



<b>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b>			
Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School		To-Be-Implemented 2010-2011	
Principal: Thomas L. Brow, Jr.		Council Co-Chair: Amy Morrison	
Signature:	Date:	Signature:	Date:
To be completed by School Committee			
Received (Date):		Approved: [ ]–Yes [ ]–No Date:	

The four major areas of responsibility for school councils are defined in the Educational Reform Act as follows: to adopt educational goals for the school, consistent with and complementary to city-wide, state and federal minimum goals; to identify the educational needs of students attending the school; to review the school’s annual budget; and to formulate a school improvement plan. The Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Council has developed a 2010-2011 School Improvement Plan that addresses these four major areas and aligns with the goals of the current Melrose Comprehensive District Improvement Plan. While developing the School Improvement Plan, the Council considered district goals, needs of the school, and a plan of action.

**Preamble**

We, the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Council, believe that as we look for solutions to our school’s issues, we must keep in mind that middle level schooling, which services students between the ages of ten and fourteen, is a distinct level of education. Each middle school student has particular intellectual, physical, social and emotional needs that require an appropriately responsive middle school. Any changes to programs, policies, or practices must take into consideration this distinct level of teaching and learning known as “middle school education.”

The members of the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Council believe that all twenty-five goals and sixty-one items in the School Improvement Plan are necessary to make our school more successful. However, we would like to emphasize several issues we feel are paramount to improving Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. Such items are as follows:

- The recovery of teaching positions lost due to the budget reductions in prior years; this would reduce large class sizes.

- The restoration of a second assistant principal now that the new school has opened.
- The hiring of an auditorium facilities manager to monitor, operate, and/or maintain the beautiful new facility especially prior to, during and after rental endeavors.
- The hiring of a mechanical facilities manager-technician with expertise and/or training in HVAC systems, electrical systems, roofing units, computer technology and a wide variety of mechanical expertise.

**Goal 1 - District Improvement Goal (Curriculum):** To improve the quality of Pre K-12 education by continuing the process of aligning Melrose's curriculum with state frameworks and creating academically challenging standards-based learning environments for all students, especially in the areas of mathematics, English/language arts, and science and technology/engineering.

ITEMS 1 – 3 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 1. The Council recommends that efforts continue to be made to ensure that all students' educational needs can be identified and met, in accordance with a Melrose District Curriculum Accommodation Plan.** A major goal of the DCAP is to increase Mathematics, English/Language Arts, and Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS scores by measurable increments. The council believes special consideration should be made to identify and meet the needs of students in the following subgroups: 1) Special education students, 2) Students who receive free and/or reduced lunch, 3) Students of color (race and ethnicity), and 4) English Language Learners (ELL) students.

The School Council also endorses the *Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School 2009-2010 MCAS Action Plan and School Performance Evaluation Instrument* as a means of meeting this goal. Some of the topics in the MCAS Action Plan that relate directly to improving MCAS scores and meeting Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) goals include the following:

- 1.1 Curriculum
- 1.2 Instructional Practices
- 1.3 Instructional Materials and Equipment
- 1.4 Instructional Technology
- 1.5 Climate for Learning
- 1.6 Student Assessments
- 3.3 Special Education
- 3.4 Academic Support Services
- 4.3 Evaluation
- 4.4 Parent and Community Engagement

Many efforts are already underway in support of this item, the DCAP and the MCAS action plan. The Spring 2009 MCAS Test scores (English Language Arts 6, Math 6, English Language Arts 7, Math 7, English Language Arts 8, Math 8, and Science and Technology/Engineering 8) have already been analyzed by the faculty. Plans have been developed to help all students who received a “warning” or “needs improvement,” with special attention being paid to the subgroups. Some strategies and highlights aimed at helping students succeed include:

- Individual Student Success Plans (ISSP) have been designed for all students with “Warning” scores.
- Aggregate and disaggregate data from Spring 2009 MCAS Test Items has been analyzed. Plans have been created to support students in the following subgroups who need help: 1) Free and Reduced Lunch, 2) Minorities, 3) Special Education, and 4) ELL students.
- This is the second year for a school-wide activity known as MCAS Math Practice Mondays and MCAS English Practice Tuesdays. The Math Department Head and the English Department Head submit weekly MCAS practice packets to the math and English teachers and students. The practice questions are also posted weekly online at [www.melroseschools.com/mms](http://www.melroseschools.com/mms).
- This is the fifth year of a new plan for Math 6. Sixth grade students are divided into three teams, thereby reducing the mathematics class size on each team. All sixth-grade students participate in a double math program. Students are instructed in Math 6, which meets every day for 49 minutes. Sixth grade students also take an MCAS Prep 6 class, which meets daily for 49 minutes on a rotating basis.
- All sixth grade students will have access to mathematics instruction, aligned with the Curriculum Frameworks, which has been proven successful based upon past practices in analyzing data. This is the fifth year of this initiative. Math teachers meet at grade level meetings to ensure consistency in the delivery of instruction.
- All sixth grade students have their own online Grade 6 MCAS mathematics and English language arts accounts at [www.studyisland.com](http://www.studyisland.com).
- All seventh grade students continue to take pre-algebra (seventh year of implementation).
- All seventh grade students have an MCAS Prep 7 course (fourth year of implementation).
- All seventh grade students have an opportunity for online computer-aided instruction at [www.glencoe.com/sec/math/studytools/ost.php4/ma](http://www.glencoe.com/sec/math/studytools/ost.php4/ma).
- All seventh grade students have their own online Grade 7 MCAS mathematics and English language arts accounts at [www.studyisland.com](http://www.studyisland.com) (third year of implementation).
- All eighth grade students take algebra (sixth year of implementation).
- All eighth grade students have an additional supplementary MCAS Math Prep 8 course (sixth year of implementation).
- All eighth grade students have their own online Grade 8 MCAS mathematics, English language arts, and science accounts at [www.studyisland.com](http://www.studyisland.com).

- Middle School Math Team meets regularly in the MVMMS Victoria McLaughlin Library. This is the fourth year the Math Team is competing in the Eastern Massachusetts Intermediate Math League against the following schools: Marblehead Middle School, Swampscott Middle School, Danvers Middle School, and the St. Mary's School in Lynn.
- This is the fifth year Middle School students have participated in the MathCOUNTS program. A selected team will compete in the MathCOUNTS meet to be held on February 6, 2010 at Roxbury Latin High School. The MathCOUNTS Team practices regularly after school and periodically during the G-Block MCAS class.
- Mandatory after school math help sessions based on MCAS data are required at all grade levels.
- Emphasis has been placed on math and English language arts instruction in Learning Strategies 6, Learning Strategies 7, and Learning Strategies 8 special education classes.
- TestWiz training has been given to selected members of the faculty including all math teachers. A refresher course was held for the principal, teachers, and other stakeholders to help analyze students' MCAS scores.
- Training has been given to teachers to assist them in the analysis of various data: school data, benchmark data, MCAS data.
- Time at Math Department meetings, English Language Arts Department meetings, Science/Engineering and Technology Department meetings, and faculty meetings is regularly devoted to the analysis of data in order to improve instruction and content knowledge.
- Collect and organize data according to subgroups prior to taking spring MCAS tests.
- Develop benchmarks and standardized tests for Grade 6 – Math, Grade 7 – Math, and Grade 8 – Math. Develop similar benchmarks and standards for English Language Arts and Science/Engineering and Technology.
- Use of the principle of “Cumulative Review;” i.e. mandatory yearlong math notebooks with sections for class work, graphic organizers, homework, vocabulary, tests, quizzes, and other items relating to mathematics, English language arts, and science/engineering and technology strands in the respective Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.
- Instruct 6A, 6B, 6C, 7A, 7B, 7C, 8A, 8B, and 8C team leaders and teachers to look at student work at team meetings, make recommendations to the principal and department heads, and implement changes as needed.
- Analysis of MCAS data at the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School faculty meeting on October 14, 2009.
- Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School mathematics teachers, English language arts teachers, science teachers, special education teachers, guidance counselors and/or the administration met to analyze MCAS data, discuss annual yearly progress, identify students in various subgroups who need remediation and/or MCAS tutoring, and develop Individual Student Success Plans (ISSPs) based on MCAS scores.

- Develop measurable academic goals in mathematics, English language arts, and science/engineering and technology (one year intervals).
- MCAS open-ended response questions and MCAS practice problems assigned by all teachers at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.
- Monitor teachers' and students' attendance. Develop and implement a policy to improve attendance. Set clear expectations about attendance. Make it part of faculty meetings and student meetings.

**ITEM 2. The Council recommends that the faculty of Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School continue its efforts to improve the teaching of mathematics and science/engineering and technology to enhance student performance in the areas of mathematics and science** by changing how mathematics and science/engineering and technology is taught to better reflect how middle school students learn. The Council believes that increased access to the curriculum and improved teaching strategies are essential. The Council supports the decision to continue to schedule pre-algebra instruction for all seventh grade students and to continue to schedule algebra instruction for all eighth grade students. The faculty's desire and effort to increase mathematics and science instruction, integrate technology in mathematics and science, and take other steps in mathematics and science pedagogy and learning is admirable.

**ITEM 3. The Council recommends that all Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School teachers continue their efforts to include in all classes the following three aspects of curriculum:** 1) the acquisition of **knowledge** specific to individual courses and across disciplines, 2) the development of **skills** specific to each course and the complex thinking skills discussed at the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School faculty meetings, and 3) a focus on the five school-wide **personal qualities**. All teachers must continue their efforts to align their practices with the principles in the state frameworks and prepare all students for the MCAS tests. All teachers should continue their efforts to reflect on the following key questions in lesson planning: What knowledge, skill, or concept am I teaching? What thinking skills do I want students to practice and develop? What activities will students do? How can I get students really engaged? What do I want my students to know, be able to do? How will I know if they can do it?

**Goal 2 – District Improvement Goal (Professional Development):** To improve the quality of all professional development activities in the Melrose Public Schools by continuing activities and programs that are curriculum-focused and properly designed to raise student achievement

ITEMS 4 – 10 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 4. The Council recommends that a guaranteed allotment for professional development be made available to all teachers.** The Council believes that each teacher should be permitted to attend self-selected teacher workshops, in conjunction with their Individual Professional Development Plan, with reimbursement of up to \$125.

Teachers should also be able to enroll in one graduate course at a Massachusetts college or university with tuition reimbursement of up to \$1,633.00 (the cost of one three-credit graduate education course at the University of Massachusetts, Boston during the 2009-2010 school year), under the agreement that they remain in the district the following year and receive a grade of at least a 'B' for the course. While there is some provision for reimbursement in the current contract, not every teacher is guaranteed reimbursement for professional development efforts.

ITEM 5. A school environment marked by collaboration, collegiality, and support can make all the difference in the success of a new teacher's first year in a school system. An appropriately matched mentor can provide the needed support. **The Council recommends that the current mentoring program continue for the new 2010-2011 faculty.** The Council suggests that the program continue to be organized and implemented with equitable funding for each school, based on its ratio of newly hired faculty members. Technology can be very useful in helping teachers improve the quality of their instruction. For example, the Council supports the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Principal's use of online, staff development resources whereby teachers have opportunities to watch featured educators demonstrating instruction in authentic classrooms, with real students, teaching real content and skills in real time (see: [www.educatorsvirtualmentoring.com](http://www.educatorsvirtualmentoring.com)). This is the fifth year this technology has been used to improve instruction at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 6. The Council recognizes the importance of effective professional development for teachers at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. Teacher knowledge and skill level significantly affect student achievement (Darling-Hummond, 1997; Brophy, 1986). Because teachers regularly use their professional knowledge base when designing and assessing learning activities, student learning is limited by what the teacher knows (Goldhaber & Brewer, 1996). Therefore, **the Council recommends training for teachers in areas of new, skillful teaching techniques, aligning the curriculum with the frameworks, teaching the middle school child, enhancing student achievement, using SMART Boards, using the Digital Classroom, using Student Response Systems (the clickers), developing memory strategies, developing digital video editing skills, developing models of teaching that are intended to teach both content knowledge and higher-order thinking skills, using key words as guides to structuring questions and tasks that develop higher-level thinking, English Language Learners (ELL) training, and the use of new technology.** The Council also recommends continued training for teachers in areas such as: Project CRISS (Creating Independence through Student-owned Strategies), Jon Saphier and Robert Gower's eighteen parameters of skillful teaching, strategies for preparing students for the MCAS tests, the latest research on how the brain learns, strategies for successful inclusion instruction, information about different learning dysfunctions from books such as Mel Levine's *A Mind at a Time*, Harry Loryane's *Memory Book* (workshops started at MVMMS in November 2007), Martin L. Kutscher's *Kids in the Syndrome Mix* (workshops started at MVMMS in December 2007), Jodie Blanco's *Please Stop Laughing at Me* (workshops started at MVMMS in October 2008), and other relevant areas of professional training.

**ITEM 7. The Council recommends teachers receive professional development specific to middle level education and understanding the nature and needs of adolescents.** The New England League of Middle Schools 2000 Assessment of Melrose Middle School stated, “Teachers in middle levels should be selected and specially educated to teach young adolescents.” In addition, the Council feels there is a need to continue to provide Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School teachers with the opportunity to build their skillful teaching repertoires as described in Saphier, J. & Gower, R. (1997) The Skillful Teacher: Building Your Teaching Skills. Skillful teaching practices should continue to be tied to the evaluation instrument established during the 1999-2000 school year which supports the Massachusetts “Regulations on Evaluation of Teachers 603 CMR 35.00 - Principles of Effective Teaching” and/or any new evaluation instrument that is negotiated during the 2010-2011 school year.

**ITEM 8.** The Council recognizes and supports site-based professional development efforts. **The Council recommends that teachers have input into developing the professional development topics** that are to be presented at the Professional Development Release Days planned for secondary teachers in 2010-2011, and that teachers be valued as part of the decision-making process when system-wide curriculum and instructional decisions are made. On October 13, 2009, Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School finally experienced a site-based, professional development release day that was taught and/or facilitated by members of the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School faculty; it was well received. When Melrose teachers serve as facilitators of workshops within their own schools, many desirable results can be achieved as the teacher/facilitators are already in tune with the needs and culture of the school itself.

**ITEM 9.** Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School has celebrated its accomplishments and commitment to ongoing staff development in the areas of teaching and learning. **The Council recommends that the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School faculty continues the commitment to ongoing staff development** and expands on it through further development of its school culture. This should be done by continued examination of the school’s mission to keep its purpose in the forefront of the school’s collective mind with the school’s vision of what it wants to become. These efforts should also include discussion of the values that define the school’s educational behavior and the goals that define the steps that must be taken to continually improve the school culture and its educational middle school program. The Council believes it is important for the faculty to examine, for every course, the following questions: What is it we want students to learn? How will we know when they have learned it? What will happen when students do not “get it”? How will we achieve better student results based on evidence we collect?

**ITEM 10. The Council recommends that the Superintendent and the School Committee reach an agreement with the Melrose Teachers’ Association and/or other associations to provide additional time for the professional development** of all faculty members, including but not limited to additional release days, professional development meetings, courses, and workshops. The Council recognizes that it is important to include in the learning process not only Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle

School teachers, but paraprofessionals, nurses, custodians, secretaries, and other adults who work and/or come in contact with middle school students.

**Goal 3 – District Improvement Goal (Budget):** To refine the budget process to more clearly articulate ways to enhance the district’s ability to improve student achievement goals over time.

ITEM 11 is a recommendation to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 11. The Council recommends the faculty, staff, and administration of Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School ensure efficient use of available resources for school improvement efforts, especially in the areas of middle school mathematics, English language arts, and science/engineering and technology instruction.** The Council supports and praises the efforts of the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School PTO enrichment committees to provide additional funds for educational programs and activities at the middle school level.

**Goal 4 – District Improvement Goal (Communication):** To develop a communication mechanism that will allow communication to flow both horizontally and vertically throughout the organization and the greater community of Melrose for the purpose of supporting collaboration efforts to improve students’ academic performance.

ITEMS 12 – 13 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 12. The Council recommends that all Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School teachers post homework assignments, projects, and other communications online.** In September 2008, all teachers at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School launched “The Digital Classroom” as their school wide, online management website. The Follett Digital Classroom is a technology product aimed at K-12 classrooms. It is a web-based application for students, teachers, parents and administrators. It is intended to be a learning hub that brings together educational content and tools to help organize the digital chaos and facilitate communication and collaboration among the learning team. This effort is helping to foster better communication with parents and improve school-family-community partnerships. The online communication will continue to be implemented in conjunction with the use of the *Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School 2010-2011 Student Agendas*.

**ITEM 13. The Council recommends the continued release, during the 2010-2011 school year, of a monthly middle school calendar of events that lists middle school activities.** The monthly school calendar is a vehicle for informing parents of extracurricular activities, intramural programs, and the dates of vacation days, and for communicating events at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School such as: the

Melrose Alliance Against Violence Candlelight Walk from the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School held on October 25, 2009; the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Veterans Day Assembly on November 10, 2009; the Drama Club's production of the musical "Annie" on May 20 and 21, 2009; the First Annual Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Acts of Kindness Summit on November 30 – December 4, 2009; the Scholastic Book Fair on December 1-4, 2009; the Eighteenth Annual School-Wide National Geographic Geography Bee on January 13, 2010; the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration in the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School cafeteria scheduled for January 18, 2010; Melrose Veteran Memorial Middle School "No Name Calling Week," January 25-29, 2010; Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Drama Club's play on March 6-7, 2010; Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School/King Arthur Bread-Making Community Service Project on April 9, 2010; and the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Memorial Day Assembly on May 28, 2010. The calendar also informs parents about field trips, school events, PTO meetings, School Council meetings, and forums. Many other events are listed in the monthly calendar. The school calendar, the Principal's monthly summary, and other Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School news items can be viewed online at [www.melroseschools.com/mms](http://www.melroseschools.com/mms). The Council plans to continue to examine these partnerships and to encourage teachers and teams to increase family involvement during the 2010-2011 school year.

**Goal 5 – Middle School Goal (Self-Assessment):** To allow Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School faculty, staff, students, and parents an opportunity to assess the middle school program.

ITEM 14- 15 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 14. The Council acknowledges the efforts of the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School faculty and staff to assess their school program in conjunction with the New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS) Self-Assessment Survey. **The Council recommends and supports the efforts by the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School faculty to continue to evaluate and improve the middle school programs.** In October 2006, (and again with new teachers in October 2007) the faculty conducted the NELMS nine-page survey that contained forty-six questions. The emphasis was on the educators' perspective of the common practices, attitudes, and understanding of Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. The survey gathered data about curriculum, instruction, middle level teachers, teaming, governing democratically, school climate, and involving parents and the community. The analysis and a discussion of the data occurred at a middle school leadership team meeting on October 25, 2006, at a School Council meeting on November 8, 2006, and at a faculty meeting on November 15, 2006. Further analysis was conducted with the leadership team in November 2007. The data was then submitted to the New England League of Middle Schools for further review after NELMS conducted its own independent site visit of Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School in the winter of 2008. As a result of the assessment, Melrose

Veterans Memorial Middle School earned the distinction of being named a “NELMS Spotlight School” for the next two years.

**ITEM 15. The Council recommends Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School assess the school’s performance and design program improvement initiatives that are the result of that assessment.** The following nine areas would be studied and assessed: 1) Student Focus and Support – how the middle school goals and objectives accurately reflect the school’s vision. 2) School Organization and Culture – how the school’s culture exemplifies a caring community that supports continuous learning. 3) Challenging Standards and Curriculum – how a rationally designed curriculum ensures high levels of achievement including significant content learning, citizenship, and interpersonal and workplace skills. 4) Active Teaching and Learning – how purposeful decision-making governs all aspects of the learning process. 5) Technology Integration – how the use, mastery, and application of technologies promote teaching and learning in a manner that improves students’ learning. 6) Professional Development – how continuous professional development supports improved teaching and student learning. 7) Leadership and Educational Vitality – how leadership engages the school community in continuous improvement focused on high levels of student achievement, current needs, and future challenges. 8) School, Family, and Community Partnership – how a commitment to the role families, partnerships, and community play supports learning. 9) Indicators of Success – how students achieve at high levels.

**Goal 6 – Middle School Goal (Class Size):** To reduce class size and increase student performance.

ITEMS 16 – 18 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 16.** During the 2009-2010 school year, there were **thirty-five** team classes with a class size of 26-29 students. This is an increase in twenty classes compared with the previous year. For example, the class sizes in two eighth grade MCAS prep classes are 26 and 28. The class sizes in four seventh-grade English classes are 26, 26, 26, and 26. The class sizes in three eighth-grade English classes are 26, 27, and 28. The class sizes in three seventh-grade pre-algebra classes are 26, 28, and 29. The class sizes in three eighth-grade algebra classes are 27, 28, and 28. The class sizes in seven eighth-grade world history classes are 26, 26, 26, 26, 27, 28 and 28. The class sizes in six seventh-grade science classes are 26, 26, 27, 27, 28, and 29. The class sizes in six seventh-grade science classes are 26, 26, 27, 27, 28, and 29. The class sizes in seven eighth-grade science classes are 26, 26, 26, 27, 27, 27, and 27.

As a result of budget cuts from previous years, the class sizes in many Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School non-team classrooms continue to be very large. During the 2009-2010 school year, there are **thirty-eight** non-team classes with a class size of 26-32 students. For example, the class sizes in two sixth-grade technology health classes are 26 and 26. The class sizes in two eighth-grade health classes are 26 and 27. The class sizes

in three sixth-grade wellness classes are 26, 28, and 29. The class size in one seventh-grade French class is 29. The class sizes in five seventh-grade Spanish classes are 27, 27, 28, 29, and 30. The class sizes in four eighth-grade Spanish classes are 29, 30, 30, and 31. The class size in one eighth-grade Italian class is 26. The class sizes in five sixth-grade foreign language exploratory classes are 27, 27, 28, 30, and 30. The class sizes in four sixth-grade technology education classes are 28, 28, 29, and 30. The class sizes in six seventh-grade technology education classes are 26, 29, 29, 29, 32, and 32. The class sizes in two eighth-grade technology education classes are 26 and 28. The class size in one seventh-grade computer class is 26, and the class sizes in two eighth-grade art classes are 29 and 29. Many of the physical education classes are suffering from the same trouble, with one seventh grade class reaching 114 students assigned to a block with three instructors.

Research and educational data collected by educational leaders such as Theodore Sizer, Robert Gower, Jon Saphier, Chris Stevenson, John Van Hoose, David Strahan, and others, support the concept that the ideal middle level class size should be lower (18-21), and that the middle level teams should not exceed 80-90 students. The current team size at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School is 91-104 students per team. This was due to the reinstatement of a third team in the sixth grade, at the start of the 2005-2006 school year, the reinstatement of a third team in the seventh grade, at the start of the 2006-2007 school year, and the reinstatement of a third team in the eighth grade, at the start of the 2007-2008 school year. Having three teams is vital at each grade level. The council is glad to see the reinstatement of all three teams in each grade. We believe that the education being offered in non-team class sections is just as important to the needs of our students. Therefore, the next step to improve the education being offered at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School is to decrease the number of students in non-team classes. **The Council recommends the continued hiring of teaching positions** in an effort to maintain the integrity of the educational process by lowering the student-to-teacher ratio in all classes.

**ITEM 17: The Council recommends that a new and different non-team course be offered at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School beginning in the 2010-2011 school year to reduce the class size in non-team classes and allow for a more comprehensive middle school program.** With an increase of 120 students in five years (780 students in 2006-2007, 821 students in 2007-2008, 868 students in 2008-2009, 896 students in 2009-2010, and a projection of more than 900 students in 2010-2011), class size has clearly increased. A new non-team course is especially necessary for students who are not enrolled in a foreign language and are not members of the band, chorus, or orchestra. One new course would complete their non-team course selection process. The Council directs the Principal and the curriculum leaders to explore options for such a course and develop the necessary curriculum under the direction of the department heads and teachers.

**ITEM 18.** As a means of modifying the daily interaction ratios of teachers to students, the Council believes that the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School scheduling process for the 2010-2011 school year be implemented in a manner that permits team

leaders and teachers to create extended learning time or double blocks for their students. Elimination of cross teaming will allow the team leaders and team teachers to create extended learning time. This will allow a daily reduction in student-to-teacher ratios. The instructional benefits of this are many, as flexible scheduling creates increased opportunity for specific, authentic learning experiences. **The Council recommends that every effort be made to eliminate cross-teaming**, thereby allowing team teachers to have more scheduling flexibility for the improvement of daily teacher ratios without jeopardizing the integrity of the middle school team concept.

Goal 7 – **Middle School Goal (Teams)**: To maintain the number of teams and teaching positions.

ITEMS 19 – 21 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 19. When the new Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School opened in September 2007, it was designed to house three sixth-grade teams on the second floor, three seventh-grade teams on the third floor, and three eighth-grade teams on the fourth floor. **The Council recommends and supports the continued assignment of three teams at each grade level.** The Council is thrilled with the restoration of three teams at each grade level. As previously mentioned, students have been proven to perform better and learn more effectively when class size is reduced. The Council appreciates, acknowledges, and supports the district's efforts in this area, especially in a difficult financial time when other areas of the school system have suffered fiscal reductions.

While the efforts to restore three teams have been successfully made, other subject areas are still suffering due to past budget reductions. The overall number of teachers has been significantly decreased by budget reductions, and the school is currently operating under a staff deficit of eleven teachers. In 2002-2003, Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School suffered the loss of two health teachers, one physical education teacher, one special education teacher, one general education sixth grade teacher (math/history), one resource center librarian or library media specialist, a 4/5 computer teacher, and a 2/5 technology education teacher. In 2003-2004, Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School suffered the loss of three general education teachers (two science and one history teacher) and two non-team teachers (one art and one computer teacher) due to more budget cuts. With the restoration of three teams at each grade level, the workload (number of papers to read and correct, number of students to educate, number of parents to communicate with, etc.) of the team teachers has been restored to a productive level. The Council believes that the other positions should be reinstated to thereby make the same improvements in our other non-team areas of education and that this will help increase student performance.

ITEM 20. Music classes, as well as other fine arts and non-academic courses, can be of immeasurable importance to students. **The Council recommends the hiring of a 1/5 music teacher to expand the music/fine arts program.** For the past six years, students

have had their access to music programming restricted by lack of scheduling opportunities and overcrowded courses. Each grade should have access to two available blocks of chorus. Under current scheduling restraints one grade has only one chorus block available to it while the other two grades each have two chorus sections. For example, in 2000-2001, there was only one eighth-grade block of chorus. In 2001-2002, there was only one seventh-grade block of chorus. In 2002-2003, there was only one sixth-grade block of chorus. In 2003-2004, there was only one eighth-grade block of chorus. In 2004-2005, there was only one seventh-grade block of chorus. During the last five consecutive school years (2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010), there was only one eighth-grade chorus class. This is the tenth consecutive year in which students have been excluded in this way. Some eighth-grade students were unable to take chorus due to the limits of having only a single chorus block. The addition of music sections will provide more students with the opportunity to take chorus or a music/fine arts appreciation course.

**ITEM 21. The Council recommends that the Principal explore ways to reduce the large class size in foreign language classes.** Some foreign language classes at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School are too large. For example, in 2009-2010 there are **sixteen foreign language classes** with class sizes of 26-32 students. Furthermore, not all sixth-grade students are permitted to take the sixth-grade foreign language exploratory courses. An additional foreign language teacher is necessary and would improve middle-level foreign language instruction.

**Goal 8 – Middle School Goal (Parental Involvement):** To enhance parental involvement at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEMS 22 – 23 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 22. The Council recommends continuing the excellent parental involvement in Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School activities** that has been evident this year and in past years, and that such activities continue during the 2010-2011 school year. The Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School PTO and/or community-sponsored enrichment activities are numerous. Some examples include: The Twelfth Annual Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Author-in-Residence program (formerly Writer's Week) planned for the 2009-2010 school year. Some of the authors/writers who presented at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School were: Linda Davis, Kathleen Duble, Norton Juster, Steve Krasner, Jonathan Kranz, Lynda Morganroth, Marie Franklin, Bridget Alverson. In December 2009, the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School PTO Mini-Grant Committee invited teachers to apply for mini-grants. Several mini-grants expected to equal \$3,000 will be allocated to Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School teachers and/or teams. Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School eighth-grade health students have participated in the Teen Dating Violence Prevention Program, facilitated by guest speakers from the Melrose Alliance Against Violence, the Melrose Police Department, and a survivor of teen dating violence. As part of "Team

Harmony Day” at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School, students will participate in “The World of Difference” activities. Furthermore, there were numerous other guest speakers across the curriculum at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

Additionally, parents actively support school-sponsored events. Examples are as follows: the Scholastic Book Fair to support the Victoria McLaughlin Library on December 2-4, 2009; the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School and Melrose High School Choral Concert on the evening of December 9, 2009, the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School and Melrose High School Orchestra-Band Musical on the evening of December 16, 2009; and the school-wide Eighteenth Annual National Geographic Geography Bee scheduled for January 12, 2010.

The Twelfth Annual Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Author-in-Residence program (formerly Writer’s Week) has been planned for the 2009-2010 school year. Some of the authors/writers who presented at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School were: Linda Davis, Kathleen Duble, Norton Juster, Steve Krasner, Jonathan Kranz, Lynda Morganroth, Marie Franklin, Bridget Alverson. In December 2009, the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School PTO Mini-Grant Committee invited teachers to apply for mini-grants. Several mini-grants expected to equal \$3,000 will be allocated to Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School teachers and/or teams. Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School eighth-grade health students have participated in the Teen Dating Violence Prevention Program, facilitated by guest speakers from the Melrose Alliance Against Violence, the Melrose Police Department, and a survivor of teen dating violence. As part of “Team Harmony Day” at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School, students will participate in “The World of Difference” activities. Furthermore, there were numerous other guest speakers across the curriculum at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 23. The Council recommends that individual teams at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School involve families in team events** such as: team projects, team nights, special events, parent forums, team activities, and/or other presentations for parents. This would foster a school climate that encourages learning experiences, projects, and activities that include parents, teachers, and students.

**Goal 9 – Middle School Goal (Parent-Teacher Conferences):** To enhance the amount of time at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School for parent-teacher conferences.

ITEM 24 is a recommendation to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 24.** It is important that administrators, teachers, the Melrose Teachers Association and/or other associations, the Melrose School Committee, and parents work together to examine solutions that will increase the communication between teachers and parents and continue to study options to enhance parental involvement in the educational process. The Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School faculty members have explored different

scheduling options for parent-teacher conferences. **The Council recommends one early release-day for middle school students be implemented for the sole purpose of scheduling afternoon parent-teacher conferences.** Other middle schools have early release days. For example, the Coolidge Middle School in Reading has the following eight early release days: September 23, 2009; October 21, 2009; December 16, 2009; January 27, 2010; February 24, 2010; March 10, 2010; April 28, 2010; and May 26, 2010. The one release day proposed for Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School should be scheduled on the same day as the evening parent-teacher conferences. This would increase the number of conference appointments available and would be beneficial for parents and teachers.

ITEM 25. Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School implemented its first online parent-teacher conference registration system for conferences that were held on December 3, 2009. Parents registered online for conferences on a first-come, first served basis. A team teacher was able to visit with twenty-four sets of parents out of one hundred sets of parents. A non-team teacher (art, foreign language, tech ed, gym, etc.) was able to visit with twenty-four sets of parents out of one hundred sets of parents. The long lines were eliminated, and those who had appointments praised the change. However, up to seventy-six parents per team were unable to visit that particular team teacher. **The Council recommends that middle school students continue to implement online scheduling of parent-teacher conferences,** but afternoon conferences ought to be scheduled to accommodate more parents. The principal and/or the principal's designee will monitor the effectiveness of the online parent-teacher conference registrations.

Goal 10 – **Middle School Goal** (School Safety): To ensure a safe school environment for all students, faculty, parents, and visitors at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEMS 26 – 29 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 26. As current events have shown, it is now more crucial than ever to have safe schools. The Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School faculty must be vigilant in guarding against issues such as bullying, school violence, threats, criminal acts, and even terrorism. The population of students at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School is steadily increasing. The population of students at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School in September 2006 was 780 students. The population of students at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School in September 2007 increased to 821 students. The population of students at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School in September 2008 increased to 863 students. The number of students at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School in September 2009 increased to 896. In September 2010, a projected population of over 900 students will be receiving a middle school education. Having two full-time

assistant principals at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School in September 2010 will greatly increase the safety and discipline in the school environment.

Therefore, **the Council strongly recommends the process of restoring a second assistant principal by September 2010.** The New England League of Middle Schools 2000 Assessment of Melrose Middle School strongly recommended the need for a second assistant principal to create a smaller environment within a school (schools within a school). Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School currently has a student to assistant principal ratio of **896 to 1**. Next year it will be over **900 to 1**. This ratio is too high. Other comparable middle schools are empowered by greatly reduced ratios. For example, during the 2009-2010 school year, Belmonte Middle School in Saugus has two assistant principals, with a student to assistant principal ratio of **350 to 1**. Diamond Middle School in Lexington, with two assistant principals, enjoys a ratio of **375 to 1**. Coolidge Middle School in Reading has a student to assistant principal ratio of **475 to 1**. Therefore, the assistant principal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School has significantly more students in his or her caseload as compared to assistant principals in other local middle schools. This ratio needs to be reduced. Contemporary issues of school safety and discipline are frequently more urgent and complex these days than in times past. Having an additional assistant principal would allow Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School to be proactive instead of reactive, a difference that leads to greater safety and better health for all concerned. Furthermore, an additional assistant principal would permit the principal to allocate more time to classroom visibility, teacher evaluation and supervision, parental communication, educational leadership, and curriculum development.

The Council feels the first priority is the safety of all children at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. Students at this age are very impressionable and make major decisions that can influence other decisions for several years. Our students need adults who are able to give them meaningful time during the school day, especially during those “teachable moments,” when students need to be disciplined or counseled to prevent a negative situation from happening. When the school opens in September 2010 after the summer vacation, a second assistant principal would also allow for a comprehensive and effective in-school suspension program for students who violate the *Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School 2010-2011 Student Code of Conduct*.

**ITEM 27. The Council recommends the position of a full-time Melrose Police School Resource Officer be maintained** in order to continue to serve not only the students and faculty at Melrose High School, but also the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School students and faculty. The School Resource Officer plays a proactive role in preventing crimes and violence on the middle school/high school campus and within the community. The School Resource Officer is available to meet with the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Principal on a daily basis and is someone with whom the entire faculty can consult whenever necessary. Students can speak candidly with a School Resource Officer about important issues. The School Resource Officer educates students, parents, and the faculty about issues regarding the law and criminal justice and serves an important role by monitoring conflict resolution and/or peer mediation sessions. Without

a School Resource Officer, the interaction with Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School and the Melrose Police Department would be more reactive and less proactive. There is no question that this important role should be upheld in the future.

**ITEM 28. The Council recommends a truant officer be hired for Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.** A truant officer would reach and support children who are chronically absent and/or tardy. A truant officer would also work closely with the administration, guidance staff, and school resource officer, as well as the juvenile officials and probation officers at the Cambridge District Court. Currently due to the lack of a truant officer, a faculty member (the principal, assistant principal, and/or a guidance counselor) must regularly leave Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School and travel to Cambridge District Court to represent students and the school on truancy and other court issues. This is neither cost effective nor appropriate, as it removes needed faculty from their designated position during school hours.

**ITEM 29.** The faculty at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School practices three different types of emergency evacuation/safety drills. The drills are 1) Fire Drill, 2) Code Seven (Bomb Threat Situation), and 3) Code Red (Dangerous Situation or Threat in Building). The Principal and the School Resource Officer met in September 2008 to discuss the implementation of a new fourth drill called a “Shelter-in-Place Drill” or a Code Yellow drill. A Code Yellow drill is similar to a Code Red drill with lock down procedures. The difference is indoor instruction, teaching, and learning would continue under caution. Students would only be allowed to walk in the halls with special permission. Shelter-in-Place or Code Yellow drills are commonly implemented when there is a non-school criminal or emergency threat in another section of a district or city. Information about Code Yellow (Shelter-in-Place Drills) was introduced at a Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School faculty meeting on November 19, 2008, and subsequently with groups of secretaries, maintenance workers, custodians, paraprofessionals, cafeteria workers and other school personnel. Color-coded drill instructions were attached to the back of the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School employees’ ID cards on November 21, 2008. **The Council recommends that all four emergency evacuation/safety drills continue to be practiced.** The Principal and the Melrose School Resource Officer will be responsible for its implementation.

Goal 11 – **Middle School Goal** (School Climate): To foster a school climate at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School that supports tolerance and respect for all groups.

ITEMS 30 – 34 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 30. The Council recommends the implementation of the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Acts of Kindness Summits.** The First Annual Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Acts of Kindness Summit was held on November 30 – December 4, 2009. The objectives of the Summit were as follows: 1) To promote school-wide acts of kindness. 2) To hear stories about the

positive impact of acts of kindness and the negative impact of bullying. 3) To highlight the importance of the following five personal qualities stressed at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School: honesty, responsibility, self-management, sociability, and self-esteem. Some of the guest speakers and/or activities at the Summit included: “Acts of Kindness – The Movie,” a movie produced on campus by WMVMMS-TV 85 to promote kindness and sociability; “Discover the Life-Changing Power of Kindness,” Michael J. Chase, guest speaker and director of the Kindness Center; “A Guide to Surviving Bullies,” Brigitte Berman, a teenage author and victim of bullying; “Connor’s Story,” a parent’s point of view of emotional bullying; “The Ryan Patrick Halligan Story,” John Halligan’s account of his son’s tragic story; “Peer Power: From Bystander to Allies,” Rebecca Mooney and Alice Wadley, Melrose Alliance Against Violence; “No More Bullying,” performed by the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Drama Club; “The Power of Girls,” a video for girls; “Boys of Bullying,” a video for boys; “Reflective Students Essays,” written by students and read by teachers; and “Rachel’s Challenge,” inspired by Rachel Scott, the first victim of the Columbine High School Shootings. The Principal, the Assistant Principal, and a team of teachers will be responsible for the implementation of this program and future such programs.

**ITEM 31. The Council recommends that the school continue to support Melrose anti-bullying activities, the A-Okay (Acts of Kindness) Club, community service, a multicultural club, participation in The World of Difference Team Harmony events such as the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School “No Name Calling Week,” Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School “Day of Harmony,” and sponsor school-wide programs addressing issues of tolerance and respect for all groups.** Funds for the multicultural club, along with funds for other Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School clubs, were eliminated prior to the 2003-2004 school year. The Council believes that funds for school clubs should be restored. In addition, the Council also believes that the Melrose METCO Program and families who reside in Melrose should continue to foster clubs and programs that benefit all students.

**ITEM 32. The Council recommends that the faculty and staff continue their school-wide effort to support respect, tolerance, and appreciation for diversity through its academic programs.** The school staff has adopted the integration of five personal qualities in all areas of the curriculum. The following five personal qualities are stressed at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School: honesty, responsibility, self-management, sociability, and self-esteem.

**ITEM 33. The Council recommends that the faculty and staff continue to support the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School “Belief Statement,”** adapted from Sawni, S. (2003) This We Believe: Successful Schools For Young Adolescents. The current Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Belief Statement acknowledges that a successful middle school is characterized by a culture that includes:

- Educators who value and work with 10 – 14 year old students and who are prepared to do so
- Courageous, collaborative leadership
- A shared vision that guides instruction
- An inviting, supportive, and safe environment

- High expectations for every member of the learning community
- Students and teachers engaged in active learning
- Caring adults who advocate for students
- School-initiated family and community partnerships.

Therefore, Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School must provide during the 2010-2011 school year:

- A curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory
- Multiple learning and teaching approaches that respond to student diversity
- Assessment and evaluation programs that promote quality learning
- Organizational structures that support meaningful learning
- School-wide efforts and policies that foster health, wellness, and safety
- Multifaceted guidance and support services.

**ITEM 34. The Council recommends that faculty, parents, and students continue to support inclusive education in an effort to show respect for learning differences.** It is important that the faculty, students, parents, and the Melrose community continue to acquire knowledge about inclusion. Information about supporting inclusive schools can be obtained at the following web site: [www.inclusiveschools.org](http://www.inclusiveschools.org). These continued efforts to support inclusion will enhance the school climate and demonstrate respect for all groups. Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School celebrated inclusive education by participating in the “Seventh Annual National Inclusive School Week,” December 7-11, 2009. The advisor board for the Inclusive Schools Week has posted over fifty tips online to help schools foster inclusive education. For example, some of the tips include: saying thank you to family members involved in classroom activities; assigning independent study projects that allow students to showcase their talents; hosting a meeting with students, teachers, administrators, and family members who want to get involved; making books available for students with visual impairments or other print disabilities; teaching lessons on using daily planners and good organizational skills; celebrating and sharing information about different cultures; incorporating wait-time to help all students process information; helping facilitate social interaction and acceptance outside the classroom; and engaging family members in meaningful school and classroom activities. Similar plans are underway for the 2010-2011 school year.

**Goal 12 – Middle School Goal (Student Assessment):** To enhance the assessment of student work at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School

ITEMS 35-36 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 35.** It is desirable that all Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School students work diligently to produce quality work. The products created by our students can vary from performances, papers, reports, projects, assignments, letters, charts, authentic work,

portfolios, class work, homework, quizzes, tests, and a host of other tangible outcomes. The Council believes that student assessment can be enhanced by a Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School faculty that regularly assess the performance of their students relative to state and local student performance standards and local benchmarks. The faculty will continue analyzing aggregate and individual assessment results to review and improve the practices of curriculum and instruction. **The Council recommends that groups of teachers meet to assess student work.** The Council envisions team teachers regularly scheduling team-meeting time to share samples of student work and assess the quality of student work for the purpose of review and improvement. The council also envisions this process happening with groups of middle school teachers at grade level meetings, department meetings, across grade level meetings, and/or in other such groups.

ITEM 36. It is desirable that all Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School students work diligently to produce work as a result of regularly scheduled interdisciplinary units. Middle school teams should continue to plan, implement, and assess interdisciplinary units, which will require writing across the disciplines, application of teaching, and transfer of learning from one setting to another setting (i.e. principles learned in math class are transferred to science, to English, etc.). **The Council recommends that team leaders and teachers regularly discuss, schedule, implement, and assess such interdisciplinary endeavors.** The Council believes that the Principal, department chairs, and team leaders should make this expectation clear to each team and other members of the faculty.

**Goal 13 – Middle School Goal (Extracurricular Activities):** To provide extracurricular activities for students at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 37 - 38 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 37. Early adolescence can be a very fragile time for many middle school children. The students need time for social interaction, and after-school extra-curricular activities are a wonderful way to help meet this developmental need. Structured after-school activities also keep children positive and occupied, and therefore reduce at-risk behaviors. All stipends for after school clubs at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School were cut in recent years. For example, in 1997-1998, the intramural budget for stipends at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School was \$4,200. In 2005-2006, the intramural budget at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School was \$3,200. In 2007-2008, in 2008-2009, and again in 2009-2010, the intramural budget was \$2,800. We now have more students and greater needs, yet a smaller intramural budget. The per-pupil expenditure for intramural activities has decreased dramatically. **The Council recommends that funding for after school extracurricular activities is reinstated in the FY 2010 Budget.** Funds need to be allocated to maintain and/or restore and hire staff to supervise and implement extracurricular activities, such as: Anime Club, Appalachian Hiking Club, Art Club, Ballroom Club, Band Gig Club, Dancing Club, Board Game Club, Broadcasting Club, Checkers Club, Chess Club, Computer Club, Cooking Club,

Debate Club, Environmental Club, Free Rice and Chocolate Club, Future Teachers of America Club, Homework Club, Investment Club, Line Dancing Club, Magic Club, Mathematics Club, Math Team, MathCounts Team, Multicultural and Team Harmony Club, Newspaper Club, Quiz Bowl Club, Science Club, Scratch Club (a MIT computer programming club), Video Club, Weightlifting and Exercise Club, and other clubs depending on students' interests and needs. It is imperative that all middle school students have an opportunity to participate in a wide array of extracurricular activities. Therefore, the funding for after school extracurricular activities needs to be restored.

**ITEM 38. The Council recommends that grade-level Homework Clubs be established for students who would benefit from an extended school day.** The newly formed Homework Clubs would allow students a safe and helpful place to complete homework assignments, use school resources and reference materials, and benefit from professional help. If funds are available, other activities could be offered at the completion of the homework sessions. The stipends for the faculty to run these clubs would need to be negotiated between the Melrose Teachers' Association and the Melrose School Committee.

**Goal 14 – Middle School Goal (Diverse Learning Needs):** To meet the diverse learning needs of all children at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEMS 39 –42 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 39.** Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School has an excellent special education program. Every year, one special education teacher is assigned to each team as part of the school-wide inclusion program. In addition, there are special education teachers who teach self-contained, small group English language arts, learning strategies, mathematics, MCAS prep, and history classes. Our special education program also includes a Supportive Training and Education Program (STEP) and an alternative education program (Choices Program). The special education services in our school meet the diverse learning needs of many children. So that our program can remain strong, **the School Council recommends that one separate special education teacher continue to be assigned to each team** as a means of meeting, within the general educational programs, the diverse learning styles of not only special education students, but also general education students. These positions are important to special education students, as well as to middle school teams in their quest to schedule double-block team activities. It is imperative to have one special education teacher assigned to each team. If special education services are not offered universally throughout the teams, certain teams will have a preponderance of special education students, and other teams will have few, if any, special education students. The teams need to be balanced to continue the fair and equitable inclusion program that has become the hallmark of middle school education at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. Research on middle school education confirms that tracking does not work. Tracking is defined as follows:

Tracking – the practice of separating students into different academic programs according to their perceived abilities and prospects – tends to relegate many students, typically poor and minority children, to a less challenging curriculum (Danielson, 2002).

The special education and the general education teachers at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School have provided a wonderful inclusion program. Therefore, the Council believes it is vital to maintain the current system of assigning special education teachers to meet the needs of all teams and all students.

ITEM 40. The School Council supports the idea that small group special education classes should be assigned according to teams. The special education teachers provide instruction in inclusion classes and in self-contained, small-group special education classes. **The Council recommends continuing to follow the best practices for inclusion by dividing and assigning students with disabilities to all three teams in each grade level**, as suggested in the New England League of Middle Schools 2000 Assessment of Melrose Middle School, so that the diverse learning needs of as many children as possible can be met. The New England League of Middle School 2000 Assessment recommended, "...a more flexible use of special education staff that does not conflict with the grouping and regrouping of students within the school day." This will ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate in their team's double blocks, extended learning time opportunities, team assemblies, plays, field trips, and other team activities.

ITEM 41. **The Council recommends reinstating the full-time, site-based leadership and/or administrative special education position that was established at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School in September 2007 and subsequently cut or reduced to serve both Melrose High School and Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School in June 2009.** This position should be staffed by an individual who is assigned and has responsibilities exclusively in the middle school. The special education teachers, who form the largest department at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School, and the general education teachers need a full-time, on-site special education department leader who can provide the support to foster shared leadership roles within the special education department and serve as a resource person for the complex, legal special education issues that emerge during the school year. The Council believes that this leadership position truly needs to continue as a site-based position with a full-time focus on the needs of the middle school and not as a district position. The needs of 13 Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School special education teachers and 119 special education students on Individual Education Plans would be best met by reinstating the full-time, site-based leadership position.

ITEM 42. **The Council recommends that efforts continue to be made to ensure that all students' educational needs can be identified and met**, in accordance with a Melrose District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) and the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School MCAS Action Plan and School Performance Evaluation Instrument. Furthermore, the council recommends that the faculty and staff continue to utilize the Instructional Support Team process and use accommodations and interventions found in the following manual: McCarney, Stephen (1993) Pre-Referral Intervention

Manual. Columbia, MO: Hawthorne Educational Services. The manual contains a list of many educational and behavioral accommodations and interventions that can be implemented in all classrooms. Accommodations and interventions are listed in the manual for the following areas: 1) Memory, Abstractions, Generalizations and Organizations, 2) Listening, 3) Speaking, 4) Reading, 5) Writing, 6) Spelling, 7) Mathematical Calculations, 8) Academic Performance, 9) Interpersonal Relationships, 10) Depression/Motivation, 11) Inappropriate Behavior, 12) Rules and Expectations, and 13) Group Behavior. The council recognizes that skillful teachers may also develop and use other appropriate accommodations and interventions. The council believes that with such efforts, accommodations, and interventions, the educational program in all classes at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School will be strengthened to meet the diverse learning needs of the students.

**Goal 15 – Middle School Goal (Technology):** To increase the use of computers and technology at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEMS 43 – 45 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 43. When the new Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School opened in September 2007, modern technology was at the fingertips of our middle school students. However, this new technology must be maintained, supported, and serviced. **The Council recommends that technology support staff be hired exclusively for the new Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.** There has not been any technology staff housed in the new school since it opened. Technology support must be adequately available for every middle school teacher due to their new computers, telephones, printers, email accounts, interactive whiteboards (SMART boards), the new student response systems (the clickers), the new broadcast studio, video/computer projectors, and/or Internet access. This will ensure that teachers will be able to email lessons home to students who are ill, list homework assignments on a Digital Classroom website, communicate with different departments in the building, communicate with others in the district, and provide state-of-the-art instruction. In order to integrate computer technology into the curriculum and prepare all students for the Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS Tests and other MCAS tests, students and teachers need to have access to technology support for facilitation and upkeep of the new technology in their classrooms. These efforts should be pursuant to topics in the Melrose Technology Plan.

ITEM 44. Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School special education teachers have access to web technology that allows them to complete Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) online. They are currently using eSped.com technology (see: [www.esped.com](http://www.esped.com)). Special education teachers use this web based application to write IEPs and progress reports. The program is designed to allow users to enter secure data accurately and quickly in school or at home. **The Council recommends that technology support be**

**integrated with the eSped record-keeping process** (i.e. quarterly reports, initial Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), completed IEPs following the annual review meetings, etc.) in an effort to make the process of writing and keeping records more efficient and less time consuming for the special education liaisons, special education chairperson, and special education teachers. It is recommended that each special education teacher have access to adequate computers, software, programs, and technology support that will allow them to conduct this task effectively and efficiently, thereby providing increased time for the delivery of special education services to the children. It must be noted, that before we can expect the teachers to use technology efficiently, the school must provide adequate technology, training, and support. A middle school technology instructional support staff is necessary to support the faculty to make the process of writing and record keeping more efficient and less time consuming.

ITEM 45. Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School teachers ought to have access to web technology that allows them to use online grading programs at home and in school. This would allow teachers to use this web based technology to post grades during the school day, evening, weekends, and/or after school hours. Currently Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School has a site license for a program called GradeQuick and a program called EasyGrade Pro. Such programs have the potential to allow teachers to enter secure data and grades accurately and quickly in school or at home. **The Council recommends that technology support be integrated with the grading process** to allow teachers to post and calculate student grades electronically in school and at home with a web based software program.

Goal 16 – **Middle School Goal (Library):** To maintain a Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Library.

ITEM 46 is a recommendation to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 46. **The Council recommends that the middle school library continue to be staffed by a full-time middle school librarian.** A full-time middle school librarian, reinstated in September 2009, is needed at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School to run the library, teach research skills, collaborate with students and teachers on projects, and a host of other such activities. The Victoria McLaughlin Library has celebrated the completion of the library automation project. All materials are now in an Internet based database, and students can search an accurate electronic catalog. Approximately 900 volumes and 20 periodicals were added to the Middle School collection between September 2007 and November 18, 2009. Three subject databases are subscribed to annually; ten periodical subscriptions are currently funded. With support from the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School PTO, local foundations, donations and four book fairs, over \$16,000 was raised between September 2007 and June, 2009. As of November 18, 2009, an additional \$4,500 had been received from local foundations and the Middle School PTO. Additional donations received over two years include new books valued at \$1,000 and gently used books valued at \$800. As of November 18, 2009,

the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Victoria McLaughlin Library had a collection of 8,524 volumes. During the first quarter of the 2009-2010 school year, 1,394 books were circulated to middle school students. Over 2,100 student visits during school and after school were recorded at the library in the first quarter. The Library supported on average 37 classes per week. An additional 15 classes per week used library resources, including lap top computers, books and library staff, in the classroom. All sixth-grade students completed a library orientation and training program. The training program included information on how to access individual accounts on the web based catalog Destiny, organization of the library, and using the library website to access databases. The Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Victoria McLaughlin Library hosted a Scholastic Book Fair on December 2-4, 2009, and similar plans are underway for the spring. The School Council acknowledges and supports the efforts of the full-time librarian.

**Goal 17 – Middle School Goal (Maintaining a High-Quality Faculty):** To recruit, hire, and keep the best teachers at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 47 is a recommendation to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 47. The Council recommends that the Principal, in conjunction with community groups and the district administration, explore ways to recruit, attract, hire, and keep high-quality professional teachers at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.** In addition to nurturing a professional and attractive school culture, rich with ideals of a professional learning community, the Council believes that efforts must be made to offer competitive salaries and benefits to attract and keep excellent teachers at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**Goal 18 – Middle School Goal (Maintaining a High-Quality School Facility):** To maintain and keep the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School facility in the pristine, immaculate, and/or unspoiled condition for future generations.

ITEM 48 - 53 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 48.** The new auditorium at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School is in pristine condition. It is a state-of-the art auditorium. It is imperative for future generations of Melrose students and the community that the auditorium remains a high-quality facility. During the school day, the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School faculty, staff, and students are committed to keeping the auditorium in excellent condition. However, the auditorium should, and most likely will, be used by the public as a way to generate rental income for the Melrose Public Schools. If safeguards are not put in place, the misuse of the auditorium facility will quickly lead to major monetary and

aesthetic problems. The posting of “No Food or No Drink” signs at the entrances of the auditorium will not suffice. The unsupervised use of the sophisticated and highly technical lighting, sound, stage thrust, video/audio, screen, projection, input and output jacks, and rigging systems would be a major mistake. The unsupervised areas inside and outside of the auditorium including, but not limited to, the lobby, cafeteria, bathrooms, green rooms, classrooms, back stage, prop rooms, and the adjacent hallways would pose a great risk during public practices and performances.

The 2009-2010 school year was the third year Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School did not have an auditorium facilities manager. An auditorium facilities manager must be present whenever the auditorium is in use by non-school groups, non-affiliated organizations, and/or school groups that are not regularly on the campus. This would also include set-ups and rehearsals. The facilities manager would help prevent any damage to the property, stop problems before they happen, note damage in a timely fashion, and help bill the organization using the auditorium for damage when, and if, it should occur. The facilities manager and/or crew would be responsible for checking to see that food, drink, and other contraband does not enter the auditorium. This means stationing qualified people at the entrance of the auditorium as the audience enters. When security personnel, ushers, and/or stage staff for an event are required, it should be coordinated through an auditorium facilities manager and the Principal. **The Council recommends that an auditorium facilities manager be hired to manage and maintain the auditorium under the Principal’s supervision, and that a percentage of each auditorium rental fee be allocated directly to fund this position and to help with the upkeep for the auditorium.** That allocation would be a portion of each rental and noted on each rental invoice. The Council gives praise and thanks to the Melrose School Building Committee for the design of the auditorium and believes that these measures are the best way to secure and maintain the beautiful Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School auditorium for future generations.

**ITEM 49. The Council recommends that steps be taken to oversee the proper use of the new Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School gymnasium and concession stand area.** The posting of “No Food or No Drink” signs at the entrances of the gymnasium is inadequate. Whoever sets up tables to sell food and drinks outside of the gymnasium and/or uses the concession stand adjacent to the gymnasium must put in place safeguards to prevent food and drinks from entering the gym. Likewise, the sophisticated gymnasium sound, camera, screen, input and output jacks, and other gymnasium equipment and systems should not be used by non-school groups, non-affiliated organizations, and/or school groups that are not regularly on the campus without the permission of the Principal and/or the Athletic Director. All groups using the gymnasium should collaborate with the Principal and/or the Athletic Director to ensure that the gymnasium is not misused. Proper security at all events is a necessity to preserve the new gymnasium.

**ITEM 50.** The new Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School is roughly 220,000 square feet with over 70 classrooms. It is designated as a “Green School” that features sophisticated, high-efficiency light fixtures, automatic light sensors, condensing boilers,

170 solar panels and energy occupancy sensors all operated with the latest technology. Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School received the Massachusetts Green School Certification, the first school to receive this designation outside of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative Green Schools Initiative. These extremely technological, comprehensive high-performing systems allowed the City of Melrose to receive an additional two percent reimbursement from the state, not to mention the direct reimbursements of \$150,000 from NSTAR (an electrical company) and \$50,000 from KEYSpan (a gas company). The school is a high performance school utilizing energy efficient systems, low emitting construction materials, pollution controls, reduced water utilization and sustainable materials.

*Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School has a number of very sophisticated mechanical systems.* For example, the computer control station runs the mechanical systems with software programs and graphics. It is possible for a mechanical technician to adjust various aspects of the system with constant computer monitoring, commands and inputs. It is possible for certain aspects of the systems to be controlled with remote Internet access. It is possible, with proper technical training and skills, for a technician to trouble-shoot, monitor, and/or adjust the systems. There are actuators, dampers, and various speed control boxes to be regulated to control the velocity and speed of air flow. Such adjustments to the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems (HVAC) can reduce the needs for service calls and are intended to keep the students, faculty, staff, and visitors comfortable. There are rooftop units tied into the control systems. There are rooftop heat recovery, heating and cooling, and temperature control units; all of which need regular monitoring, adjusting, and maintenance. Every classroom facing an exterior wall has a unit ventilator that provides heat and fresh air ventilation. These unit ventilators are also piped to a platform on the roof that could someday house and be connected to a rooftop chiller to provide air conditioning to classrooms that currently lack air conditioning. The unit ventilators receive forced hot water from the boilers, all individually controlled by a computerized system. The interior classrooms have overhead cabinet ventilators that provide heat and/or air conditioning. These classrooms, along with various offices, have duct work and variable air volume (VAV) boxes that provide heat and air flow. The sophisticated fire alarm and security alarms systems are likewise controlled by modern technology and computers. When a zone is activated or triggered, it would be better for a trained technician to shut down a zone rather than the entire system. That way, a zone could be reset or repaired without losing the entire functionality of the intended security systems. The short-term attempt to bypass these systems, rather than use them as they were intended, does not make sense and compromises the specifications and code requirements.

Therefore, **the Council recommends that the district explore the possibility of hiring a mechanical facilities manager-technician.** Furthermore, such a technician must have the expertise and/or training in HVAC systems, electrical systems, roofing units, computer technology and the wide variety of mechanical expertise. Such a technician would be able to someday monitor and manage a Computer Maintenance Management (CMM) system. Such a system has the capabilities to read various bar codes to produce work orders, maintenance reminders, filter replacement time schedules, and various other

repair, upkeep, and maintenance issues. Before the warranties expire, personnel will be needed to operate, trouble-shoot, adjust, and maintain these modern computerized mechanical systems. Some schools have costly maintenance contracts and frequent service calls. It is difficult to stay ahead of the technology. A mechanical facilities technician makes economical sense, and in the long run it would save money for the district. The more knowledge, skills, expertise, maintenance, and mechanical trouble-shooting that can be done at the building level, the less service calls will have to be made. Such ongoing technological maintenance will increase the longevity of the sophisticated and costly mechanical systems.

ITEM 51. There are nine interior science classrooms at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. There are safety shower drains embedded in the floors of each these science classrooms. For the past two years, a strong pungent odor emanated from the drains from time to time. The science teachers have had to continuously pour water down these drains and/or move their classes to a project room, cafeteria, and/or the library. This is not acceptable. **The Council recommends that measures be taken to repair the problems with the drains in the science classrooms at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.** This will ensure a healthy and safe environment for all students and staff who are learning in these rooms.

ITEM 52. There are eight major student bathrooms at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. There is a boys' room and a girls' room on each of the four floors. These bathrooms are tiled not to the ceiling but only from the ground up half way to about five feet. The top of the walls consist of painted sheetrock panels. **The Council recommends that measures be taken to tile these bathrooms to the ceilings.** This would preserve the beauty of these bathrooms for generations to come. The cost of this project could be reduced if students from a local vocational-technician high school completed this project. The Principal and the Maintenance Director shall explore the possibility of this endeavor.

ITEM 53. **The Council recommends that measures be taken to repair and/or maintain the roofs at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.** The new roofs have experienced an increase in the number of leaks especially after heavy rain and/or snow storms. Fortunately, many of these leaks were recently repaired. Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School is beautiful and needs to be preserved and maintained. The Council believes that the roofs must be repaired as quickly as possible to keep the interior of the building safe, dry, and in a pristine condition.

Goal 19 – **Middle School Goal** (School Psychologist): To increase the school psychology services at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 54 is a recommendation to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 54. The Council recommends hiring a part-time school psychologist at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.** There is currently one full-time school psychologist position at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. The psychological needs of 896 middle school students are daunting for one school psychologist. The school psychologist's caseload (with the amount of testing based on special education referrals, testing for new referrals, clinical interviews and/or behavioral functional assessments in emergency situations) leaves inadequate time for the necessary therapy and psychological counseling that is needed by so many students. It is difficult or nearly impossible to meet the legal time requirements for testing with only one school psychologist. Therefore, the School Council believes a part-time school psychologist will complement the services provided by the full-time middle school psychologist.

**Goal 20 – Middle School Goal (Hall Monitor):** To extend hall monitor services to Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 55 is a recommendation to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 55. The Council recommends hiring a part-time hall monitor at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.** There are currently no hall monitors at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. Melrose High School has three hall monitors. The needs and supervision of 896 middle school students in the hallways are daunting. The need is especially great after school from 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. As students travel from place to place, it is very difficult to monitor the whereabouts of students and others in the school especially after the faculty has left for the day. Many high school students enter the middle school to use the varsity facilities. As students exit the building, other students (both middle school and high school students) and other people find their way into Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School after hours. There are six stairwells and numerous exterior doors at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. There are security cameras, but no staff to monitor the technology. Hall monitors would be very helpful during this period. Therefore, the School Council believes a part-time hall monitor is essential.

**Goal 21 – Middle School Goal (Support Staff):** To increase the secretarial and/or support staff at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEMS 56 - 57 are recommendations to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 56. The Council recommends hiring additional full-time secretaries at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.** One full-time secretary position was

eliminated several years ago. Furthermore, a secretary who works at both Melrose High School and Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School was cut in September 2009. The Melrose Middle School Guidance Department, Main Office, and Nurse's Office are in need of more secretarial help. The Council believes that additional full-time secretaries are needed and warranted.

**ITEM 57. The Council recommends that the Melrose High School community service students be volunteers at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School as tutors, peer mediators, mentors, gym assistants, cafeteria aides, and other such jobs.** The Council believes that this would be beneficial to both middle school and high school students. The Council suggests that the Principal and/or his or her designee explore the possibility of increasing such partnership between Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School and Melrose High School.

**Goal 22 – Middle School Goal (Volunteers):** To increase the volunteering efforts at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 58 is a recommendation to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 58.** The Council acknowledges the efforts of The Bridge: A Melrose School/Community Partnership for providing volunteers for Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. The Bridge is a non-profit organization that recruits, screens, trains, and places volunteers in schools. Volunteers at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School help tutor students and serve as guest speakers and chaperones. Volunteers serve as one-on-one tutors, in the library, and as support personnel for small group MCAS math instruction. **The Council recommends that the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Principal explore opportunities to increase the use of qualified volunteers** and foster the positive concept of volunteerism within the middle school community.

**Goal 23 – Middle School Goal (Partnership with Universities and Colleges):** To increase the collaborative endeavors between Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School and local universities and colleges.

ITEM 59 is a recommendation to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

**ITEM 59.** The Council believes that Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School would benefit from increased collaborative efforts with local universities and colleges. Such a partnership would help with the placement of teaching interns, best practices, experimental classes, a bridge between higher education and middle school instruction, and the creation of a professional development school within Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. **The Council recommends that the Melrose Veterans Memorial**

**Middle School Principal and/or his or her designee explore opportunities to increase collaborative efforts and partnerships with local universities and colleges.**

Goal 24 – **Middle School Goal** (Strategic Plan): To allow Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School faculty, staff, students, and parents an opportunity to support the Melrose Strategic Plan.

ITEM 60 is a recommendation to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 60. The Council acknowledges the efforts of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee in its development of the Melrose Public Schools 2005-2010 Strategic Plan. **The Council recommends that the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School faculty continue to embrace the Melrose Strategic Plan** and work diligently to move the school from its current state to its desired future.

Goal 25 – **Middle School Goal** (Middle School Concept): To continue to support and promote the middle school concept at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 61 is a recommendation to achieve this goal at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School.

ITEM 61. The Council believes that any efforts made to share teachers between Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School and Melrose High School be entered into only following serious exploration of the potential impact or unintended consequences it would have on the quality of middle school instruction. Such sharing of the two faculties can have a serious impact on the concept of common middle school faculty planning time and the teams' abilities to use their team time for the purpose of double blocks, extended learning time, and other flexible middle school periods that are central to middle level education. **The Council recommends that Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School and Melrose High School do not share teachers**, if it is going to impact middle school instruction and the concept of middle school teams. The Council recognizes that in some situations, such as non-team classes (i.e. band, orchestra, chorus), there will be little impact.

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As stated in the Melrose School Council Policy, the School Committee may approve or disapprove a school improvement plan in whole or in part. Criteria for disapproval include failure to comply with any of the following: School Committee goals and performance standards, School Committee policies, district-wide policies, or state and federal laws and regulations.

## **AMENDMENTS**

### **MVMMS 2010-2011 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

*The members of the School Council, after adopting the initial Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School 2010-2011 School Improvement Plan, expressed a desire to add amendments to further shape the policies and to improve the programs at the school. Therefore, the following amendments have been adopted by the School Council:*

#### **Priority Initiatives and Success Measures for 2010-2011**

#### **AMENDMENT I – Theme: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**

The School Council **recommends** that Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School engage in an external, formal assessment by Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence, Inc. This assessment will help determine how well Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School is meeting student needs. It will assess the school’s performance in nine major categories and inform program initiatives as a result of that assessment. **Planned for fall 2010-2011.**

#### **AMENDMENT II – Theme: Student Support**

The School Council **recommends** that Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School improve instruction to meet the academic needs of students in the area of the middle school mathematics program by assessing and identifying the areas needed for student improvement based on MCAS scores and other assessments. Utilizing this data the mathematics department will:

- a. Study and modify the curriculum to address students’ needs.
- b. Utilize regrouping strategies according to students’ abilities and/or needs.
- c. Develop a well-written and thoughtful middle school mathematics curriculum map.
- d. Discuss current needs and desired outcomes in cross-grade math meetings.
- e. Promote “Thinking about math” vs. “Solving math only by formulas and rote practice.”
- f. Develop measurable and targeted success indicators based on MCAS math scores and student performance growth indices.
- g. Develop internal school-wide mastery assessment for math.

**A-G Planned for fall 2010-2011.**

#### **AMENDMENT III – Theme: School Culture and Climate**

The School Council **recommends** that activities and programs be scheduled at the school for the purpose of preventing, stopping, and eliminating bullying. Such programs include the following:

- a) Recognizing and Responding to Bullying in School (Training for Staff)
- b) Preventing Bullying: What Parents Need to Know (Training for Parents)

- c) Peer Power: From Bystander to Allies (Training for Students)
- d) Participate in the Second Annual Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School Acts of Kindness Summit.
- e) In order to stop any bullying via text messages during the school day, change the consequences for misuse of cell phones. Misconduct forms will be written for students who are first offenders; additional offenses will require the student to surrender cell phone to main office personnel each day for a period of one week as soon as the student enters the building.

**A-E Planned for fall 2010-2011.**

#### **AMENDMENT IV – Theme: Facilities and Technology**

The School Council **recommends** the following actions be taken to improve the “Green” environment promoted and established by the green initiatives of Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School:

- a) Reduce and/or investigate alternative use of Styrofoam trays used in the cafeteria and elsewhere in the school.
- b) Place additional recycling bins in common areas.
- c) Place “No Food or Drink” sign within the interiors of the auditorium and gymnasium.
- d) Display “Recycle Posters” in the cafeteria.

**A-D Planned for 2010-2011.**

#### RUBRIC for Amendments I - IV

4. Goal has been accomplished and the initiative is part of the fabric of the school.
3. Significant progress toward completion of the goal has occurred.  
Initiative will continue as part of SIP.
2. Some progress toward completion of the goal has occurred.  
Initiative will continue as part of SIP.
1. Minimal progress has been made. Goal will be reviewed and revised in SIP.

These Amendments to the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School 2010-2011 School Improvement Plan are made by a vote of the School Council on this the 8th day of April 2010.

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Thomas. L. Brow, Jr. – Council Co-Chair

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Amy Morrison – Council Co-Chair