

Annual Report of the
PIERCE SCHOOL COUNCIL
JULY 2016

**Pierce School Improvement Plan
2016-2017**

Submitted to the Superintendent of Schools July 2016

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2016-2017 School Council Members

Name	Position	Status	Term Expires
Christine Kelley	Principal	Permanent	NA
Naomi Sweitzer	Parent	Year 2 Co-Chair	June 2017
Brian Bergstein	Parent	YR2	June 2015
Lauren Kelly	Teacher	YR2	June 2016
Melissa London	Teacher	YR4	June 2015
Caroline Babbidge Connors	Teacher	YR3	June 2015
Tracy Bare	Teacher	YR2	June 2016
Ellen Ball	Community Representative	YR2	June 2017

Executive Summary

The Pierce School Council met regularly throughout the 2015-16 school year. Meetings were posted and members of the public were welcome to attend. Annual elections were held in June 2015. Openings were filled by the re-election of Naomi Sweitzer and teachers Melissa London, Lauren Kelly, and Tracy Bare, and Caroline Babbidge Connors. We also welcomed several new members to the School Council after the June election: parents, Jen Rothstein and Jen Amigone and community member Ellen Ball, Brookline resident, former Pierce Parent and PTO co-chair. All the new members joining the council were trained on council procedures. We thank those members of the council who are moving on. They were instrumental in helping to shape our plans and make progress in achieving these goals over the last two years, and for the coming years.

Surveys conducted during the new principal search, and the feedback nights for the same, helped to inform our progress on existing goals and determine next year's goals. Results show that both parents and teachers feel that Pierce School continues to provide a powerful academic and social environment that fosters a love of life-long learning. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2016-17 continues to encourage staff PLC participation, with a focus on ongoing improvement efforts in literacy, math, and implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support system (PBIS). We will also continue our focus on executive function skills, as we continue our partnership with the Landmark Outreach Program (LOP), expanding it to include grades three, four and five. Finally, our hope is that the SIP will support Pierce as it welcomes new principal, Christine Kelley, as she continues to help identify space needs, priority infrastructure repairs, and funding to support the growing enrollment of our school.

Summary of our SIP work in 2015-16:

The 2015-16 Pierce School enrollment data reflects a population that is 5.0% African American, 22.6% Asian, 9.3% Hispanic, 55.2% white, and 7.9% multi race/non-Hispanic. In addition, 8% of our population is low income, and students whose first language is not English make up 29.4% of our population. Spring 2015 MCAS data reveals numerous achievement gaps that remain persistent, and widening in some areas, most notably between low income and non-low income students. Town-wide MCAS data also reflects this persistent achievement gap.

Our SIP continues to work toward our 10 year goal to eliminate our achievement gaps around race and socio-economic status. Continuing to develop programs and strategies to address the achievement gaps here at Pierce is a social justice imperative. Every student who walks through our doors should be able to succeed here academically. By embracing the data we are already collecting, formatting it in such a way that teachers and specialists can make sense of it, and reinforcing our strong Professional Learning Communities (PLCs using Inquiry Groups) with new and returning staff, we can work together to ensure that no students' needs go

unmet and they experience academic success using multiple measures. In addition, if data informs our Response to Intervention (RtI) models we can ensure that students' needs will be met promptly and by the staff member best able to meet those needs. Given these aspirations, we faced several challenges in 2015-16, including our inability to secure funding required by the Brookline Educators Union for our Intervention Beyond the School Day (IBSD) support for those students whose families could not, for a host of reasons, provide them with that academic support. We Identified students in grades one, two and three who would benefit from this additional support, however conflicts with the union about the expected pay rate, compounded by the climate created by the lack of a new contract, prevented us from implementing our carefully thought out plans.

The following summarizes our work:

1. *Teachers in grades one, two and three spent hours over the summer (2015) crafting parent letters and plans for how classroom teachers would identify students and work collaboratively with families to support these students.*¹
2. *We were able to improve RtI work through the use of PLC's with a continued focus on literacy and math instruction through staff Inquiry Group time, during faculty meetings.*
3. *An increase in the RtI strategies were provided in the 6-7-8 grades as a result of the additional FTE for math and literacy specialists. This led to more inclusion support for a range of students.*
4. *Our newly created data team systematically reviewed and organized data, and shared it with grade level teams and at a faculty meeting.*
5. *Our PBIS team worked to develop a plan for rolling out this whole school behavioral approach. They presented the work to date at a faculty meeting.*
6. *Guidance department staff and classroom teachers continued to expand the use of consistent language around a growth mindset, with the support of the Benson-Henry Institute Mindfulness and Stress Reduction training, to help students find balance in their lives.*
7. *In addition, 7th graders were surveyed to assess their level of stress, the results of which will shape our goal addressing stress reduction in our 2016-17 SIP.*² *The new school counselor position has been immensely helpful in meeting with students and families as well as in the collection of data to inform our efforts in this area.*

¹ See appendix for IBSD documents.

8. *We successfully implemented the resources from the Landmark Outreach Program (LOP) with grades six, seven and eight, meeting in small and large groups throughout the year. This monthly sessions provided grade level teams the opportunity to learn of each other's practices and reach agreements around the best ways to improve the transition between 6th and 7th grades using common language and common practice. Surveyed staff members reported that they have tried one or more Landmark strategies in in their classrooms this year.*³
9. *The Pierce Loft (3rd floor of 62 Harvard Street) was opened for four 7/8 classrooms in September 2015. This allowed for the shifting of other classroom spaces to accommodate increased enrollment and additional sections in 2nd and 8th grades.*

Executive Summary of *New and Continued Goals for 2016-2017

Goal 1: Increase the achievement of all students by creating learning environments that successfully balance content, pedagogy and student-teacher relationships.

Goal 2: Eliminate achievement gaps with respect to race, ethnicity and socio-economic status and increase the achievement of students with special needs through individualized strategies and programs.

- **Intervention Beyond the School Day (IBSD)**-We need to find solutions to the problems of scheduling and funding for our planned IBSD program (see appendix). This program will provide support to students who need more time on task in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math is through small group work before and after school. This opportunity for students in grades one through three will be provided by classroom teachers and specialists three times a week for 30 minutes each morning and afternoon.
- **Continue to use PLCs to support the work of Math Differentiation and the Literacy Collaborative**- The collaboration of the math, literacy, and ECS specialists with classroom teachers will support differentiation, new curriculum implementation, and co-teaching models. Numerous summer workshops are planned to support this collaboration.
- **Landmark Outreach Program**- We will begin the second of three years working with the LOP, now targeting grades 3, 4, 5, primarily focusing on language and executive functioning skills. Consultation will continue with 6, 7, 8 teachers with a focus on the transition from grades 5 to 6.

Goal 3: Prepare students with the intellectual, interpersonal, and reflective skills needed to thrive in an increasingly complex and diverse global society.

- **Continue to look at the use of technology and the impact on teaching and learning** – As a result of the district wide collaboration across specialists (math, literacy, ECS, library and technology) the Pierce Specialists Instructional Team has determined a common focus: creating a culture at Pierce around student questions. This team will spend time working together in 2016-17 to identify how best to implement this common focus across grades and across disciplines.²
- **Provide continuing follow up and opportunities for additional workshops that introduce and support the Mindfulness and Stress Reduction Techniques** from the Mass General Hospital Benson-Henry Institute in order to minimize stress for

² See appendix for Pierce Specialist Team poster.

students and staff. While the 2015-16 seventh grade survey data reflects that many students are now familiar with these methods, many report they are not yet using them consistently.³

Goal 4: Foster a cycle of continuous improvement by using data to effectively examine system-wide programs and practices.

- **Continue to expand the Data Team-** Increase representation across grades and specialists. The Team will continue to support the following goals:
 - streamline all the data (i.e. academic, behavioral, social, etc.) teachers already collect
 - share data spreadsheets with grade level teams and specialists
 - offer support for teachers who may need more assistance in how to use the data to inform instruction
 - take the lead in examining data at each grade level.
- **Determine the best implementation plan for the school wide behavior support system-**As our enrollment has grown and our school is housed in 3 buildings, we need to implement our new plan focusing on PBIS and continue to review our OLWEUS survey data to determine any necessary changes in policy and procedure.
- ***Building Initiatives-** Given that we do not anticipate a renovation within the next ten years, and as our enrollment continues to increase, we request a complete Capital Improvement Project (CIP) assessment of our main building and historical building. Priorities include, but are not limited to, identifying and addressing safety concerns and other necessary improvements, especially to bathrooms, substandard classroom spaces, lighting, electrical and other hardwiring, and dilapidated furniture and equipment.

³ See appendix for 7th grade “stress survey” results.

Our plan is linked to the following District Goal(s):

1. **Educational Equity.** Eliminate achievement gaps with respect to race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status and increase the achievement of students with special needs through individualized strategies and programs.
2. **Continuous Improvement Using Data.** Foster a cycle of continuous improvement by using data to effectively examine system-wide programs and practices.

Our plan is linked to the following School Goal(s):

1. *Through the use of data teams, PLC's and increased RtI, we will identify the students in need of intervention and reduce the achievement gap for low income and minority students by 50% within 5 years.*
2. *We will begin by inviting 6 to 10 students in grades 1 through 3 to participate in before and/or after school academically focused programs with 60% in each cohort participating. We hope to follow these students through the grades and/or add students in the upper grades after the first year.*
3. *We will better use the workshop block as an Intervention Block during the school day, three times a week, as part of the RtI model for grades 5-8. Students will meet with classroom teachers, specialists and other support staff to address their needs.*
4. *We will expand the Landmark Outreach Program (LOP) to grades 3-5, (offering follow up support in grades 6-8) and add K-2 for the 2017-18 school year. The goal is to develop or refine existing strategies that help address the confusion language sometimes creates around instruction and the varied vocabulary teachers use to give the same directions while also addressing the executive functioning challenge many students face throughout the grades. We will monitor how students apply these strategies to increase academic success.*
5. *Pierce Specialists Instructional Team goal*
6. *The Benson Henry Institute for Mindfulness and Stress Reduction will be offered to additional teachers and students in an effort to incorporate additional strategies to reduce stress and anxiety.*
7. *DATA team goal-Continue the data collection, examination with grade level teams and determine how to utilize the data to improve practice*
8. *Positive Behavior Intervention Support goal- Implement our new plan focusing on PBIS and continue to review our OLWEUS survey data to determine any necessary changes in policy and procedure.*
9. *Building goal- complete a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) assessment of our main building and historical building. Priorities include, but are not limited to, identifying and addressing safety concerns and other necessary improvements, especially to bathrooms, substandard classroom spaces, lighting, electrical and other hardwiring, and dilapidated furniture and equipment.*

Baseline Data	Strategies and Action Steps	Responsibility-Resources Needed/Anticipated Funding Source	Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
Roughly 17% of our school population was below proficient level on the 2015 ELA MCAS, and 21% was below proficient in math. Low income and African American students'	We will share the Excel tracking system created by the data team during the 2015-16 school year to provide information to classroom teachers and specialists about the children on their caseloads.	Data team	Summer 2016, September 2016	Excel form will be ready for staff use on or before September 8th.

<p>scores on MCAS were significantly lower than those of their non-low income and white peers. Student end of year comments and/or grades indicate that classroom teachers are successfully identifying those students with below-grade level skills, yet those students are still not making progress.</p> <p>Goal 1: Through the use of data teams, PLC's and increased RtI, we will identify the students in need of interventions and close the achievement gap by 50% within 5 years.</p>	<p>Each grade level team will examine student data, and input new data into the Excel form, with support of the data team.</p> <p>We will schedule PLC meetings, which will include grade level teachers, specialists, guidance counselors, and members of school administration, to review data, evaluate effectiveness of core instruction, and design/support RtI plans for students who are not meeting grade level expectations.</p> <p>A co-taught workshop ELA model, established in 8th grade during the 2015-16 school year, will be expanded to include a 7th grade co-taught ELA class in 2016-17. The four involved teachers will meet during the summer of 2016 to plan for the year.</p>	<p>School administrators, data team, classroom teachers and specialists.</p> <p>Classroom teachers, special educators</p>	<p>September 2016- June 2017-</p> <p>June 2016, September 2016- June 2017</p>	<p>Student performance data from the 8th grade co-taught model in 2015-16 will be analyzed and compared to data collected in 2016-17, with emphasis on MCAS results, BAS score changed, and analysis of writing samples using a standard rubric.</p>
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<p>During the 2015-16 school year, the IBSD program was thoughtfully designed to support students in grades 1-3, for whom there is no before/after school academic intervention program.</p> <p>Goal 2: We will secure time and funding for the IBSD initiative and will pilot it, inviting 18-30 families in grades 1 through 3 to participate in before and/or after school academically focused programs with 60% in each</p>	<p>Principal will secure funding and gain scheduling approval from the school department, with Union approval. PTO funding has been approved.</p> <p>Classroom teachers will identify and share with guidance counselors the names of students who would benefit from additional academic intervention before/after school based on BAS data, MCAS data, math assessments, and classroom data and observations. Classroom teachers, specialists, guidance counselor and an administrator will meet to identify families for invitation.</p>	<p>Principal, school department, union representative and PTO</p> <p>Classroom teachers, guidance counselors and principal</p>	<p>Summer 2016 – September 2016.</p> <p>By October 1 2016</p>	<p>School staff will identify, communicate with, and enroll students in morning and/or after school programs.</p> <p>Students who sign up for the program(s) will attend; classroom teachers will report increased student engagement/improved academic skills.</p>
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<p>cohort participating.</p>	<p>Students, parents, and teachers will be surveyed mid-year and at the end of the year to determine program effectiveness and evaluate any areas for improvement. End of year assessment data for all program participants (math EOYA, BAS and MCAS results) will be reviewed to evaluate the impact of programming, determine needed improvements, and evaluate who from the 2015-16 cohort should be invited to continue in the 2016-17 programs.</p>	<p>Principal or designee to create and distribute survey.</p> <p>Data team</p>	<p>February 2017 and June 2017</p> <p>Summer 2017</p>	<p>Students and parents will report increased engagement, improved confidence and improved academic skills. Assessment results will reflect a measurable increase in student performance for at least 75% of participating students.</p>
<p>Existing workshop periods offer the time for support of the RtI models but with limited resources available at the times scheduled.</p> <p>Goal 3: Better use the workshop block as an Intervention Block during the school day for three times a week as part of the RtI model for grades 5-8. Students will meet with classroom teachers, specialists and other support staff to address their needs.</p>	<p>Schedules for 6th-8th grade were more aligned to better share teacher/specialists during the workshop periods during 2015-16, which allowed for more support. However, student need continued to outpace available time, so the workshop periods will be expanded by two blocks per week in 7th and 8th grade for the 2016-17 school year.</p> <p>During the school day interventions will better address the specific needs and provide differentiated instruction within the RtI model.</p>	<p>6th-8th grade teachers and specialists</p> <p>Resource: School department FY 16</p>	<p>2016-2017 school year</p>	<p>Students' needs are more readily met with increased achievement in course work, district measures and MCAS.</p> <p>Teachers of 7th and 8th grade students will report increased mastery of content objectives and reduced stress in students will be reports as measured on student survey results.</p>
<p>Landmark Outreach Program (LOP) will continue its three year commitment with Pierce's 3rd-5th grade teams.</p> <p>Goal 4: Increase the common language and support of strategies to address executive</p>	<p>Beginning in September, the LOP will meet with 3rd-5th grade staff. Throughout the year the PD will provide a half day workshop with each team followed by a consultation and classroom visit by the LOP liaison each month.</p>	<p>Administrators, 3rd-5th grade teams</p> <p>Resources: School department in the FY 16-19 budgets</p> <p>Executive function inquiry group team and classroom teachers.</p>	<p>September 2016- June 2017</p>	<p>50% of classroom teachers will self-report using one or more LOP strategies in their classroom by the end of the 2016-17 school year.</p>

<p>functioning skills of our 3-5 students with the Professional Development (PD) offered to 3-5 staff through the LOP.</p>	<p>Implementation of the LOP tools across all 3-5 grade.</p> <p>Follow up with staff at grades 6-8, with emphasis on the transition from 5th to 6th grade.</p>			
<p>Parents in grades 6-8 report that their children are experiencing stress, and we have had an increase in mental health behavior and student hospitalizations in the past two years. We have partnered with the Benson-Henry Mind Body Institute at MGH to train staff in mindfulness and meditation. In addition, 30 staff have been trained by the Institute in mindfulness strategies and techniques with a continued grant to train additional staff and students.</p> <p>Goal 5: 80% of students in each grade level will self-report an increase in their use of effective strategies to increase academic success and decrease stress.</p>	<p>A subgroup of 6-8 staff will be created to generate lists of student behaviors that reflect effective effort at each grade 6th - 8th level.</p> <p>Create a “Habits of Mind” rubric for each grade level and a corresponding parent checklist to facilitate the use of common home-school language around effective strategies.</p>	<p>6th-8th Team of Teachers</p> <p>Classroom teachers, parents, students, guidance counselors, social worker, school administrators and Landmark liaison. Resource: Hamilton Grant with the Benson Henry Mind-Body Institute</p>	<p>Fall 2015</p> <p>Fall 2015</p> <p>2015-16</p>	<p>Committee will have a draft rubric for each grade level grouping.</p> <p>Decrease in student hospitalizations and a reduction in reported stress levels.</p> <p>Students will self report an increase in their use of effective strategies for increased academic success on their “Habits of Mind” rubric. (To be filed in student cumulative files at the end of the year.)</p>

<p>Goal 7: Continue to look at the use of technology and the impact on teaching and learning.</p>	<p>Collect and examine data that outlines the usage of increased hardware. How are teachers and students using the new devices and how is it impacting their academic performance?</p>	<p>Technology specialist, classroom teachers, ECS specialists, math and literacy specialists Resource: District Research department, Library and media specialist department chair</p>	<p>2015-2017</p>	<p>Students performances are enhanced and the teaching and learning experience is improved with teachers reporting that the network connections are consistently reliable</p>
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Appendix 1: Intervention Beyond the School Day – Documents

Date: Sept 1, 2015

To: Grade 1 – 4 teachers

From: Pipier

RE: Learning Beyond the School Day (BSD)

This year, we will be introducing a pilot program, Learning Beyond the School Day (BSD). We plan to provide workshops (taught by classroom teacher/specialist) for students who would benefit from extra intervention in either math or literacy. For the first session (Oct 19-Dec 18 not the week of Thanksgiving), we will focus on math intervention for about 5 students at your grade level. Beginning Nov 16-Dec.18 we will introduce a literacy workshop for five different students at your grade level.

In preparation for the workshops in math, I need your help to identify 2-5 students in your class who are missing essential math skills. Please examine last spring's EOYA, this fall's BOYA as well as reports from math specialists. Fourth grade teachers also have access to MCAS results (see email from John). Specifically, we are looking for students who are not currently on an IEP, and who do not receive LLI or who are not pulled out for on-going intervention. As you review this data, make note of the skills that your students have yet to master.

By Friday, October 2nd, please work together with your grade-level colleagues to identify a total of 10 students and one or two target skills at your grade level. For the pilot program, we hope to have 5 students in a group. The workshop teacher will give you details about how to best share this information with the child's parents/guardians. I will also provide a cover letter that will go home with the more detailed information from the workshop teacher.

This initiative is supported by the district and the PTO. It is one of this year's School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals.

The workshops will meet for 30 minutes, 3 days per week, either before school or after school or a combination (to be determined by the workshop teacher). The first session will run for 8 weeks, from Oct 19-Dec 18, not meeting the week of Thanksgiving.

The workshop teachers at each grade level are:

Grade 1:

Grade 2:

Grade 3:

Grade 4:

After LLI groups have been formed, we plan identify students for the literacy workshops. Ideally, we will select students who are in need but not selected for LLI. These workshops will begin on Nov. 16th.

Thank you for your support,
Pipier



The Public Schools of Brookline
The John Pierce School
50 School Street
Brookline, Massachusetts 02445
Main Office: 617-730-2580
Fax: 617-264-6468

Pipier Smith-Mumford, Ph. D.
Principal

John Badger
Vice Principal

Daniel Green
Vice Principal

October 2015

Dear Pierce Parent/Guardian,

I am pleased to inform you of an opportunity for your son or daughter to participate in a pilot program at Pierce. This program is intended to boost skills in literacy beyond the school day. Your child's teacher has recommended your child to be a part of this initial pilot. These workshops will be held for three 30 minute sessions before or after school. Our primary goal is to target specific curricular needs in literacy.

We are excited to have the support for this program from the school district and the PTO. This initiative allows us to provide this service with no cost to you. We only ask that you make the commitment to have your son or daughter ready to attend each session on time.

Please see the attached letter for more details and respond promptly. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Pipier Smith-Mumford



The Public Schools of Brookline
The John Pierce School
50 School Street
Brookline, Massachusetts 02445
Main Office: 617-730-2580
Fax: 617-264-6468

Pipier Smith-Mumford, Ph. D.
Principal

John Badger
Vice Principal

Daniel Green
Vice Principal

October 2015

Dear Pierce Parent/Guardian,

I am pleased to inform you of an opportunity for your son or daughter to participate in a pilot program at Pierce. This program is intended to boost skills in math beyond the school day. Your child's teacher has recommended your child to be a part of this initial pilot. These workshops will be held for three 30 minute sessions before or after school. Our primary goal is to target specific curricular needs in math.

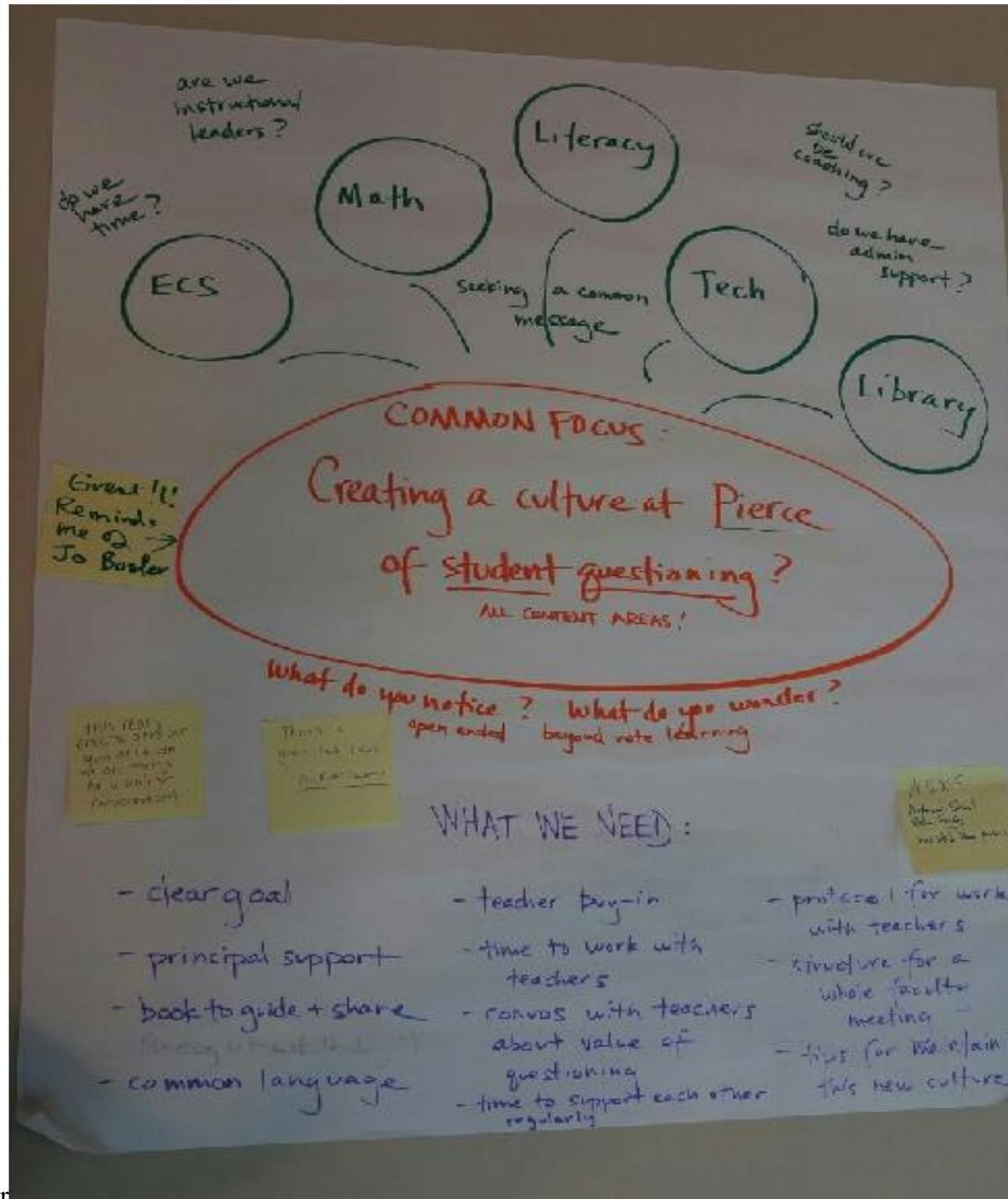
We are excited to have the support for this program from the school district and the PTO. This initiative allows us to provide this service with no cost to you. We only ask that you make the commitment to have your son or daughter ready to attend each session on time.

Please see the attached letter for more details and respond promptly. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Pipier Smith-Mumford

Appendix 2:
Pierce Specialist Team poster



Pierce Specialist Team poster

Appendix 3: 7th grade Stress Survey results

Survey Results on Stress and 7th Graders

The following summary of survey results from Pierce 7th graders was reviewed with the 7-8 team on May 4, 2016.

Total respondents= 75

How high has your level of stress been in the last month? (scale of 1=no stress to 10=highly stress)

30% rated themselves as 8 or higher
41% rated themselves as 7 or higher

In the last month:

How often have you been upset or stressed because of things that happened at:

- school - 93% identified feeling at least some stress at school
- home - 61% identified feeling at least some stress at school

Strategies to manage stress

<u>When you experience stress, how often do you:</u>	<u>Responses to "Almost Always" or "Often"</u>
do activities that you find fun	59%
talk to friends, teachers, parents or other adults that you trust when you are stressed	24%
exercise	49%
get a full, restful night sleep	35%
eat nutritious foods	41%

Compiled by Amy Reed, Pierce Counselor
5-12-16