

# INNOVATION SCHOOL PLAN

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**INNOVATION SCHOOL INFORMATION FORM**

Proposed Innovation School Name:	<b>The Merrimac School</b>
New/Conversion/Academy within a school:	<b>Conversion</b>
Proposed School Address (if known):	<b>24 Union Street Ext., Merrimac, MA (Gr 3-6) 104 Church Street, Merrimac, MA (Pre-K – Gr2)</b>
Lead Applicant Name:	<b>Dr. Jeffrey Mulqueen</b>
Lead Applicant Phone Number(s) :	<b>978-363-2280</b>
Lead Applicant Fax Number(s) :	
Lead Applicant Email Address:	<b>JMulqueen@prsd.org</b>

If conversion:

Existing School Name:	<b>Helen R. Donaghue School (Gr 3-6) Dr. Frederick N. Sweetsir School (Pre-K – Gr2)</b>
Existing School Address:	<b>Same as Above</b>

Proposed Innovation School opening school year:  2013-14  2014-2015

Proposed duration of innovation plan (up to five years): 3 years 4 years  5 years

<b>School Year</b>	<b>Grade Levels</b>	<b>Total Student Enrollment</b>	<b>Total number of Staff (including paraprofessionals and all support)</b>
First Year	Pre-K to 6	525	Approx. 90
Second Year	Pre-K to 6	525	Approx. 90
Third Year	Pre-K to 6	525	Approx. 90
Fourth Year	Pre-K to 6	525	Approx. 90
Fifth Year	Pre-K to 6	525	Approx. 90
...			
At Full Enrollment	Pre-K to 6		Approx. 90

**INNOVATION PLAN CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**

Proposed Innovation School Name:	<b>The Merrimac School</b>
Proposed City/Town Location:	<b>Merrimac, Massachusetts</b>

Names of innovation plan committee members (no more than 11 individuals) selected in accordance with state law:

<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Vote (yes or no)</b>
Lead applicant:	<b>Dr. Jeffrey Mulqueen</b>	
Superintendent or designee:	<b>Dr. Jeffrey Mulqueen</b>	
School committee member or designee:	<b>Wayne Adams</b>	
Parent who has one or more children enrolled in the school, or in the case of a new school, in the district:	<b>Sharon Bartholomew</b>	
Teacher employed by district (selected from among volunteers)	<b>Susan Simmons</b>	
Teacher employed by district (selected from among nominees submitted by the local teacher's union)	<b>Shannon Meehan</b>	
Member: Parent	<b>Chris Skinner</b>	
Member: Teacher	<b>Lynette Provencal</b>	
Member: Teacher	<b>Audrey Tarr</b>	
Member: Teacher	<b>Noelle Keach</b>	
Member: Staff	<b>Dawn Ackerman</b>	
Member: Principal	<b>Rob Harrison</b>	

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this innovation plan is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and has been approved by a majority vote of the innovation plan committee.

**Signature of Lead Applicant**

**Member** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

### ***I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

The Dr. Frederick N. Sweetsir School and Helen R. Donaghue School together provide educational experiences for approximately 540 students in Merrimac from Pre-Kindergarten through grade 6. Merrimac joins with the communities of West Newbury and Groveland to form the Pentucket Regional School District. Students in the district with disabilities on the autism spectrum attend specialized programs in the Merrimac schools. Merrimac is an economically diverse community, and some students receive Title I assistance. The students with identified learning disabilities and students from low income households have not performed as well as other peers on state MCAS examinations. Performance on these exams has resulted in the schools being ranked as Level 2.

The Pentucket district has embarked on a path leading to providing “world-class” learning opportunities for all students. These experiences will help students acquire and master challenging content knowledge and adaptive leadership skills such as communication, strategic thinking, and collaboration. The experiences will also provide students with ways to create personal meaning for their learning and opportunities to use what they learn to solve real-world problems and to have an impact on their world. Interdisciplinary units of learning and personalized instruction will be hallmarks of an education in Pentucket Schools.

Many staff in the Merrimac schools have expressed a strong desire to bring their students challenging and relevant learning experiences focused on inquiry, investigation, and constructing personal meaning. The District administration recommended that the staff investigate the International Baccalaureate Primary Program as a school structure that will enable teaching and learning in this way. The IB organization, which began in 1968, has developed a program characterized by high academic standards, thematic transdisciplinary units of study, and a focus on multi-culturalism.

An IB investigation team was formed in the fall of 2013. They are investigating the IB Primary Years Program as it appears in schools in New England. Preliminary research indicates that the IB PYP aligns well with the Pentucket vision and strategic objectives and they believe it will provide staff and students with a framework for providing the education they, the district, and parents believe students need in order to become educated, successful and well-rounded citizens. The team plans to make site visits this year to New England schools utilizing the IB philosophy of teaching and learning.

The process to fully implement an IB school will require multiple years as the staff develops units of study that are both aligned to state standards and delivered in a transdisciplinary thematic approach, learn how to teach using inquiry- and project-based approaches, and develops leadership capacity and skills. The final step in the process will be a site visit by IB personnel and accreditation, after which the school will be officially recognized as an IB World School.

The innovation schools initiative became of interest to the district as it developed its plans for realizing its vision of “World Class” education for all students in the district. It was clear that the autonomies offered in becoming an innovation school strengthened the process of the Merrimac

schools becoming an IB school, thereby providing the high level of educational opportunities intended by the Pentucket Regional School District.

This document outlines a plan for the Dr. Frederick N. Sweetsir School and the Helen R. Donaghue School to convert to an International Baccalaureate School, Primary Years Program, and become the Merrimac School. The core instruction will be organized around six transdisciplinary themes rather than around blocks of time where single subjects are taught. Resources -- budget, staffing, curricular materials -- that support the new design will be reallocated. The school schedule will be altered to provide increased teacher collaboration time, and activities will be planned that include themes that broaden our student's ownership of their learning and which have real-world impacts. The new school will focus on closing the student achievement gap using the transdisciplinary, multi-cultural, International Baccalaureate (IB) World Schools curriculum, redesigning the school schedule to foster increased collaboration between special education and regular education teachers, restructuring teacher professional development time, and utilizing the opportunity to reallocate resources to support the unique needs at the Merrimac Schools.

**II. STRATEGIC CHANGE CHART**

<b>Current School or District Practice</b>	<b>Proposed Change(s)</b>	<b>Expected Impact on Student Learning and Achievement</b>
1. School schedule prevents adequate collaboration time for teacher teams	1. Schedule teams of teachers to provide additional collaborative work and learning time	1. Increased learning due to improved lesson design and collaborative analysis of student work and learning outcomes.
2. Principal as decision-maker in matters of staff assignment, scheduling, and other systems that support the instructional core.	2. Creation of pedagogical leadership team including IB PYP Coordinator, teachers from each grade level, special education teachers.	2. Improved learning through teacher ownership of decision-making process and shared expertise in decision-making.
3. Curriculum lacks coherence and vertical articulation.	3. Organize curriculum according to IB PYP model of transdisciplinary themes, concepts, transdisciplinary learning skills and learner profile attributes	3. Improved student learning through increased motivation and deeper understanding resulting from inquiry- and project-based learning.
4. Principal as leader of instruction and curriculum	4. Creation of pedagogical leadership team including IB PYP Coordinator, grade level teachers, special education teachers.	4. Improved student learning through broader leadership, autonomy, and accountability of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
5. No foreign language learning opportunities for students	5. Foreign language learning opportunities for students beginning at age 7	5. Greater student learning due to opportunities to learn a second language, a practice shown to positively impact student achievement in other curriculum learning areas.
6. District determines professional development	6. School leadership team determines use of time based	6. Increased student engagement and learning

plans for student release time.	on IB PYP implementation.	through teacher development of inquiry-based unit design and pedagogy
7. Superintendent and principal make hiring decisions	7. School pedagogic leadership team participates in hiring of new staff	7. Student experiences improved through hiring focused on requirements of teaching in the IB PYP
8. Most assessments require low Depth of Knowledge and do not have students use and apply what they learn	8. Teachers will design and use assessments that measure student learning through use of knowledge and skills.	8. Students learn at a higher and more complex level.

### ***III. PUBLIC STATEMENT***

The Dr. Frederick N. Sweetsir School and Helen R. Donaghue School together provide educational experiences for approximately 540 students in Merrimac from Pre-Kindergarten through grade 6. Students from across the Pentucket Regional School District with disabilities on the autism spectrum attend specialized programs in the Merrimac schools. The town of Merrimac is economically diverse and some students receive learning support made available through Title I.

The Merrimac School, located at the Dr. Frederick N. Sweetsir School and Helen R. Donaghue School will adopt the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program curriculum and model of teaching and learning which will serve the community with a program and design that best meets the needs of the students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 6. Using the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program as a framework, Merrimac students will have learning opportunities that will help them become inquiring, knowledgeable, globally aware, and caring young people who accomplish significant things with their lives. The program and design of the school combine the autonomies that are offered as an innovation school, the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program’s inquiry-based approach to learning, and the needs identified by the staff and community as a means to provide “World Class” educational opportunities to all students.

### ***IV. MISSION, VISION, STATEMENT OF NEED, AND PROPOSED PARTNERSHIPS***

#### **A. Mission Statement**

The Dr. Frederick N. Sweetsir and Helen R. Donaghue schools serve an economically diverse community that is part of the three-town Pentucket Regional School District. With the rest of the district, the Merrimac schools aim to become the educational opportunity of choice for students/families, the employment opportunity of choice for talented educators, and the investment opportunity of choice for the community.

Through the International Baccalaureate Primary Program students in the Merrimac Schools will meet high academic standards in core subject areas through a

transdisciplinary, inquiry-based approach to learning, develop the adaptive leadership skills needed for success in their lives, personal meaning for their learning, understanding and acceptance of others, personal responsibility, and respect for self and others.

## B. Vision Statement

The Merrimac School will develop internationally minded students, who meet high academic standards and develop adaptive leadership skills while recognizing their common humanity and shared stewardship of the planet. The program will be characterized by:

High quality inquiry-based instruction tied to high standards and expectations.

Curriculum that is aligned to the Massachusetts Frameworks and organized around transdisciplinary themes.

Instructional resources, including professional knowledge and skills, to equip every educator with the tools necessary to promote and sustain student learning and achievement.

An effective, academically capable, inspired staff.

Staff that is committed to reflection to improve practice.

Time provided for collaboration, planning and ongoing professional development.

Learning experiences that provide students with an engaging, innovative and multi-dimensional school day that builds language and mathematical literacies and strong background knowledge.

Learning experiences that intentionally help students develop and practice the thinking processes needed for learning and living. These include planning, diagnosing, experimenting, evaluating, communicating, influencing, negotiating, and exploring.

Students who recognize their importance as individuals capable of making contributions to the school community and the world beyond.

Students who think critically and engage themselves in finding answers to complex relevant problems that have both local and global significance and who become lifelong learners.

Students who learn to apply and use what they learn in meaningful and impactful ways.

Students who make informed and reasoned decisions about their learning and their lives.

Students who identify challenges, design solutions, and evaluate their effectiveness.

Family outreach that provides meaningful opportunities for family involvement in school activities.

A parent and local community that shares the responsibility for a high quality education system.

A high priority on personal integrity and a strong sense of fairness, justice, and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups, and communities.

### C. Statement of Need

The Pentucket School District includes four elementary, one middle, and one high school. The Dr. Frederick N. Sweetsir and Helen R. Donaghue schools both have Title I status. Sweetsir, which serves students in Pre-K through Grade 2, has 221 students. The Donaghue School serves grades 3 – 6 and has a population of 331 students. Of these students, 16.3 % are low income and 16.6% receive special education services. At the Sweetsir School, 22.2% of the students are from low income households and 18.6% receive education through special education. The exurban nature of Merrimac contributes to the students having a somewhat limited view of the world and the needs of its inhabitants.

Several barriers inhibit teachers from being able to provide students with the powerful learning opportunities and outcomes they seek to provide. The programmatic structure of the curriculum, particularly in mathematics, does not provide opportunities for students to become self-directed, motivated learners who feel a connection to their world. The pacing and structure of this curriculum results in topic coverage rather than in-depth investigation and understanding of skills and concepts. Additionally, there is inadequate vertical alignment within the English Language Arts curriculum which results in a lack of curriculum cohesion, not dissimilar from other curriculum areas.

Integrating students from the District special education programs into the regular education classroom is an on-going challenge. Teachers have insufficient time to collaborate and plan interdisciplinary lessons that include students with diverse learning needs into the general education classes. Inflexible models of staffing and student groupings prevent teachers from having the time to adequately support each student's needs. Providing tiered and differentiated instruction is a strategic objective in the school's capacity-building plan. The students with identified learning disabilities and students from low income households have not performed as well as their peers on state MCAS examinations. Closing this achievement gap is a priority for the Merrimac School.

The current school classroom schedule, based on subject and grade level groupings, prevents transdisciplinary, project-based learning, which the staff recognizes as necessary for the cognitively complex and high-level learning they intend to facilitate for students. Additionally, schedules of supplementary and special education services prevent



flexibility needed for effective learning through problem-based inquiry experiences. Designing, teaching, and assessing learning through units that integrate content knowledge with adaptive leadership skills and which help students develop personal meaning through their learning is a strategic objective in the school's capacity-building plan.

Several years ago, the District began several new initiatives including developing the Habits of Learning, Critical Skills Classroom design, Universal Design for Learning, designing Powerful Learning Environments, utilizing Critical Friends groups, Professional Learning Communities, and using Reader's and Writer's Workshop. The traditional school structure and systems have limited access to the full potential of these instructional tools.

#### D. Primary Proposed Partnership

The Pentucket Regional School District and the Merrimac schools community will partner with the International Baccalaureate (IB) to develop the Primary Years Program (PYP) for the newly named Merrimac School with the help of the Innovative Schools Initiative. The multi-year process to become an International Baccalaureate World School will frame the work as staff members re-organize the structures that support teaching and learning.

The International Baccalaureate is an international educational foundation founded in 1968 which offers three educational programs for children ages 3–19. The programs can be offered individually or as a continuum by IB World Schools. The IB works with 3,113 schools in 140 countries to offer the three IB programs to approximately 892,000 students. The IB Primary Years Program (PYP), for students aged 3 to 12, focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer with teachers working as facilitators in the education process. The PYP was started in 1997 and is now offered by 745 IB World Schools. The philosophy of the PYP is to develop lifelong learners who are "inquirers, thinkers, and communicators, risk takers, knowledgeable, principled, caring, open-minded, well-balanced, and reflective."

Through consultation and oversight, the International Baccalaureate organization provides many levels of professional development, including leadership training, whole staff on-site training, and on-line professional development, as well as regional workshop opportunities. It is an accrediting organization which allows a school to become an IB school as the school demonstrates its ability to successfully deliver instruction within the IB framework. They provide ongoing consultation and feedback during the application process along with site visits. They also monitor student academic performance. High academic standards and rigorous assessments are the hallmark of IB schools. This external accountability will give the Merrimac staff guidance and feedback as the school goes through the multi-year application process.

### ***V. HOW AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY WILL BE USED TO IMPROVE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT***

## A. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, ASSESSMENT

### 1. Curriculum

Our primary instructional goals are to improve the ability of all students attending the school to acquire the challenging content knowledge of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, to develop adaptive leadership skills such as communication and strategic thinking, learn to make personal meaning for their learning, and to use what they learn in meaningful ways to positively impact their world. These goals align with the College and Career Readiness standards central to public schools' purpose in Massachusetts. We often think of college and career readiness as a secondary school priority, but helping students develop independence of thought and action, strong content knowledge, communication skills, critical thinking abilities and dispositions, abilities to use digital tools and media with purpose, proficiency, and discernment, begins in the earliest years. The IB Primary Years program is particularly well-suited to developing in students an understanding and appreciation of others' perspectives, experiences, and cultures, an important College and Career Readiness standard.

This will be accomplished through comprehensive, tiered language and math literacy programs utilizing the workshop model and real-world problems delivered through the transdisciplinary IB themes. The curriculum will be aligned to the Massachusetts Frameworks and supported by effective practices such as differentiated instruction and by problem-based units of inquiry and instruction that include content standards and teaching adaptive leadership skills. By basing our curriculum on the IB PYP, we will help students develop essential learner characteristics and behaviors, concepts, transdisciplinary learning skills, and attitudes/dispositions that will serve them well in all learning and living. Additionally, we will provide students with motivation and opportunities to take action with what they learn through their inquiry and learning.

#### International Baccalaureate Primary Year Program Curriculum Framework

Much of the written curriculum will be delivered through six transdisciplinary themes defined and supported by the IB World Organization. The staff will spend significant time prior to the conversion deciding how the curriculum will be organized around these themes and also align to the Massachusetts Frameworks. The six themes are:

- Who we are
- Where we are in place and time
- How we express ourselves
- How the world works
- How we organize ourselves
- Sharing the planet

Teachers are guided by the transdisciplinary themes as they design units of inquiry that teach the subjects of:

- language
- social studies
- mathematics

visual and performing arts  
science  
personal, social and physical education.

An important goal of the IB PYP is helping students develop a broad, world-wide perspective and understanding of diverse cultures. This includes giving students the opportunity to learn another language in their elementary years. This curriculum and instruction will be a part of the Merrimac School student experience.

## 2. Instruction

The use of thematic blocks through experiential learning and project-based inquiry will provide opportunities for students to focus on topics in depth. This will lead to a fuller, deeper understanding of concepts than what has been possible in the past. Staff will use common planning time to develop these units. This is an opportunity for our staff which will allow each teaching team to develop units of instruction that simultaneously help students learn challenging content standards and adaptive leadership skills.

Small group, cooperative and experiential learning opportunities, provided through project based thematic blocks, will help students master adaptive leadership skills and academic content. Using the IB Primary Years Program interdisciplinary themes, which allow learners to progress at their own pace and including meaningful educational activities, all learners, including special education and low income populations, will be provided with valuable opportunities that will allow them to proceed more successfully with their education. It is anticipated that curricula will be developed with input from all areas of expertise, including special educators, school therapists, etc., so that related services can become a more integral part of the instructional model.

IB World School curricula share five essential elements. The five essential elements—concepts, knowledge, skills, attitudes, action—are incorporated into the curriculum framework, so that students are given the opportunity to:

- gain knowledge that is relevant and of global significance;
- develop an understanding of concepts, which allows them to make connections throughout their learning ;
- acquire transdisciplinary and disciplinary learning skills;
- develop attitudes that will lead to international-mindedness; and
- take action as a consequence of their learning.

Low class sizes may be achieved by using different grouping strategies made possible by shifts in teachers' instructional practices. Designing transdisciplinary units also creates opportunities to integrate core subjects and unified arts. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum, we expect more flexibility in meeting students' individual learning needs. Ideally, the support staff would be integrated into the classroom within the projects. The collaboration of staff with specific expertise will become critical in addressing these needs.

### 3. Assessment

The IB, Primary Years Program divides assessment into three components:

Assessing – how we discover what students have learned

Recording – how we make note of our findings about what students have learned

Reporting – how we pass that information on to parents, administration and other parties directly involved in students' learning

Assessment is performed to meet several purposes:

To promote continuous student learning and growth.

To guide children through the five essential elements of learning contained in the PYP (concepts, knowledge, skills, attitudes and action).

To celebrate what students can do with what they have learned.

To set goals and plan for future student growth

To evaluate the effectiveness of the learning program

The IB Primary Years school assesses student growth in the following areas:

Understanding of concepts (big ideas that transcend traditional subject areas)

Acquisition of knowledge

Mastering of skills

Development of attitudes (as reflected in the student profile)

Decision to take action

Demonstration of the attributes of the PYP Student Profile

We will monitor student progress and performance in the following subject areas: language; mathematics; social studies; science; the arts; science and technology; personal, social and physical education. We will also monitor student growth in their development of the adaptive leadership skills and their development of personal meaning through their learning experiences. This will be accomplished through performance assessments and through assessment of the actions students take, the impact they make, with their learning. Quality indicators and rubrics will be used to provide students feedback and to measure students' learning and growth.

The Merrimac School will continue to look at student performance with assessments such as the DIBELS, Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessment, Ten Marks mathematics, and newly developed District-Determined Measures of student learning. We will also use the MCAS assessment to collect and analyze data. We will use assessment information to plan instruction for improved student learning and higher achievement. Teachers will continue to be involved in collegial conversations, professional development, peer observations, and planning that will improve practice and accelerate student learning. Backward design to plan lessons and units will also be implemented to improve standards-based instruction and assessment. Development and use of the transdisciplinary units of inquiry will be central to this work.

Central to the IB PYP experience is the student exhibition at the transition grade, sixth grade for the Merrimac School. This exhibition is an important of each student's assessment, where it provides students with the opportunity to integrate the knowledge, concepts, skills, and dispositions they acquire and develop over their years in the school. The Merrimac School teachers will review student work and student assessment results on an ongoing basis. We will use formative assessments that are embedded in the teaching and learning process and which occur during the daily routine of the classroom. These assessments will guide teachers to give support to students to become better learners and will help teachers to plan the next stage of learning. We will use summative assessments at the end of the teaching and learning process and teachers will provide students with opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned in a new context. Summative assessments aim to give teachers, students and parents clear evidence-based insight into students' understanding in a particular moment of time. Both formative and summative assessments will be developed as part of the interdisciplinary units and will focus on assessing content knowledge as well as adaptive leadership and higher level thinking skills.

## B. SCHOOL SCHEDULE AND CALENDAR

The Merrimac School calendar will continue to follow the calendar of the Pentucket Regional School District. This calendar includes early release days for students in order to allow for additional time for teacher collaboration, planning and professional development. We will seek autonomy in designing how this release time is used for the staff's learning and professional development.

The school teacher leadership team will collectively design staffing patterns and assignments that best match teachers' skills and knowledge to student learning needs. This will include creating teams of teachers which have complementary skills and personal and professional qualities.

Staff scheduling will make time available for professional learning and collaboration. Giving greater control and flexibility to teachers in establishing their schedules is an important component of providing the autonomy that brings greater motivation to improve and excel. Creating the school schedule, the way student learning time is allocated, will be done by the school pedagogic leadership team referenced in section E of this document.

## C. STAFFING

The Merrimac School Pedagogical Leadership Team seeks to be part of the hiring process to fill positions within the school. In addition to classroom teaching positions, we will participate in the hiring of an IB consultant and/or coordinator, who will help facilitate the development and assessment of the curriculum units and strengthening community partnerships. Another position required is a teacher of a second language, who will provide this essential IB PYP curriculum component to students.

## D. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Merrimac School's focus will be ensuring the capacity of all staff to effectively implement the IB PYP. Professional development, then, will be focused on these three priorities:

- preparation for and operation as an IB World School, including pedagogy to support the IB program.
- development of transdisciplinary units of instruction
- teaching through project-based and inquiry-based learning

The school will need autonomy for professional development in order to accomplish these priorities, which we deem necessary for high-quality use of IB-oriented instruction and for providing powerful learning opportunities for all students. We plan that these will be pursued in the first years of this plan, and teachers and other staff will tailor their learning to their own education needs. The exception is the plan that all staff will maintain and build a strong foundation in IB PYP planning, assessment and teaching methods and practices.

The Merrimac staff and teacher leadership team will take advantage of the professional development offered by the IB organization. IB requires some professional development during the application process and expects that staff will continue to take advantage of ongoing IB professional development, either on-line or at regional workshops. The IB organization contains many IB schools, and staffs are encouraged to share expertise through school visits. IB also provides documents and consultation to staff that guide and assist in developing lessons and assessments.

## E. BUDGET

We anticipate that the school district will continue to provide funding for student materials based on the per pupil formula used by the school district. The Merrimac School will need autonomy to distribute the per pupil allocation in a way that we see best meets the priorities for effectively implementing the IB PYP. The teacher leadership team, with input from the Merrimac School Council, will determine how to allocate the funds across the school. The school's instructional and administrative priorities will be supported through its budget priorities.

The Merrimac School budget will support membership in the IB Organization (IBO), professional development sponsored by IBO, and curricular materials that are needed to implement the IB approach to teaching and learning.



**VI. CAPACITY OF APPLICANT GROUP**

The eleven people identified on page three of this plan collectively created its contents. They represent parents, teachers, school leadership, and district leadership. The group brings diverse perspectives and voices to the plan, so the resulting school will have support of a broad constituency. All members of this group seek to provide all students in Merrimac with the best possible educational learning opportunities through the public schools.

The undersigned members of the planning committee acknowledge their support for the school plan and their commitment to assist the school’s successful conversion to one based on the curriculum structure and organizing principles of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program.

Dawn Ackerman, Special Education Staff Member

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Wayne Adams, Pentucket Regional School Committee Member

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Sharon Bartholomew, Parent

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Noelle Keach, Teacher

---

Robert Harrison, Principal Dr. Frederick N. Sweetsir and Helen R. Donaghue Schools

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Shannon Meehan, Teacher

---

Dr. Jeffrey Mulqueen, Superintendent of Schools, Pentucket Regional School District

---

Lynette Provencal, Teacher

---

Susan Simmons, Teacher

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Chris Skinner, Parent

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Audrey Tarr, Teacher

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## ***VII. TIMETABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ESTABLISHMENT***

The Merrimac School prospectus was submitted for review by the district on November 25, 2013. A three member team, composed of the Superintendent, a representative from the Pentucket Teachers' Association, and a representative from the Pentucket Regional School Committee approved the innovation school prospectus at a meeting. Once approved by the district, a planning team convened to collect information about writing the Innovation Plan. The composition of the eleven-member group followed the guidelines provided by the state.

Regular weekly meetings commenced to begin the work of organizing and writing the school's Innovation Plan. The group brought representatives of the parent community, district teachers, current Merrimac school teachers, the Pentucket Regional School Committee, and the Superintendent of Schools.

The process for Innovation Plan development required a high level of engagement with the schools' staff members so that the new innovation school will be welcomed and supported. A preliminary, straw poll was conducted prior to the development of the prospectus. Approximately two-thirds of staff present indicated positive interest and support for the applicant group to move forward in the development of the prospectus. Teacher leadership from every grade level has continued to encourage the development of this innovation plan during leadership team meetings. The School Councils expressed support for the conversion and have increased their knowledge of the IB PYP during meetings. A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for April 29, 2014. The Pentucket Regional School Committee will vote to approve in May/June 2014.

The International Baccalaureate organization provides many levels of professional development, including leadership training, whole staff on-site training, on-line professional development, as well as regional workshop opportunities. It is an accrediting organization which allows a school to become an IB school as the school demonstrates its ability to successfully deliver instruction and utilize assessment within the IB framework. They provide ongoing consultation and feedback during the application process along with site visits. The multi-year application process is outlined below:

### **2013-2014**

#### **Year 1 Consideration Phase**

Conduct feasibility study

School Year IB Site Visits

Innovative Schools Plan application

Periodic broad communication to parents, school committee and community

### **2014-2015**

#### **Year 2 Consideration/Application Phase**

Development and training of pedagogical leadership team.

Professional Development aligned to IB PYP curriculum development and inquiry-based learning.

Development and implementation of one transdisciplinary unit of inquiry at each grade level.

Application for Candidacy of IB – Prior to April 2015

Notification of candidacy status July 2015

2015-2016

Year 3 Candidate Phase

Continued IB Curriculum Implementation

Development and implementation of two additional transdisciplinary units of inquiry at each grade level.

All staff continues IB PYP training

2016-2017

Year 4 Continued IB Curriculum Implementation

Development and implementation of two additional transdisciplinary units of inquiry at each grade level.

Application for Authorization of IB – November/December 2016

2017-2018

Year 5 IB PYP approval

Development and implementation of sixth transdisciplinary unit of inquiry at each grade level.

All staff continues IB PYP training

Regular and Ongoing IB Program

### ***VIII. MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS***

We will use the autonomies described above and the IB PYP curriculum and resources to improve the learning for all students and to narrow the achievement gap between students with high needs and other students. Once we have fully implemented the IB PYP in 2017, we will obtain baseline information on students' learning and on comparisons of learning and performance between different groups of students. We will use information from our District-Determined Measures, PARCC, and the IB PYP student exhibitions to obtain this baseline. We will look to see if there are any persistent gaps in learning and performance between groups of students, and take the steps necessary to close any gaps that exist by 5 % each year.

To become an IB PYP School, we will focus our work on the following five strategic objectives, which are aligned with Pentucket Regional School district's vision and strategic planning. The goals and initiatives designed to bring us to meet them are outlined in greater detail in the attached Capacity-building Plan for the Merrimac School.

### **Strategic Objective #1**

Implement shared governance of Merrimac School to strengthen the collective capacity of the school to deliver world class results.

**SMART Goal:** By May 2015, the Merrimac School's governance team will implement a written leadership plan that documents the collective actions of professionals related to strengthening the collective capacity of the school to deliver world class student results.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

1. Identify governance team and leadership practices to increase staff autonomy, mastery, and purpose.
2. Develop, strengthen, and integrate partnerships supporting the vision of the Merrimac School.
3. Implement practices that support priorities and enact the vision of the Merrimac School.

### **Strategic Objective #2**

Implement professional development to increase the capacity of educators to enact the vision and experience of the Merrimac School.

**SMART Goal:** By May 2015, the Merrimac School's governance team will implement a written professional development plan that documents and addresses the individual and organizational learning needs pertinent to reaching intended student outcomes.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

1. Train governance team to support school with effective leadership
2. Train governance team to support the team's function in collaboration, shared-decision-making, and resource distribution
3. Train staff in IB PYP instructional unit development
4. Train staff in systematic instruction (3-tiered instruction)
5. Train staff in assessment practices that are compatible with IB PYP
6. Implement feedback mechanisms to ensure the enactment of professional development
7. Implement feedback mechanisms to evaluate training and take next steps
8. Implement strategies to provide collaboration, progress monitoring, and feedback structures.

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### **Strategic Objective #3**

Develop powerful units of instruction by integrating challenging standards, adaptive leadership skills, and high levels of personal meaning to ensure the success of each student

**SMART Goal:** By May 2015, each Sweetsir and Donaghuegrade level team will have created one instructional unit that is aligned to IB standards and integrate blended learning supports.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

1. Implement process to develop units of instruction
  2. Implement Net Texts to support unit / course development and blended learning
  3. Implement Ten Marks to support blended, 3-Tiered Instruction for mathematics
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#### **Strategic Objective #4**

Implement 3-Tiered Instruction to accelerate the learning of every student

**SMART Goal:** By May 2017, Sweetsir and Donaghue teachers will implement three-tiered instruction to accelerate the learning of each student.

##### **Strategic Initiatives**

1. Implement processes to strengthen core instructional practices
  2. Implement supplemental instructional practices to ensure accelerated learning for every student
  3. Implement intensive instruction for students whose needs require highly specialized instructional strategies and resources
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#### **Strategic Objective #5**

Implement systematic assessment that links professional practice with student outcomes.

**SMART Goal:** By May 2016, Sweetsir and Donaghue teachers will implement systematic assessments aligned with IB standards and that link professional practice with student achievement and growth toward intended outcomes.

##### **Strategic Initiatives**

1. Design student success plans (PK-6) aligned to District-determined Measures.
2. Implement District-determined Measures across Personal Meaning, Content Standards, and Adaptive Leadership Skills.
3. Support effective communication / feedback loops for stakeholders (students, parents, educators, partners, community)

### ***IX. ATTACHMENTS***

The following attachments support the Innovation School plan described above.

- A. Resumes of Innovation Plan Committee members
  - B. Helen R. Donaghue and Frederick N. Sweetsir Capacity-Building Plan
  - C. Capacity-Building Plan for planned Merrimac School innovation school
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