DATE: June 3, 2010
MEMO TO: Salem School Board
FROM: Michael W. Delahanty, Superintendent
RE: Analysis of Goal Status

### Analysis of Goal Status
2009-10 Goals

**Principles:**

1. **To continue to improve the delivery of all instruction, with priority on literacy and mathematics instruction,** and to quantify the educational performance of all students through a multi-dimensional assessment model.

**Rating – Developing**

As noted above, this principle continues to represent the highest of priorities and receive the bulk of our professional development attention. Mrs. Soley, Assistant Superintendent, has developed an attached spreadsheet that identifies the professional development programs we’ve offered. An accompanying memo explains the acronyms and abbreviations. The training is extensive and will continue during the upcoming school year as we move forward our math, literacy, and assessment training programs.

One further enhancement we’re beginning to explore is the tracking of student progress with standard assessments we’re having students complete. For example, student results on Children’s Progress and Progress Toward Standards 3 (PTS3) as well as scores on benchmark assessments, will be recorded. We will have baseline scores to determine what kind of growth, if any, students are making over a time period. It’s still early in the process with these particular assessments, and we’re not certain of the validity of student results, but with more experience and with further development from the company we should acquire the experience necessary to help us become better at “quantifying” performance.

With the assessment training being done by Measured Progress, based on Norm Webb’s Depth of Knowledge model and related teacher created assessments, along with the computer based testing being done at the elementary level, we are developing a stronger aptitude for informed student progress and achievement. However the complexity of the concept will require a steady approach and regular adjustments to ineffective strategies.
2. That an environment conducive to learning requires that students show respect to staff and fellow students, and that the school district personnel should model and expect such conduct and promote student self-worth.

Rating - Developing

An environment conducive to learning is a foundation for all that’s done in the district. Nothing good occurs unless we sustain high expectations for professional staff and, in turn, the staff holds high expectations for students. Regrettably, there have been circumstances this year when our professional staff has not met expected standards, and occasions when students have not adhered to rules of conduct. In such circumstances it’s important for administrators and Board members to put the well-being of the broader district first. This helps to uphold the foundation of expectations. I believe this occurred and signaled a strong message that high standards are required.

Though there is no formal program for character education, consistent rules help to uphold school decorum. Though as stated there are occasional deviations from the modeling we expect, and the respect students and staff should demonstrate, a formal program for character education can be delayed as long as we continue to remind staff and students of the expected rules of deportment. If so, we will continue to have the quality culture we need to deliver the type of education we want.

A change in New Hampshire’s bullying law as well as a recent local incident has prompted Mrs. Soley to schedule administrator training in bullying awareness and prevention. Follow-up will take place during the next school year. Included in any rule changes or policy revisions will be mention of the concept of “cyber-bullying”. I believe attention to this issue is another way we can address this Board principle.

3. To continue to appropriately infuse technology into every aspect of the learning process.

Rating - Developing

I strongly believe this principle must remain in place as technology in the learning process remains a viable source of instructional efficiency. Several members of the leadership team have worked to integrate applications into their schools or instructional areas. We expanded our individual student licenses for the I CAN Learn Algebra support software because of student successes. We introduced two elementary school applications, ALEX and Education City, that have shown some promise. In a recent meeting with an elementary school staff, the teachers spoke confidently and specifically about teaching and re-teaching opportunities presented by the different software. They were specifically enthused about web-based applications that are much more sophisticated than what has been available in the recent past.

Our purchases of netbooks; the wireless infrastructure; and our hardware architecture all contribute to these opportunities, and there might not be a similar emphasis without the significant support of such a principle established by the School Board.

We continue to have success with Virtual High School and Virtual Learning Academy that offer worthwhile courses that serve to expand electives or provide credit recovery for students that have failed some courses. In fact, such opportunities combined with available web application software might help us to eventually eliminate the summer program as we currently know it. The virtual learning environment, while still relatively unproven, is a practical alternative for some students.

Finally, the computer-based testing we’ve asked students to complete offers another area of efficient infusion of technology into the learning process. The early response provides guided direction for next steps. Our responsibility now is to collect tangible data indicating the level of value this assessment information provides.
4. To promote public involvement in school and district issues.

Status - Developing

The support of our capital project warrant article is an indication that public involvement is critical to the success of our initiatives. The Board has been successful two years running with significant initiatives. The first was kindergarten and the second was this year’s bond article. In neither of these years could we have been successful without a broad public support campaign. As previously mentioned, public involvement generally has to be targeted at a tangible outcome rather than expected as a matter of course. The Board should maintain this as a principle because it is our practice, but we have to be cognizant of a need to establish a communication plan as a strong foundation if we are to move beyond promoting and to realizing public involvement.

Non-Capital Goals:

- To infuse the use of Salem School District technology into the way we do business on a regular basis.

Status - Developing

This year I struggled with the concept of a part-time Director of Information Technology and the supervision of IT staff. Consequently, I recommended a diminished role for George Morris and elevated Ryan Mahoney to full-time Director for next year. With this change, and further personnel changes within the department, I expect more progress on this goal during the upcoming year and recommend that it continue. I believe we’ve demonstrated that technology can create efficiencies for us through the use of different types of management-related software applications, but more opportunities are available. Some of these opportunities are costly. This includes an enhanced version of BudgetSense that offers interrelated electronic personnel forms. However at the current price such an enhanced version doesn’t offer comparably related reduced expenses. We’ll continue to weigh benefits as opportunities are presented.

Training offered later in June will advance the development of individual or team web sites for as many as fifty teachers. This will help efforts to improve communication through helping staff better understand the opportunities presented by SharePoint.

I encourage the Board to maintain this goal with an expectation that we continue to progress toward greater efficiencies.

- To enhance the physical appearance of school district properties through an increased emphasis on existing grounds and landscaping and attention to refurbishing exterior facades with a commitment to fund that effort.

Status - Developing

The 2009-2010 school year brought a more specific focus to landscaping and exterior facades. Capital improvement projects to address the exterior appearance of our buildings generally had been limited to paving. As noted in previous years, the facilities audit did not address exterior building attributes other than the finishes on the libraries of the three larger elementary schools and the granite columns on the high school library. The granite columns will be addressed this coming year as will the aforementioned library finishes.

Through PTA groups and other private sources, we’ve been able to enhance some of our building appearances with new hardscape and plantings. We continue to emphasize pride in exterior appearances; however our manpower is limited and we learned last spring that contracting with local services is cost
prohibitive. This is an area the board can continue as a goal, but with other priorities and work underway at three elementary schools, it’s likely to continue to receive limited attention unless administrators are otherwise directed by the Board.

- **To continue our partnership with third party facility users and other interested groups to fund the Athletic Facilities Trust Fund in order to renovate and maintain the district’s athletic facilities.**

  **Status – Developing**

  There continues to be interest in developing better athletic facilities and all stakeholder groups are committed to supporting this effort. I’ve met continually throughout this past year with a group of community members that were certain we could have a turf field project for Grant Field completed by fall. Though this effort continues, and it continues with some hope that something will be done for this fall, it appears more and more likely that we will be waiting until the spring/summer of 2011. Some consideration might be given to soliciting a level of enhancements through the ballot process. Since inception, we’ve deposited $8900 into the fund, and we have another $11,100 to contribute to the Trust by the end of our current fiscal year. At this rate of deposit, and without some creative funding sources, it would take quite some time before sufficient funding via this resource is available for field renovation. With that stated, however, a possible improvement example would be to install natural sod on a field for $50,000 or so. This is simply an example of one possible renovation project, however a natural turf field does not have the same staying power as artificial turf. With this example, the field would be improved, but we would still face reduced availability for use.

- **To implement multi-year funding of collective bargaining agreements on warrants and ballots.**

  **Status - Beginning**

  Though the Board has made some effort to craft warrant articles that ensure costs for contract obligations are included in our operating budget, there has been little opportunity to do so given our recent negotiations and contract settlements. The effort is most worthwhile, and a commitment from the Board will continue to bring public attention to this concept. Attention alone has merit.

- **To revitalize our relationship with State and National School Board Associations, including a commitment to have a member(s) attend the National School Board Association Convention.**

  **Status - Beginning**

  The Board included costs for this purpose in the proposed 2010-2011 budget. The funds were removed by the Budget Committee and there was no restoration made at the Deliberative Session. This is a matter Board members can discuss and weigh related pros and cons of maintaining this as a goal.

- **To develop a plan for the housing of a full day kindergarten program.**

  **Status – Developing**

  The Facilities Plan for our elementary school expansions includes future space for full-day kindergarten. In effect, this can be considered the plan for housing a full day program. The physical space can be part of a future addition for the three schools currently under development, and the Board can seriously consider the value of including the space within the scope of phase II of our master plan project. Alternatively, the Board might want to consider including the full day kindergarten space as part of the
targeted phase II schools – Fisk, Haigh, and Soule. The likelihood of the community supporting a revisiting of the current schools undergoing renovation is remote.
The Board also can consider the planned tuition-based full day kindergarten upcoming for 2010-2011 and determine whether or not to direct the administration to continue this effort into the 2011-2012 school year. With added classroom space it might be a practical consideration. The fact that we’re very close to adding a third full day classroom option, this one at Barron School, is an indication that a need exists.

Capital Goals:

1. To support the Facilities Master Plan for the renovation of Salem School District facilities by obtaining funding for construction costs.

   Status – Developing/Secure

   The Board can take a great deal of satisfaction in acknowledging the success of earning voter support for funding Phase I costs. The administration diligently will continue to ensure timely completion of the project within the cost parameters. The Board will concede that this is the first phase of a multi-phase effort, and though the initial support is gratifying, there remains a need for substantially more effort as we consider the next phases.

2. To fund Capital Improvement renovations to all district buildings as recommended in the 2005 Facilities Audit annually at a rate of 2% of the facilities’ value.

   Status – Developing

   The Board successfully earned support for a line item in the upcoming operating budget that reflects just over 1% of the facilities’ value. This is the second year the Board has withstood criticism for including the funds in the operating budget rather than in a separate warrant article.

   The focus likely now will turn to the middle and high school as the elementary renovation project begins. Placed in context with the successful bond article, the Board can plan to continue placing funding in the budget for this purpose as we’ve still not reached the necessary commitment identified in 2005. However, the Board might also consider having another facilities audit completed for 2011-2012 – perhaps most specifically for the middle and high schools. This information will be helpful and necessary as the current information reaches the five-year anniversary mark.

   The Facilities Audit has served its purpose as a resource and guide for prioritizing identified deficiencies, and this funding within the operating budget should help sustain efforts toward improvements. Consideration should be given to maintaining the goal toward eventually achieving the 2% value.

   I have attached a list of the likely projects to recommend for support within the 2011-2012 school district operating budget. Board members will note that the projects primarily address the high school and the elementary schools not included in phase I renovations.