# Livingston Public Schools District Goals 2020-2021 Mid-Year Update

February 8, 2021

# What are Focus Areas?

- Areas we want to highlight and prioritize.

- Not the only focus of the Board or the Administration; we have many areas of focus.

- Developed jointly between Administration and Board.

- Required approval of the Board by the end of September of each school year.

- Consistency of goals provides for deeper impacts and clear direction.

# Focus Area #1

**Improve the culture and community within Livingston Public Schools by enhancing inclusiveness, cultural awareness, anti-racism, and acceptance of individual differences through mandated curricular programming, extracurricular programming, and district operations.**

# Focus Area #1:  Action Steps

Create an Equity Leadership Advisory Team (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Administrators, Teachers, Counselors, Students, Community Members,etc) to:

- ❖ **Identify and evaluate existing efforts to engage in culturally responsive practices and determine new ways to raise awareness of and promote best practices across the district at every level (elementary, middle school, high school).**
- ❖ **Work with teachers to make instruction more responsive to diversity, and inclusive of various cultures.**
- ❖ **Strategically implement professional development and school-based programming focused on diversity, anti-racism, and cultural inclusivity in teaching and learning in order to create a common language and set of expectations for the school community.**

# Focus Area #1:  Intended Outcomes

1.  Establishing an Equity Leadership Advisory Team in order to identify district-wide action steps to operationalize this goal.

2.  Scheduling Equity meetings with the Equity Team, teachers, and student leaders.

3.  Identify and execute a method for gathering feedback (i.e. normative survey, culture and climate survey, other tools) on current culture and climate in LPS.

4.  Reviewing curriculum documents for evidence of cultural responsiveness, required diversity-connected curricular mandates, and  resources.  Revising curriculum documents where needed enhancements are identified.

5.  Creating curricular and instructional tools for staff regarding matters of social justice, equity, culturally responsiveness, civility, and empathy.

# Focus Area #1: Intended Outcomes (Cont'd)

6. Reviewing professional development offered to teachers at all levels. Creating and implementing additional professional development programs as identified.

7. English Language Arts and Social Studies Departments collaborate to create integrated and synthesized units of study; select a more comprehensive booklist, provide training in facilitating difficult conversations around race and social justice, and in addressing current events related to these areas. Teachers will work age-appropriately at all levels to instill the knowledge and skills required to successfully engage in civil and academic discourse.

8. Engage in community conversations with appropriate members to continue to identify and evaluate the needs of our students and our school community.

9. Conduct community outreach connected to cultural awareness, harassment, intimidation, and bullying practices, and issues of social justice. Identify and implement an anti-bias framework that spans academics, student affairs, and community outreach.

# Focus Area #1:  UPDATE
# Equity Teams - Great Schools

- **Great Schools Partnership identified and hired as consultants working with the district to correct equity and inclusion.**

- **District Equity Leadership Advisory Team established and meeting weekly since October.**

- **Building Equity Teams have been established at every school.  These teams now include administrators, parents, teachers, and will soon include student leaders.**

- **Individuals were initially invited to volunteer based on interest, experience, and expertise in a diversity of areas.  School based teams asked for volunteers.**

# Focus Area #1: UPDATE
# Equity Teams - Great Schools - Process

**Step 1. Establishment of a District Equity Team** comprising of representatives from the central office, educators from each school, students from the middle school and high school, parents and guardians, and community members.

**Step 2. Set a vision and articulate a two- or three-year plan** of what the district will do to address inequities and divisions, work on community engagement, build support and shared understanding for equity, anti-racism, diversity, and inclusion work.

**Step 3. Support school-based teams** in the determination and understanding of their site-based needs and in the subsequent development of action steps and strategies to reach their stated goals.

**Step 4. Expand the circle of community-based partners** (e.g. town equity team, community-based groups, faith-based organizations) and work in partnership to host community conversations about race - GSP will help bring these groups together and provide coaching support around the particular leadership moves that will help bring such organizations together.

# Focus Area #1: UPDATE
# Equity Teams - How are the teams established?

**Assistant Superintendent Serving as Leader of this District Initiative**

- Admins, Supervisors, Teachers, School Counselors, SAC, Directors volunteered.
- Small group of admins was started - that group expanded to include teachers and staff first, then District ABS's to lead building equity teams; these staff were invited and assigned the role.
- District committee has 22 people on it.
- Added to the building equity there is nearly 150 different people on an equity team.

**Building teams are co-led by Principals and ABS's**

- Great School Consultants led the meetings to establish norms, set goals, and start the work.
- LHS members of the Culturally Responsive Classroom Committee were invited to participate.
- Elementary / Middle Schools asked for volunteers; parents were invited to volunteer for the committee.
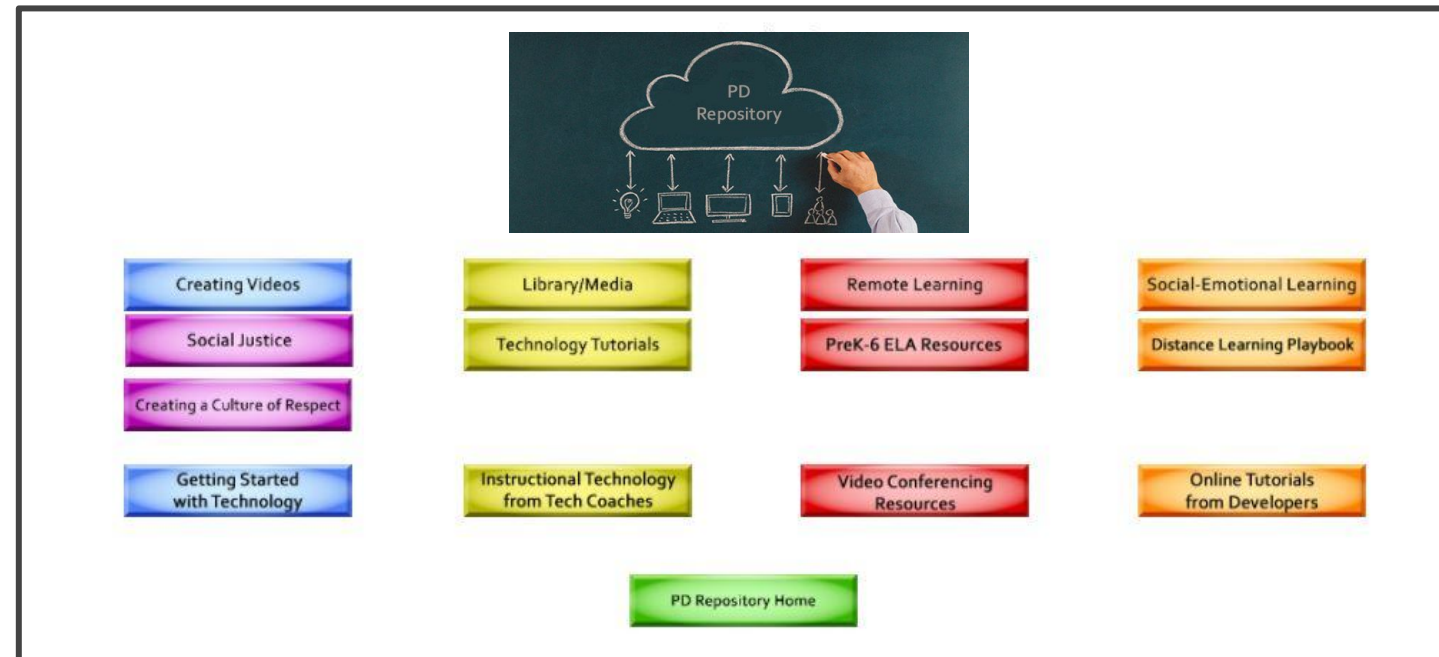
# Focus Area #1:  UPDATE
# Focused Programming Initiatives

- Worked directly with secondary students over the summer in "listening" groups to understand feelings regarding challenges associated with race and inclusion.

- Academic Departments have begun collaborating to create integrated and synthesized units of study; select a more comprehensive booklist, provide training in facilitating difficult conversations around race and social justice, and in addressing current events related to these areas.  Teachers will work age-appropriately at all levels to instill the knowledge and skills required to successfully engage in civil and academic discourse.

- High School Teacher participated in a community forum on race for Martin Luther King weekend and highlighted the proactive work the district is doing on this issue.

# Focus Area #1: UPDATE
# Staff Resources and Professional Development

- **Building and District Equity Teams Reviewing professional development offered to teachers at all levels. Teams will use information to create and implement additional professional development programs as identified.**

- **Created a repository of resources on the topics of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism.**
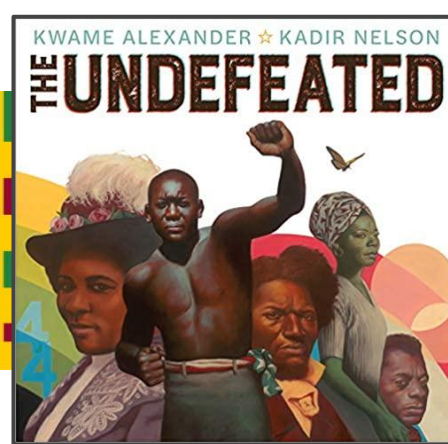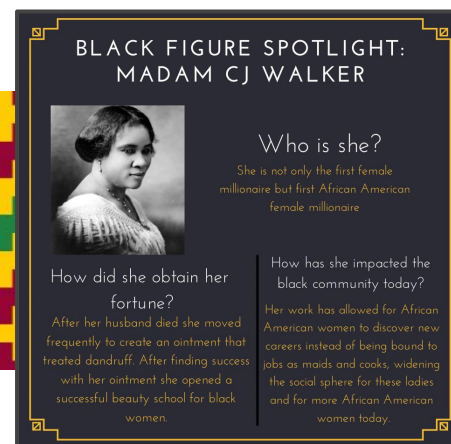
# Focus Area #1:  UPDATE
# Celebration of Diversity - Highlights

- **Media Specialists, Teachers, and Administrators working to bring in new books and curricular materials representing diverse authors and to expand cultural variety.**

- **Clubs at secondary schools from Diversity Club, Key Club, Spectrum Club (LGBTQ), Livingston Minds Matter (Mental Health), Black Student Union, Gender Sexuality Alliance, Heritage Clubs (Multiple),  Black and Latino Club, Culture-Based Clubs (multiple).**

- **High School Culturally Responsive Classroom Committee** (has been in place for 3 years). **Working to launch high school advisory program for 2021-2022 school year.**

- **Elementary:  Redesigning curriculum to reflect diversity including literature, music, and community meeting sessions.**

# Focus Area #1:  UPDATE
# Upcoming Special Events - Highlights

- **Media Center Celebration of Black History Month**
- **Black Student Union - Spotlights**
- **Reading of story "The Undefeated" by Kwame Alexander - Multiple Elementary Schools**
- **Upcoming forum on Amanda Gorman's Poem,  "The Hill We Climb"**

# Focus Area #1:  UPDATE
# Looking Ahead

- **Developing process for gathering feedback around school culture and climate. This will be included in the work of the Equity Teams.**

- **Teams working to establish norms, goals, and begin a systematic process for communicating (listening and speaking) about equity, diversity, inclusion  and anti-racism.**

- **Soon we will start to engage in larger information sharing to establish understandings by the larger community that we are considering lots of questions as professionals, students, and parents regarding the ways in which we engage in conversations about anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion.**

# Focus Area #2

**Review and refine strategies to enhance instruction and student learning outcomes in Elementary and Middle School Mathematics, Grades K-8.**

# Focus Area #2: Action Steps

- **Oversee and monitor implementation of a new elementary mathematics program K-2 and facilitate an expansion of instructional strategies in Grades 3-8 in preparation for this curriculum transition.**

- **Measure growth at each grade level through periodic benchmark assessments and collect and analyze data related to the effects of the new program and instructional enhancements on student learning outcomes.**

- **Ensure ample professional development opportunities for teachers who are using the new program in Grade 2 and continue implementing new strategies in Grades 3-8.**

# Focus Area #2: Outcomes

1. Successfully creating a remote learning guide and resource manual for implementation of the new curriculum.

2. Compiling Student Growth Objective (SGO) data to demonstrate student achievement at each grade level utilizing the new program.

3. Analyzing the observation feedback provided to teachers implementing the new math program in grades K-2 to inform professional development meant to improve instructional practice.

4. Provide a presentation to the Board of Education that includes data representative of the impact of the new math curriculum on student achievement. Share next steps in refining implementation of curriculum and instruction in this area.

# Focus Area #2:  UPDATE  - General

- **Professional development provided to teachers K-2 since the summer including *Math In Focus* PD on pacing, instructional strategies, pedagogy, planning.  PD has happened at Department Meetings, special professional development meetings.**

- **All materials ordered and received to support teachers using the new *Math in Focus* program.**

- **Teachers have observed sample lessons and reflected on those lessons to build capacity.**

- **Principals and supervisors have provided in-classroom coaching and support through lesson observations.**

# Focus Area #2:  UPDATE - Program

- **Introduction of new problem solving approach and math vocabulary lessons in grades 3-8 to align with new *Math in Focus* program.**

- **Teachers at upper levels are having conversations about new approaches to problem solving and incorporating them into lesson at all levels.**

- **Working to teach in a workshop structure K-8.**

- **Regular analysis conducted of data including assessment results and LinkIt! data.**

- **Development of new common assessments for mathematics grades 3-5.**

- **Conducted two sessions of K-2 Parent Academy to help families provide students with support in the Math in Focus program.**

# Focus Area #2:  Assessment of Progress Toward Goal

- **First graders experienced *Math in Focus* in Kindergarten and will be assessed at the end of this year.**
- **Second graders are assessed three times each year to measure progress in math.**

**December - Form A / March - Form B / June - Form C**

**SECOND GRADE AVERAGE SCORES ON FORM A - Second Graders this year scored higher than second graders last year.  This year's second graders was the first group of second graders to experience *Math in Focus* for a full year.**

| FORM A - 2019-20:  57% | FORM A - 2020-21*:  73% |
|---|---|

*This year's 2nd grade cohort went up in both ELA and Math, but went up 7 points more in math.

# Focus Area #2: UPDATE
# Professional Development - Ongoing

- *Math in Focus* consultants conduct initial training for all teachers. This starts the year before the curriculum cycles up. A full day of professional development was conducted with each teacher by the *Math In Focus* trainers.

- Book studies on guided math for all elementary teachers. *Becoming the Math Teacher You Wish You Had*, by Tracy Johnston Zager was one of several key books.

- Ongoing push in lessons (coaching lessons) from Math Supervisor.

- Regular (weekly) professional development sessions for small groups of teachers.

# Focus Area #2:  UPDATE
# Outreach to Families - Ongoing

**Math-focused parent nights held throughout the year:**

- **Two K-2 Parent Nights held so far this year.**

- **One 3-5 Parent Night held so far this year.**

- **Additional family math nights planned and are upcoming.**

- **Each parent program this year has been attended by between 150-200 participants.**

# Focus Area #3

**Identify and incorporate effective instructional methodologies that create positive social and emotional support for students.**

# Focus Area #3:  Action Steps

- Gather data regarding current implementation of SEL standards (NJDOE and CASEL) both in curriculum and in practice in order to inform changes to both.

- Continue to analyze what effective instruction looks like through the lens of the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) core competencies via the Danielson Teacher Evaluation Rubric.

- Engage faculty and staff in professional development that allows for the understanding of core beliefs about instructional practices that best foster social and emotional growth.

- Define how we promote and operationalize these approaches throughout the district.

- Reinforce a common language surrounding socially and emotionally supportive instructional practices.

# Focus Area #3:  Outcomes

1. Expanding PDP focus and Professional Development in SEL strategies for in-person, hybrid, and remote learning, including continued periodic joint meetings between School Counselors and Classroom Teachers to increase collaboration time and expand use of effective SEL strategies.

2. Analyzing observation and lesson plans of teachers/faculty implementing SEL core competencies.

3. Expanding SEL outreach to additional stakeholders.

# Focus Area #3:  UPDATE

- **Currently developing and preparing to launch a school counselor survey for all students in grades 3 - 12 to monitor and track student self-reported social and emotional wellness, to guide future programming and to implement interventions.**

- **Promoting effective instruction through the lens of the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) core competencies as observed through the Danielson Teacher Evaluation Rubric by emphasizing these competencies through daily observations and post-observation conferences with staff as well in administrative meetings.**

**DANIELSON POWER COMPONENTS:**

- ❖ **Knowing and valuing your students.**
- ❖ **Building responsive learning environments.**
- ❖ **Engaging students in learning.**

# Focus Area #3: UPDATE Focuses

- **Focused SEL professional development to start the year. Continuing and ongoing PD through department meeting PD, Livingston U and our PD repository.**

- **Provided information about SEL through Livingston U courses, and constant sharing of webinars, resources, and tools. School counselors promote and create lessons and tools for teachers to use within the classroom, in addition to delivering school counseling lessons.**

- **Fully embraced district wide The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to provide a common framework and common language. Evidence-based SEL resources and tools are constantly circulated amongst teachers, counselors, supervisors and Principals. CASEL framework is included in every written curriculum document with essential resources and strategies.**

Teachers have received training in methodologies that infuse SEL skills and standards into their teaching as well as increase their empathy and sensitivity.

Books such as *Teaching to Strengths*, *The Culturally Responsive Classroom*, *The Morning Meeting*, and others have been utilized as guides for this work.



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# Focus Area #3: UPDATE
# Practical Application - 7th Grade Science

**As a practical example of SEL in the "general classroom," the following was observed in a recent 7th grade science lesson:**

- Teacher provides a daily "attendance check in" that asks students questions that include key questions related to self-regulation, decision-making, social connectedness, learning attitudes.

- Students complete this each day and the teacher has a chance to look at the results to determine each child's readiness for learning that day.

- Teacher connects with students in small groups if they need extra attention.

- Students routinely reflect on their readiness to learning, their decision making, relationship building, and social connectedness as a tool for self-awareness.

- At the end of the lesson students are asked if they have any stressors and tools for improving the situation and to reflect on those.

# Focus Area #3: UPDATE
# Other Instructional SEL Information

**Going Forward we are assessing our SEL Efforts through:**

- ❖ Advisory lesson formative assessments;

- ❖ Teacher gathered formative assessment;

- ❖ Conversations with teachers, school counselors, CST, and administrators to look at anecdotal information. This feedback is key to understanding the extent to which teachers are practicing SEL instruction in the classroom.

**We communicate with families about SEL through the following avenues:**

- ❖ Building based SEL nights;
- ❖ Building based HSA meetings where SEL is an agenda item;
- ❖ Parent Academy sessions on SEL scheduled via Zoom with sign ups etc;
- ❖ Screencasts on District SEL website https://www.livingston.org/domain/2435

# Focus Area #3:  UPDATE
# Professional Development for Staff

- **Department and building meetings including cross-department meetings**

- **Team and grade level meetings**

- **Faculty book studies**

- **Formal professional development from administrators and supervisors**
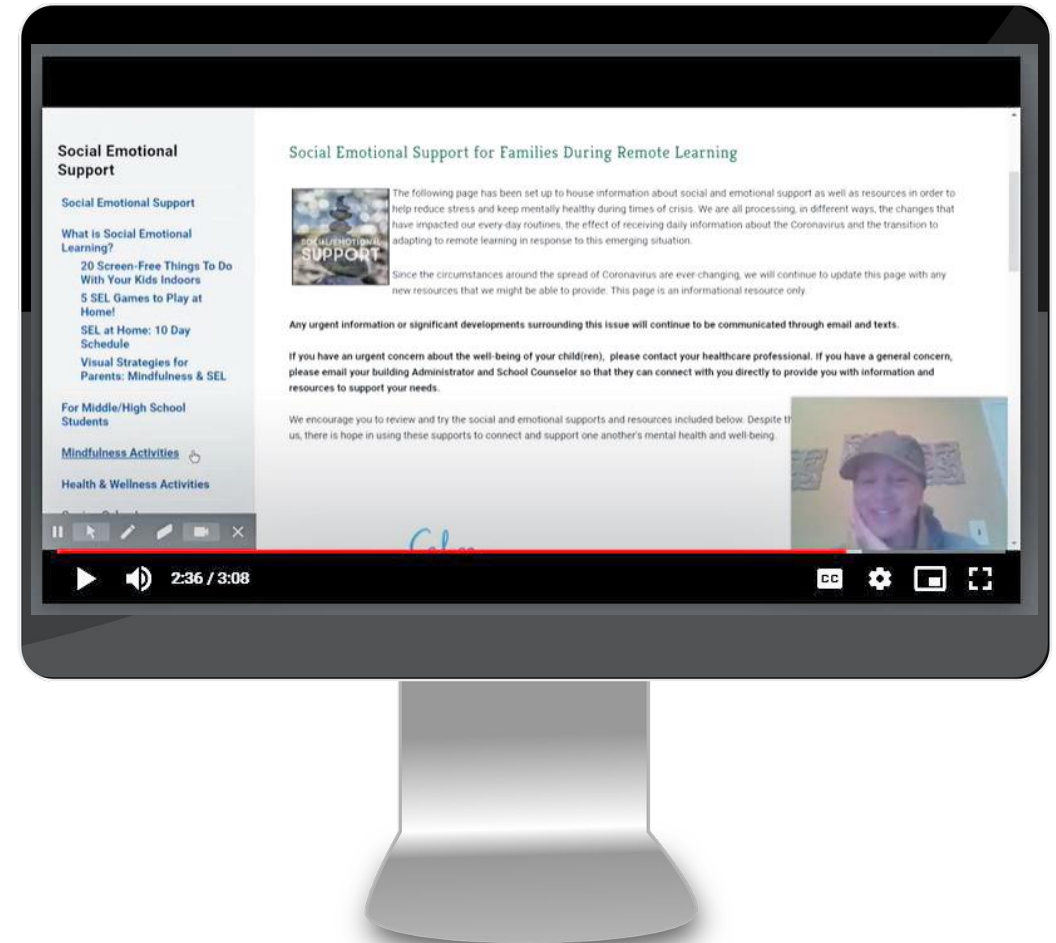
# Focus Area #4

**Increase capacity of teachers to utilize instructional technology to deliver effective in-person, hybrid, or remote learning experiences to advance student growth and achievement in all areas.**

# Focus Area #4:  Action Steps

- Gauge student entry points using effective assessment strategies to establish baseline data from which to plan instruction.

- Design and/or redesign instructional units based on the baseline data to remediate any deficiencies and advance students' learning.

- Establish streamlined communication with parents and families and provide targeted training in order to partner with them in supporting student growth.

- Consult the continuum of skills and standards identified in the curriculum when designing individual learning experiences to ensure continued growth.

- Design teacher observation and feedback tools to support strong teaching in a remote/hybrid environment.

# Focus Area #4:  Outcomes

1.  Providing professional development in instructional technology to help teachers facilitate in-person, hybrid, and remote instruction.

2.  Observing teachers and lesson plans implementing strategies for successful remote and hybrid learning.

3.  Expanding administrator training in applying, anchoring, and updating observation and evaluation rubrics to remote and hybrid learning environments.

4.  Creating a thorough repository of resources for teachers regarding remote and hybrid learning.

# Focus Area #4:  UPDATE
# Ongoing Professional Development

- **Creation of PD Repository, weekly technology tips and multiple training sessions for staff increased proficiency levels in District programs and as a result, teachers were more effectively able to enable utilize technology with students.**

- **Individual appointments for staff or collaboration during department meetings with tech coaches and sometimes classes to provide training as needed including training on district programs, help with planning lessons, and designing assessments.**

- **Planning bi-weekly training sessions on District programs.  Upcoming trainings include NewsELA, EdPuzzle and Kami.**

# Focus Area #4:  UPDATE
## Specific PD - Technology Programs

- September 3rd PD day included topics on Flipgrid, GoGuardian, Nearpod, Zoom, Schoology for Secondary Teachers (beginning and advanced), SeeSaw, BrainPop, and Google Classroom.

- Additional PD at staff meetings or scheduled times during the day with the technology coaches included topics on GoGuardian, iPad training for Math & Science Departments, Science Department training to setup for hybrid instruction with macbook and projectors, Zoom breakout rooms, Swank, Macbook training, Incident IQ Help Desk, NewsELA, Kami, and EdPuzzle.

- Assisted teachers, administrators and counselors in learning screencasting for programs, classes and parent Back to School night programs.

# Focus Area #4:  UPDATE
# Parent Support and Empowerment

- Developed a tech help request form and in-person help desk for parents to get assistance with technology needs and issues.  Since September, the technicians have responded to 4,142 requests and provided daily in-person appointments.

- Created a parent technology website to provide training materials on the District communication and collaboration platforms - SeeSaw, Google Classroom and Schoology.

- Conducted an introduction to Schoology webinar for parents.

- Conducted a Genesis for Parents webinar.

- Individual meetings with parents to assist with Schoology and Genesis questions/assistance.

# Focus Area #4:  UPDATE
# Teacher Efficacy

- **Feedback from staff to tech coaches has been positive in that they feel more confident in the use of their tools and they continuously book time with individual tech coaches when assistance is needed or to continue learning more tools and strategies.  Staff are asking questions about new websites or programs that will help them branch out more with their instructional strategies.  Teachers are doing more complicated tasks with technology.**

- **Tech coaches, supervisors, building principals regularly check-in with staff to find out what support they feel they need.**

- **Our data analytics tool on the use of programs in the District enables us to monitor usage on District approved tools and helps guide future PD sessions.**

# GOING FORWARD

- **Keep goals the center of discussion for professional development, faculty and department meetings, as well as Administrative Council discussions.**

- **Leverage work with Great Schools Partnership by seeking new information on school climate, gathered through community outreach.**

- **Continue data analysis, observation focus, and utilize meeting times to keep goals in the forefront.**

- **Utilize one-on-one meetings and observations with teachers and administrators to gather information and provide feedback on the impact of Goals 2, 3, and 4 on classroom practice.**

- **Communicate with with staff and students to get feedback on goals.**

- **Ensure momentum progressing through action plans and desired outcomes to ensure progression and growth.**

# Questions?