

## **Education Master Plan - 2005**

### **History**

Sandwich has enjoyed a history rich in public education. Joan Cook, author of *One Room School Houses of Sandwich* published by the Sandwich Historical Society in 2004, notes that community support for education in Sandwich established its roots over two hundred years ago when it was discussed at 1782 town meeting. “The town’s decision in 1794 to establish school districts was made eleven years before the passage of a state law empowering towns to do so.” At one point there were twenty-five different schools in operation.

When public transportation made it possible to effectively transport students, outlying schools were closed in favor of a centrally located Central School. Built in 1950, Sandwich Central School provided education through grade 12. In 1963, the decision was made to join the Inter-Lakes School District. Ownership of the Sandwich Central School was transferred to the ILSD via a quitclaim deed. With the addition of kindergarten a year later, SCS currently provides quality education to students in grades K through 6.

The town of Sandwich was also home to The Community School, a private school, until it relocated to Tamworth. Six Sandwich children currently attend this institution. Approximately ten percent of the K-6 student population receives a home school education.

### **Identity**

Our school has been a focal point of community activity for over 50 years. Even today it plays a central role in bringing our community together providing valuable opportunities for social interaction.

The small student population has created a nurturing social environment where no one gets lost in the cracks. SCS enjoys a fine tradition of volunteerism, with parents in the classroom, and community members supporting the stamp club, the chess club, the student newspaper and a variety of other after-school activities.

A number of community service organizations call the school home. The PTO is the most visible of these organizations. Enjoying strong support from community members, parents and teachers, the PTO plays an active role in bringing the larger community together through its programs and events. Some of these activities include hosting a safety and comfort station for the Reach the Beach relay race, presenting the annual Harvest Supper, sponsoring the Holiday Craft Fair and hosting the sled dog race. The PTO also raises money for local educational endeavors by providing parking for the Sandwich Fair. In addition to the PTO, other community services utilize the school for local events. The annual town meeting is held every March in the SCS gymnasium and the Recreation Department offers adult sports such as basketball and volleyball.

The school is also home to one of the two playgrounds in Sandwich. It provides an opportunity for parents and children to strengthen family bonds through play and shared experience.

### **Goal**

Recognizing that learning takes a number of forms, residents of Sandwich are committed to a philosophy of lifelong learning by providing quality community-based education from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade while supporting the development of our preschool children and the continuing education of our graduates and community members. We support the idea of local scholarships as an investment in the future of our community. We welcome and encourage active participatory community involvement at all levels – mentoring, internships and volunteerism.

As the results of the upcoming survey are processed, we will be identifying specific action-oriented goals based on the needs addressed by our community.

### **District Plans**

No capital improvements projects are planned for the near future. Building capacities remain sustainable.

The Inter-Lakes School District is currently involved in many different initiatives. Most of these initiatives focus on curriculum, assessment and/or the reporting process. In 1998 the district hired its first curriculum coordinator, to over see the development and implementation of the curriculum as outlined in the curriculum development cycle.

In 2000 the Inter-Lakes School District was invited to participate in the New Hampshire Department of Education's Best Schools Initiative. As part of the initiative each participating district chose a Best Schools project to work on over the next few years.

The Inter-Lakes School District chose to develop assessment plans as its project. This led to the development of an Elementary Assessment plan, a Secondary Assessment plan, and a new reporting process.

In the development of the Elementary Assessment plan the Elementary Assessment Committee used the I-LSD topic outlines (curriculum) and exit outcomes to create assessment plans and rubrics for each grade level.

With the development of the new elementary assessment plans the district also developed a new elementary reporting process. The new process involves students, with the support and guidance of their teachers, creating portfolios in which they document and highlight the growth they have made. Along with developing a portfolio, students are also participating in Parent/Student/Teacher conferences. These conferences allow the student to show her family the work she has been doing and the growth she has made.

Conferences also provide an opportunity for the parent, student, and teacher to develop one or two learning goals for the child to focus on until the next reporting period. Instead of the traditional report card with letter grades brought home four times a year, the new process has children bringing home Standards Based Progress reports twice a year. The

new process is currently being phased in to grades kindergarten thru six. In the 2003-2004 school year, the fourth grade piloted the new reporting process. This year the 2004-2005 school year grades 3-5 are fully implementing the new process. Grades K, 1, 2, and 6 are doing the portfolios and Parent/Student/Teacher Conferences.

One focus of the Secondary Assessment Committee was the Exit Outcomes developed in 1995 as part of strategic planning. This committee created a holistic rubric to assess student performance in these areas. The class of 2008 will be required to meet each Exit Outcome in a variety of classes in order to graduate.

The following are the Exit Outcomes of the Inter-Lakes School District:

- The student will be technologically competent.
- The student will be an effective communicator.
- The student will exhibit teamwork and leadership skills.
- The student will be respectful of self, others, and property, and be responsible for one's own actions.
- The student will understand the role of arts in the society.
- The student will demonstrate knowledge of behaviors that promote wellness.
- The student will have career, education, and life-planning skills.
- The student will exhibit organization and self-management.
- The student will be an effective problem solver.

Some other initiatives currently going on in the district include:

**Focus Area B:** To research and promote a learning environment and academic program that best meets the needs of students in middle grades.

**Literacy Initiative:** To support the implementation of the new English/Language Arts curriculum in the 2002-2003 school year. The Inter-Lakes School district adopted First Steps for Grades K-8 and had 12 teachers trained as First Steps Tutors during the summer of 2002. The tutors help support teachers in using the First Steps resources and offer professional development related to First Steps and Literacy.

**CORE:** To support our communities in decreasing the incidents of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use by building community partnerships, seeking and enhancing resources, developing healthy alternatives, and use media to raise awareness and disseminate information. Community Response Leadership Group convened in 2001 in response to the NH Youth Risk Behavior Survey. On the 2001 survey, Inter-Lakes High School scored significantly higher in every risk category when compared to state averages.

**ILSD Funding Formula and Budget**

As a member of the Inter-Lakes Cooperative School District, Sandwich shares in the cost of funding education based on an established formula established in 1967 which takes into account the equalized value and the average daily membership of each member town. The equalized value is calculated by adding the valuation of each town together and then dividing each town's valuation by the sum. This yields the percentage rate for the equalized value of each town. The average daily membership or ADM is based on the prior school year's student population. Like the equalized value, the ADM is calculated by adding the student population from each member town and dividing each town's student population by this sum. These two values, the equalized valuation and the ADM, are now added together and divided by two to provide the percent rate used to determine the amount of the overall school budget that each town is responsible for. The values used in this formula are two years old, so for the purposes of determining the FY2005-06 school budget, the equalized formula is based on 2003 valuations and the ADM is based on 2002-03 numbers.

**Equalized Valuation (2002)**

<b>Town</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Rate</b>
Center Harbor	\$ 335,253,910	20.1148%
Meredith	\$1,035,138,571	62.1070%
Sandwich	\$ 296,309,673	17.7782%
Total Valuation	\$1,666,702,154	

**Average Daily Membership (2002-03)**

<b>Town</b>	<b># of stu</b>	<b>% ADM</b>
Center Harbor	122.8	9.5105%
Meredith	1011.7	78.3535%
Sandwich	156.7	12.1360%
1291.2 students		

**Combined to determine 2005-06 rate**

<b>Town</b>	<b>EVA</b>	<b>ADM</b>	<b>Share %</b>
Center Harbor	20.1148%	9.5105%	14.8127%
Meredith	62.1070%	78.3535%	70.2302%
Sandwich	17.7782%	12.1360%	14.9571%

**2003 Inter-Lakes School District Budget - \$14,446,914**

<b>Town</b>	<b>Share %</b>	<b>Share \$</b>
Center Harbor	15.4212%	\$ 2,227,888
Meredith	69.8069%	\$ 10,084,943
Sandwich	14.7719%	\$ 2,134,084
		<b>Total \$14,446,914</b>

**Analysis of 2003-2004 Budget and Funding Formula**

- Based on public information, Sandwich paid between \$150,718.00 and \$179,000.00 per month to the Inter-Lakes School District for a total of \$2,023,718.00 for the 2003-04 school year.
- Based on figures generated for use in the work of the District-wide Elementary Enrollment Committee, the cost of operating the Sandwich Central School is approximately \$900,000.00 annually.
- The cost of tuition at the Middle-High School level is \$10,800.00/school year. Currently there are approximately 72 students attending ILHS. At this tuition rate, the cost of providing an education for these students is \$777,600.00.
- Sandwich pays approximately \$100,000 towards the operation of the SAU.
- The sum of these is \$1,777,600.00 which leaves an unaccounted balance of \$246,118.00.
- While the current formula strives to be fair to all member towns, any changes to the cooperative agreement would necessitate a review of the funding formula.

**Issues facing Sandwich**

**1. Declining Enrollment**

One of the greatest threats facing Sandwich has been the declining enrollment trend over the last 12 years. As illustrated in table 1 below, the student population in Sandwich has dwindled steadily down from a high of 125 students in 1993 to its anticipated population of 76 for the 2005-06 school year. Future births do not look to reverse this trend at this time. It would appear that the only hope for a reversal lies in an influx in young families to this area. Unfortunately, this is not likely due to the high cost of housing and the lack of job opportunities.

**Table 1  
SCS Population trend**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Pre-K</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Total</b>
1995	0	12	10	12	22	18	21	17	<b>112</b>
1996	0	15	13	13	12	21	16	21	<b>111</b>
1997	0	11	14	14	14	11	23	17	<b>104</b>
1998	0	13	13	14	13	15	13	22	<b>103</b>
1999	0	16	13	13	17	13	16	12	<b>100</b>
2000	0	10	17	11	16	13	14	14	<b>95</b>
2001	0	11	13	16	15	18	13	13	<b>99</b>
2002	0	8	9	11	15	14	20	13	<b>90</b>
2003	0	13	10	8	12	15	15	18	<b>91</b>
2004	0	7	10	11	9	11	16	15	<b>79</b>
2005	0	12	7	10	11	9	11	16	<b>76</b>

**Table 2**  
**Future Enrollment Levels Based on Sandwich Births**

Year	Known Births*
2004	7
2005	11+2
2006	11
2007	9
2008	9b+1
2009	2

\* Births as of December 12, 2004

It is this trend that has focused District attention on the Sandwich Central School as the ILSD budget has continued to grow. In 2002, the School Board passed a motion that stated that the issue would be revisited in the event that the student population in any grade dropped below a specific threshold. In 2004, that motion was brought up again as the anticipated population in two grades would fall below that limit. The School Board instituted a working committee to explore options regarding enrollment issues in the elementary schools.

**2. Establishment of the District-wide Elementary Enrollment Committee**

The District-wide Elementary Enrollment Committee was formed as a result of the identified need to establish options for schools with declining enrollments. Comprised of representatives from the three member communities as well as members of the school administration, it began by identifying a number of options for the school, organized into six clusters. These options are listed below:

**Cluster 1** focused on maintaining the status quo which was interpreted to mean that Sandwich would continue to operate with one teacher per grade level regardless of class size.

**Cluster 2** identified potential modifications to the educational structure (philosophy) and/or staffing levels in response to class sizes. Specific options included either a multi-age or multi-grade philosophy which would reflect a reduction in staffing levels.

**Cluster 3** sought to find ways to increase enrollment by developing SCS into a magnet school or a charter school, by pulling grades 7 and 8 out of the Inter-Lakes Middle School and bringing it back to Sandwich, or by turning SCS into a Special Education center. There was also talk of redistricting so that area students were sent to SCS based on their proximity to the school.

**Cluster 4** looked at ways to increase revenue to support SCS by either creating rules for subsidies (in the event that the school or class population dropped below a certain level, Sandwich would pay the district the equivalent of a penalty tax), or by modifying the existing cooperative agreement to either change the funding formula, change the organizational structure of the district or a combination of the two. It was discussed that it would be easier to modify the agreement than it would to dissolve the cooperative agreement entirely.

**Cluster 5** looked at the impact of condensing the school district by closing the Sandwich Central School.

**Cluster 6** considered the implications of a withdrawal from the district by any of the current member communities.

The committee made a recommendation to the school board in January to implement a short-term solution of combining kindergarten and first grade into a multi-age environment with the appropriate support structures in place, particularly training and curriculum development. The committee also recommended that the board extend their charter for another year as they seek to develop a long-term solution. The options mentioned included a full scale multi-age environment, open-enrollment schools, and magnet and/or charter schools. Also mentioned was the need to conduct a study of the cooperative agreement and the process by which to amend it. The board unanimously approved both the recommendation and the request to continue the work of the committee and requested that the committee submit a report to be received by the first school board meeting in December 2005.

It will remain to be seen what will occur as the school board meets to develop the budget for the 2005-06 school year. An addendum to this report will be submitted next year to update the status of our school.

**3. The goal to provide some semblance of stability for SCS**

One of the larger concerns expressed recently has dealt with the need to establish a solid philosophical and pedagogical structure for our students. It has been noted that our students have experienced a range of educational delivery methods and there is concern that the constant change in delivery will have a negative impact on their learning and morale within the school community.

**4. The institution of the Sandwich Education Committee**

The Sandwich Education Committee was commissioned by the Board of Selectmen in an attempt to provide support for the work of the District-wide Elementary Enrollment Committee as well as to develop the education master plan. It is hoped that this committee will continue to support the role of education in our community.

**Short-term plan**

It is important that essential data be gathered so that the Sandwich Education Committee can accurately assess the needs and desires of the Sandwich community as it pertains to the role that education plays. The Committee feels that it is vital to establish a baseline before an effective master plan can be established and therefore the immediate recommendation of this committee is that a community survey be developed and administered in 2005 that will serve to provide that baseline.

This data, in conjunction with the recommendations proposed to the Inter-Lakes School Board by the District-wide Elementary Enrollment Committee, will provide a frame of reference for future work by the Sandwich Education Committee. The committee therefore proposes that an addendum to the Education Master Plan be submitted for consideration at the 2006 town meeting which will show this data and the resulting goals and actions to be taken as the result.

**Respectfully submitted by the Sandwich Education Committee:**

*John E. Martin, Chair  
Dan Cunningham  
Heather Littlefield*

31 January 2005