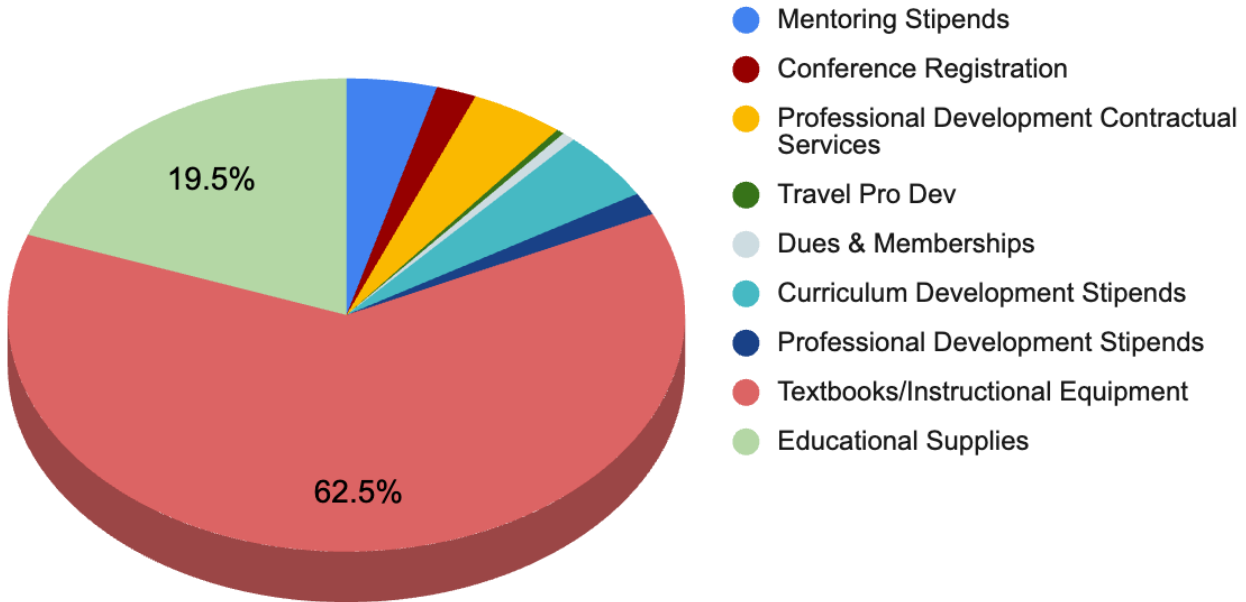
FY 2024 Total Non-Personnel Budget for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: \$543,592

**FY24 Actual Budget**



PROPOSED FY 2025 Non-Personnel Budget for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: \$846,038

### FY25 Proposed Budget



The Curriculum budget also manages a revolving account that is used to run the Summer Institute, a four-day conference that takes place in June. Educators from area districts are invited to take classes for in-district credit, and Shrewsbury partners with



Westborough Public Schools to offer professional development to area educators. Last year we also included area nurses in a new program facilitated by Shrewsbury’s Director of Nursing, Noelle Freeman.

The Summer Institute provides good value for the district because we are able to offer graduate courses that align with district priorities and satisfy relicensing requirements for our

educators. The registration fees for the Institute cover the cost of hosting it. In all, we collected \$97,340 last year and spent \$85,822. The difference remains in the account to cover anticipated costs for the 2024 Summer Institute.

*"...it takes more than a book study and a few one-off strategies stripped from the pages to level up our instructional practice for deep learning." (Zaretta Hammond)*

## II. Key Investments for Fiscal Year 2025

### *Personnel*

- An English Language Education (ELE) Coordinator position is needed to meet the increasing needs of the English learners and immigrant students in our schools. As we work to achieve district goals, we must respond to state directives as well. New guidelines for supporting English learners has resulted in increased focus on individualized learning plans and additional screening requirements. The addition of a Coordinator position is necessary to maintain existing supports for new students and families and to meet mandated services. This role is akin to the Middle Level Curriculum Coordinator roles, although it may be deployed where needed across grades K-12. The position will address needed capacity for direct involvement with students for state-mandated screenings and assessments; provide overall program support; and supervise and evaluate ELE teaching staff. The estimated salary is \$115,000 based on the experience and level of education and training for this role, which includes the coordinator stipend for a leadership role and 10 additional work days.
- The addition of a Reading Specialist at the middle level is recommended. This role, which would support Grades 7 and 8 in FY25, will work with students requiring interventions to provide expert reading support, as well as help train Oak Middle School educators in reading interventions and support them as they shift practice as we continue to systematize instructional support for students in need of reading support. In the same way that our Reading Specialists provide these kinds of support at the K-6 level, this will promote a stronger reading foundation for success in the upper middle and high school grades. This position is budgeted at \$100,000 based on the experience and level of education and training for this role.
- The Literacy Team  
The table below depicts the current staffing dedicated to literacy by level:

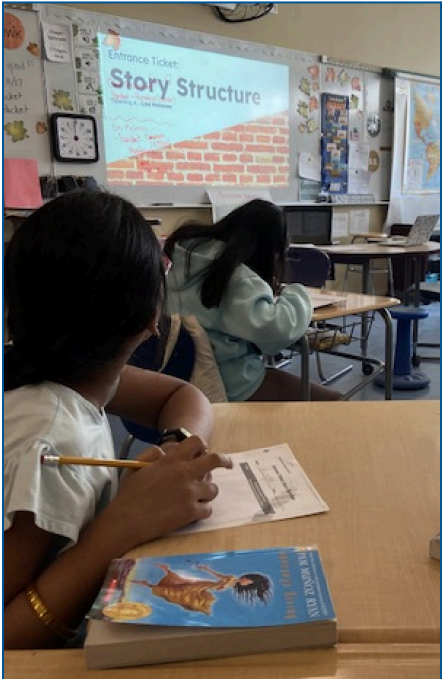


<b>Reading Specialist</b>	<b>Building(s)</b>	<b>Total Tutors (Head Count) &amp; Total Hours</b>
Maureen Henry	Coolidge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CCS: 3 tutors (65.5 hours per week)</li> </ul>
Vanessa Colleran	Floral & Paton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● FSS: 4 tutors (74 hours per week)</li> <li>● WJP: 2 tutors (39 hours per week)</li> </ul>
Heather Mistretta	Beal & Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● HWB: 4 tutors (117.5 hours per week)</li> <li>● SSS: 1 tutor (19.5 hours per week)</li> </ul>
Susan Direnzo	Sherwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SMS: 1 tutor (30 hours per week)</li> </ul>

We are in the process of adding a second tutor position at Sherwood and considering other additions of tutoring hours at K-4 by using ESSER-3 funds (see additional information on page 10 below). Briefly, by reallocating funds set aside for Summer Academy there will be enough grant money remaining to maintain these expanded hours next year. In this way we can more effectively match targeted intervention to the students that need it and provide consistent support.

*Materials*

After a year-long selection process in 2022-2023, the Literacy Council selected a new literacy program, the EL Education Literacy Curriculum. This year, the EL Implementation Team of 33 teachers (including general educators, special educators and one English language education teacher) are using this program with approximately 700 students. Their work, under the guidance of our Instructional Coach/ Curriculum Coordinators and Massachusetts Tiered Literacy consultant Kristin Osborne, will enable a successful full implementation of the program next year. I am pleased to report that students and teachers are finding the new program to be rigorous and highly engaging.



In order to provision all students and educators in Grades K-6 as planned, we will need additional investments. The cost of the new program, including teacher resources, student

workbooks and classroom sets of trade books, will cost approximately \$500,000. Fortunately, the district will not need to fund the full amount, as Shrewsbury received a \$250,000 High Quality Instructional Materials competitive grant from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Unfortunately, Shrewsbury was unable to secure grant funds to update our Social Studies materials at Shrewsbury High School. For this reason an additional \$60,000 for new textbooks is included in this year's budget.

As technology evolves, so too do instructional materials. Many curriculum materials are coupled with digital subscriptions that allow students to have broader access to content without requiring them to carry books back and forth to school. Given that these subscriptions require annual renewal they are also included in the Curriculum budget.

Finally, in our efforts to support equity and systemic thinking, it's important to note that costs that may have been covered by building-based funds are now included in the district budget, such as library books and subscriptions such as the online library Sora.

Due to inflation, the expenses of providing access to curriculum materials put pressure on the budget. For this reason the district has eagerly pursued grant opportunities.

### III. Grant Funds That Support Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

#### *COVID-specific Grant Funds*

Additional funds necessary to support the K-6 literacy initiative were provided in FY2024 through the use of federal grant funds. Specifically, the cost of renewing the Star Assessment Software last June for FY24 and FY25 came out of the ESSER-2 grant. This freed \$182,000 that would otherwise have been taken from the appropriated Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment budget for literacy materials. In January 2023, the ESSER-3 funding plan was revised to include \$55,000 for additional literacy tutoring hours in FY24 as well as \$28,472 to be used for curriculum materials, along with \$108,000 to fund Summer Academy academic programming. These funds supplemented the planned-for appropriations for texts, instructional equipment and educational supplies. We are in the process of determining an updated recommendation for how to utilize remaining ESSER-3 funds that can be spent through the early part of FY25 in the most impactful way, and will provide this recommendation before the FY25 appropriated budget is finalized. This recommendation will likely advocate using remaining funds to maintain increased literacy tutor hours during the 2024-2025 school year instead of having a Summer Academy program in 2024.

### Federal Grants

Less familiar to most people are the federal entitlement grants we receive annually for specific purposes. The table below shows how these grants supplement the Curriculum budget.

<i>Grant</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>FY24 SPS Allocation</i>
Title 1	*provides financial assistance to schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to provide additional academic support. *Currently Beal and Coolidge benefit	\$195,716
Title IIa	*used to improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals and other district leaders by supporting mentoring and professional development	\$83,701
Title III	*earmarked to help English learners and immigrant students succeed in school by providing access to rich educational experiences, including summer support	\$38,097
Title IV	*designed to support safe and healthy schools that provide all students and particularly marginalized children access to technology and experiences with the arts	\$13,673
FY24 Total Federal Grants		\$331,187

While it's safe to assume that our grant allocations should remain stable in the coming year, these funds alone are not sufficient to cover the cost of needed materials and programs. For example, the cost of the district mentoring program continues to exceed the district's Title IIa grant allocation. This same grant typically augments funds allocated within the budget for professional development, which means that for the past few years more of the appropriated budget was used for this purpose, leaving fewer dollars available for other expenses.

#### IV. Optimization of Resources and Additional Fiscal Efficiencies

In the past five years, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has encouraged districts to seek additional resources by offering partnerships with non-profit educational organizations and by providing competitive grant opportunities. As you know, Shrewsbury has been fortunate to receive several of these supports. The timing of these opportunities was also helpful in that grants became available as the district was seeking to purchase literacy materials.

As mentioned previously, this year we were awarded \$250,000 for the High Quality Instructional Materials grant. This grant will offset about half of the cost of provisioning all K-6 educators with the new EL Education Literacy Curriculum. Similarly the cost of ST Math for K-4 students is largely covered by a DESE program sponsored by the One8 Foundation (an estimated \$50,000 value, with the district paying about \$4,000).

Last year the district was accepted into two different three-year professional learning partnerships with a focus on improving outcomes for students. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Massachusetts Tiered Literacy Academy and the Instructional Prioritization group provided our district leaders at all levels access to consultant expertise at considerable savings. Educators and district leaders on the Literacy Council benefit from 60 hours of professional coaching for each year of the grant at no cost, including access to a self-paced course, training for district leaders, and two Summer Institute courses.

The professional learning organization who is providing consultation on instructional prioritization, TNTP, is furthering our efforts to close achievement opportunity gaps in the areas of Math in grades 5-6 and English and Social Sciences in Grade 9 at SHS, by providing job-embedded coaching for district leaders. Two consultants work with the district on site, and district leaders participate in a virtual learning network with area districts as well.

Shrewsbury is also fortunate to enjoy broad-based community support. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the role of Dr. Jane Lizotte, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships and Wellbeing, for her role in securing donations from local businesses. For example, the local Staples store donated Summer Reading postcards to help promote summer learning, a savings of approximately \$500.

*"Better is possible. It does not take genius. It takes diligence. It takes moral clarity. It takes ingenuity. And above all, it takes a willingness to try." (Atul Gawande)*

## V. Conclusion

The mark of a strong school district is the degree to which it prioritizes the needs of students and teachers. Our strategic goals are ambitious, and our educators are extraordinarily hardworking. This report endeavors to capture the curriculum, instruction and assessment needs required to maintain our current momentum toward improved academic outcomes for students in order to meet our district's strategic "commitment to educational excellence." I look forward to your questions and feedback as well. Thank you for your consideration.

