

Northpoint Elementary School

Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation

50800 Cherry Road
Granger, Indiana 46530

Plans for Continuous School Improvement 2008-2011

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Northpoint Elementary School Continuous Improvement Plan 2008-2011

Introduction

Northpoint Elementary School is a K-5 elementary school located in the suburban area of Granger, Indiana. The kindergarten program is a half-day experience. The students who demonstrate the need for additional skill development are invited to participate in an extended day program. Grades 2-3 are organized into classrooms where students loop together for two years, and

grades 4-5 are organized into skill groups facilitated through looping or multiage classrooms whenever possible.

The school's curriculum is located in the principal's office and at the Educational Services Center of the Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation. It is a curriculum that is fully aligned with the Indiana Academic Standards. Student mastery of the primary standards for each grade level is reported to parents quarterly.

Student performance in grades 2-5 is measured twice a year using NWEA Measures of Academic Progress. In kindergarten and first grade, the DIBELS is administered multiple times each year and NWEA Measures of Academic Progress two times per year. Writing is assessed in grades 3-5 in the fall and spring using writing prompts. In addition to these formal assessment instruments, teachers use informal benchmarks, running records, and criterion-referenced assessments throughout the year to monitor student achievement.

Mission, Vision, and Beliefs

Northpoint Elementary School has adopted the mission, vision, and beliefs of the Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation. Along with all schools in the corporation, Northpoint works to ensure that all students attain the proficiencies listed in the Graduate Profile for P-H-M students. These district goals serve as the framework for establishing school level goals. The attached Appendix A summarizes district's Continuous Improvement Plan vision, mission, values, goals and profile of a P-H-M graduate.

Summary of Data

Assessments of the current status of educational programming throughout the grades at Northpoint Elementary School are listed on the following three pages. Appendix B depicts Tier 1 data regarding student performance on corporation indicators. Appendix C graphs information from the corporation's annual performance report.

The chart marked "C" reports the results of a school climate survey that was completed by staff and parents.

CONCLUSIONS AND CURRENT STATUS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Northpoint Elementary School, along with other schools in Penn-Harris-Madison, has focused on aligning its curriculum and assessments on the Indiana Academic Standards. Reading, writing, and math are the primary focus areas for school improvement. Multiple measures are used frequently to monitor student proficiency of the standards. Additionally, student performance data is disaggregated and reviewed by grade level and class to enable the district to identify instructional practices that lead to the highest levels of student performance.

Teachers meet in grade level units to discuss student work and share teaching strategies. A learning lab is provided so that all students have access to instructional software that is organized around the Indiana Academic Standards and the adopted P-H-M curriculum. Students are pre-tested and then placed at appropriate instructional levels for guided and/or independent practice. Flexible grouping strategies, including guided reading and LiPS/Wilson Foundations (K-2) instructional groups provide opportunities for small group instruction keyed toward individual needs. Teachers also implement flexible math grouping to

increase opportunities for direct instruction, re-teaching, guided and independent practice as students work to attain mathematics standards. Instruction in writing includes opportunities for editing and revision conferences where students receive individual coaching to improve writing skills.

The analysis of student achievement data at Northpoint indicates the following:

- In the spring of 2008, NWEA MAP tests indicated that 70.5% of third graders, 60.2% of fourth graders and 67.6 % of fifth graders reached their growth target RIT in language.

- In the spring of 2008, NWEA MAP tests indicated that 95.9% of second graders, 67.7% of third graders, 66.3 % of fourth graders, and 69.4% of fifth graders reached their growth target RIT in reading.

- In the spring of 2008, NWEA MAP tests indicated that 94.5% of second graders, 53.1% of third graders, 51.8% of fourth graders, and 60.2% of fifth graders reached their growth target RIT in math.

- In the fall of 2007, third grade ISTEP+ scores indicated that 89% of students passed E/LA and 86% passed math, fourth grade scores indicated that 93% passed E/LA and 93% passed math, and fifth grade scores indicated that 91% passed E/LA and 91% passed math.

- In the fall of 2007, ISTEP+ scores at Discovery Middle School indicated that 96% of sixth grade students from the Northpoint feeder school were proficient in E/LA and 97% were proficient in math.

- In the fall of 2007, ISTEP+ scores indicated that 75% of third grade students achieved a score of 4, 5, or 6 on the writing applications component and 93% scored a 3 or higher on the conventions portion of the rubric.

- Our attendance rate was 96.6% for the 2006-07 school year.

Teachers at Northpoint Elementary School also collect data from the DIBELS assessment to monitor the reading achievement of students in kindergarten and first grade. The results of this assessment indicate that:

- In the fall of 2007, DIBELS test scores indicated that 96% of kindergarten students were at low risk in Initial Sound Fluency and 82% were at low risk in Letter Naming Fluency.
- In the fall of 2007, DIBELS test scores indicated that 90% of first grade students were at grade level benchmark.

The goals from the 2005-08 School Improvement Plan indicate that 100% of students will pass the ISTEP+ as 6th graders. In 2007, 96% of the 6th graders passed the E/LA and 97% of the students passed math showing that we have made great progress toward our goals.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Northpoint Elementary School has a very high level of parent participation. Parent/teacher/student conference participation at the November 2007 conferences was nearly 100%, matching the participation from the three previous years. Teachers frequently conference with parents before and after school or via telephone. Many parents and teachers use the corporation's e-mail system for continuous communication.

Teachers communicate regularly about individual student progress and classroom instructional plans and activities. Orientation to policies and procedures are shared at a New Parent/Student Orientation session that is a regular part of the annual Ice Cream Social prior to the opening of school. Parent Information Sessions are held for every grade level at which parents are introduced to the applicable academic standards and are informed of corporation curricular changes and expectations. Printed parent resources for the adopted math and writing curricula are available both for purchase and on loan through the school library. The building principal shares issues of instruction and school activities/concerns at PTO meetings held during the school year. Teachers also use a student agenda as a daily tool for parent communication. A school

newsletter, a PTO newsletter, and individual classroom newsletters also help to keep parents informed of student learning goals and activities.

Parents volunteer in a variety of ways to provide services to students and staff. A well-organized and well-orchestrated Art Smart program is implemented through the use of parent volunteers with art prints and supplies supplemented by the Parent Teacher Organization. Parents have also implemented a Study Buddy peer-tutoring program, which takes place after school. Parents serve as classroom helpers and tutors. Northpoint volunteers logged over 6,000 hours of volunteer time during the 2006-07 school year.

Students and parents will play an essential role in achieving goals identified within the Continuous School Improvement Plan. Ensuring that all stakeholders are knowledgeable of the goals and strategies identified to reach those goals requires a definitive plan of action. An explanation of the process, an analysis of the performance data, and an outline of the strategies that will be implemented will be achieved in a variety of ways. While sharing performance data has been an on-going process, students will become more aware of school-wide goals by setting individual and class goals. With teachers' assistance, students will track individual and class achievement of skills and standards. The School Improvement Plan will be available on the Northpoint website. Copies of the plan will be available in the school office for parent examination. Parents will be asked to participate in a variety of learning activities designed to augment classroom instruction at home. Continuing updates on the efforts to meet the continuous improvement goals will be included in school and classroom newsletters.

TECHNOLOGY AS A LEARNING TOOL

Northpoint Elementary School uses a three-year technology plan developed by a school-based technology committee as the foundation for ensuring instructional integration, including the identification and purchase of appropriate hardware,

software, and professional development. Teachers are encouraged to infuse technology into curriculum, assessment, and instruction to enable students to become active, life-long learners. Computers are available in two computer labs, mini-labs in Extended Learning Areas near the classrooms, and in the classrooms. Teachers in each grade level plan cooperatively to ensure best instructional practices through the use of technology. An interactive white board is available to empower the staff to facilitate learning in any subject at Northpoint Elementary School. The Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation provides Northpoint with a Classworks Lab, a skills-based collection of software programs that assesses student needs and prescribes practice and application programs to address skill development.

Because the improvement of writing skills is a significant goal for Northpoint Elementary School, technology will be used in drafting, editing, and writing final drafts across the curriculum. Hyperstudio, Power Point, and Inspiration will be used to provide differentiated and individualized learning opportunities in the areas of pre-writing and writing. Accelerated Math will be used with fourth and fifth graders to provide opportunities for differentiation and practice of skills. Every child will practice math facts using a computerized program for at least 20 minutes per week at individualized readiness levels. To support early literacy, Lexia is used with kindergarten, first grade, and second grade students. Buggles is also available to support literacy among children in the primary grades. The Pinnacle Gradebook will be used by teachers to track the individual students' progress on each of the Indiana Standards and Indicators.

SAFE/ORDERLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A safe and orderly learning environment exists at Northpoint Elementary School. To promote this, the teachers and students review the Lifelong Guidelines developed by the Indiana CLASS project on a regular basis and use those five skills: truth, trust, active listening, no put-downs and personal best. The staff at Northpoint believes that students should leave the elementary setting owning

their own learning and their own behavior. Staff believes it is important to enable students to make wise choices regarding their actions. A school-wide behavioral plan will be implemented in a comprehensive way during the 2008 school year. Procedures and expectations will be taught and reviewed with the students in a systematic way. The philosophy of Teaching with Love and Logic will also be implemented. Staff is very conscientious of using instructional time wisely. Distractions and interruptions are kept to a minimum. Guest teachers are provided with a sub folder, which outlines rules and behavior expectations for students.

Our Youth Services Bureau specialist, staff, teachers, principal and parents are involved in promoting positive behavior in our school. The “Caught Shining” program is designed to increase the positive relationships between students and decrease the number of incidents of disrespectful behavior toward one another. The “Words of Wisdom” program is in place to promote character building and making good choices in behavior. The program is used daily as part of our televised school news program during the morning announcements and provides inspirational messages to students to encourage making positive behavior choices. The physical education teachers and Youth Services Bureau specialist conduct direct instruction with students to promote anti-bullying measures at each grade level, with such topics as conflict resolution and self-esteem. The YSB specialist also works with children in small group or individual settings. In addition, the Student of the Month program recognizes students for their efforts with behavior, citizenship and academic effort.

Northpoint Elementary School has a comprehensive plan for safety and security in place. This plan is a part of the Northpoint School Safety and Security manual, which is on file in the principal’s office. This plan is regularly monitored and revised to ensure both the physical and emotional safety of students and staff. Fire, storm, and crisis drills are routinely practiced.

The fall 2007 climate survey showed the following results:

- 98.8% of parents believe that students feel safe at school
- 92% of parents believe mutual respect is demonstrated by all students and staff in school.
- 90% of parents believe that the school values and respects diversity.
- 95.4% of parents believe that skills to resolve conflicts nonviolently are emphasized
- 93.7% of parents believe that discipline procedures in the school are appropriate and administered fairly
- 96.7% of parents believe that this school has an atmosphere conducive to learning

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A comprehensive plan for continuing professional development will be essential to achieving the goals of the Northpoint Elementary School's Continuous Improvement Plan. Professional development is aligned to Indiana's core principles. Teams of teachers will work together to develop an Annual Professional Development Plan identifying specific areas, resources and strategies to build upon in order to gain additional instructional skills. As part of a joint effort on the part of the individual schools and the Penn-Harris-Madison Learning Division, teachers will participate in training in the following curricular areas and programs: strategies for teaching writing traits and proficiency in using the scoring rubric of the 6+1 Writing Traits program and The Simple 6; training in the use of Lindamood Bell (LiPS) and/or Wilson Foundation strategies for teaching phonemic awareness; training and/or book study of Teaching with Love and Logic; high ability learners; Ruby Payne's mental models, alternative instructional and assessment strategies for improving reading comprehension skills; differentiation strategies to ensure individual continuous student progress; interpreting assessment data and test scores and using the results to make

sound instructional decisions; developing criterion-referenced assessment tools to monitor attainment of Indiana Academic Standards and corporation curriculum objectives; coaching/mentoring to support the implementation of the reading/language arts program. Emphasis in the area of differentiated instruction will also occur.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES, SPECIFIC AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT, AND BENCHMARKS FOR MEASURING PROGRESS

Student achievement objectives, specific areas for improvement, and benchmarks for measuring progress are contained within the following goals for student achievement. These goals are summarized with their Tier 1 and Tier 2 measures on the attached chart entitled, *School Improvement Goals/Indicators Matrix*, attached and marked as Appendix B.

GOAL 1

100% of students will show proficiency on the ISTEP+ writing applications (MC, OE) and language conventions (MC, OE) as 5th graders. Exemplary growth will be demonstrated when 70% or more students in grades 2-5 achieve their target RIT on the spring NWEA MAP language test.

To ensure continuous progress toward achieving this goal, teachers in grades K-5 will implement the 6+1 Writing Traits and Simple 6 through consistent and continuous instruction. Opportunities for writing in math, science and social studies will be provided to students on a regular basis. Students in grades 2-5 will use a writer's notebook as a tool on a daily/weekly basis. Teachers will monitor proficient performance two times per year using a writing rubric. Using the DesCarts manual and assessment data, differentiated instruction will be

provided to students to ensure a RIT increase equivalent to one year of growth for all students, including high ability students.

GOAL 2

100% of students will demonstrate proficiency on the English/Language Arts ISTEP+ when taking the test as 5th graders. Exemplary growth will be demonstrated when 70% or more of students in grades 2-5 achieve their target RIT on the spring NWEA MAP reading test.

To ensure continuous progress toward achieving this goal, teachers in grades K-2 will implement strategies to increase phonemic awareness and increase proficiency in decoding while teachers in grades 3-5 will implement strategies to increase comprehension skills and build vocabulary. Guided reading and novel studies will be used to differentiate instruction for students. Students in grades 4 and 5 will have the opportunity to work at a higher level by participating in a reading/language arts class at an advanced grade level. Extra reading instruction will be provided to struggling students in grades 1-5 using the Triumphs program from MacMillan/McGraw-Hill 3-4 times per week. A benchmark of 90% for kindergarten students demonstrating proficiency on the spring DIBELS assessment will be set. Using the DesCarts manual and assessment data, differentiated instruction will be provided to students to ensure a RIT increase equivalent to one year of growth for all students, including high ability students.

GOAL 3

100% of students will demonstrate proficiency on the mathematics ISTEP+ when taking the test as 5th graders. Exemplary growth will be demonstrated when 70% or more of students in grades 2-5 achieve their target RIT on the spring NWEA MAP math test.

To ensure continuous progress toward this goal teachers will increase opportunities for students to master basic facts and basic computation algorithms and will increase opportunities for students to articulate, through written explanation, their methods and procedures for solving problems. Students in grades 4 and 5 will have the opportunity to work at a higher level by participating in a math class at an advanced grade level. Using the DesCarts manual and assessment data, differentiated instruction will be provided to students to ensure a RIT increase equivalent to one year of growth for all students, including high ability students.

More details on strategies/interventions planned to achieve these three goals are found in Appendix C.

ATTENDANCE

Northpoint Elementary School has strived to improve its rate of attendance since opening in 1998. The attendance rate in 2000-01 was 97.1%, in 2001-02 it was 97.6%, in 2002-03 it was 97%, in 2003-04 it was 96.8%, in 2004-05 it was 97.2%, and in 2006-07 it was 96.9%. The Indiana Four Star Award has been received for the last two years.

STATUTES AND RULES TO BE WAIVED

No waivers are necessary to implement this plan.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION, REVIEW, AND REVISION

Instructional strategies proposed within this plan will be implemented immediately and will continue throughout the time frame set by the state of Indiana. The plan

will be reviewed twice annually, after fall achievement has been received and again after spring achievement data is available. Annual review reports will be shared with staff, parents, the corporation administrative cabinet and the Board of School Trustees. Interventions and strategies will be adjusted or added during the review process as appropriate. Because Northpoint Elementary School strives for higher levels of continuous improvement, goals may be adjusted accordingly during the initial three years of the plan.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY COMPONENT

As part of our continuous improvement process and data collection, Penn-Harris-Madison recognizes the need to identify the racial, ethnic, language minority, cultural, exceptional learning and socioeconomic groups. The largest subgroup of concern is socioeconomic and research has shown that the impact of poverty is cross-cultural.

Currently 5 out of 11 elementary schools have 30% or more of their student population living at the poverty level. In addition two out of the three middle schools, along with the high school are impacted by a subgroup of students of low socioeconomic status. Given the current economy of the state and nation, this trend will likely increase. Dr. Ruby Payne is at the forefront of research regarding instructional strategies that educators can use to effectively educate these student populations. Focused Instruction was a result of Dr. Payne's citing of practices that close the achievement gap, based on socioeconomic status. We feel we can better educate all children, particularly those of poverty. Penn-Harris-Madison has committed resources to train two principals to serve as district wide trainers of Ruby Payne's research regarding poverty.

Dr. Payne's work focuses on eight crucial resources that children need to be successful. These resources include financial, spiritual, physical, mental, support

systems, emotional, relationship/role models, and knowledge of the hidden rules of middle class. All schools have identified students lacking resources and implemented strategies to meet those needs. Schools have worked at building appropriate relationships with at risk students. All certified staff members received information on the "Hidden Rules" of poverty during opening day staff development activities, and support staff members in October, 2004. The overview of Dr. Payne's work was presented to the PHM Forum, which is comprised of parent representatives. Ongoing professional development opportunities have and will continue addressing the needs of this particular student subgroup, in which the Northpoint staff will continue to participate.

Currently, Northpoint Elementary School's ethnicity consists of 83% white, 1% African American, 3% multiracial, 9% Asian, 2% Hispanic, and 1% Native American. Two percent of our student population is on free and reduced lunch. A variety of school wide activities support the cultural heritage found within the school community. English as a New Language services are provided to those students at various levels of language mastery. Students are assessed and identified for services provided by an ENL tutor.

During the 2004-2005 school year, schools within the Penn-Harris-Madison school corporation received specific training in various modules of Dr. Payne's work. The staff at Northpoint Elementary School has been trained in discipline methods, learning structures, and cognitive strategies, as they relate to students in poverty and/or at risk. In February of 2006, teachers were trained in using mental models. Staff development opportunities in differentiating curriculum and instruction, along with the work of Dr. Payne will continue through the next three years in the Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation.