

School Improvement Plan ~Narrative Overview ~ ~ **Fern Hill Elementary School**

PROGRESS TOWARD PREVIOUS YEAR'S GOALS

2011-12

Fern Hill is located in the south end of Tacoma. Our school is surrounded by a rich history and within the small Fern Hill historical business district. Our school community takes great pride in the relationships and support that our neighborhood brings to us. Our student body of just under 400 students is made up of a broad variety of cultural and ethnic diversity.

American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.0%
Asian	12.3%
Pacific Islander	3.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	21.5%
Black	11.5%
Hispanic	24.3%
White	35.6%

Our special programs consist of the following demographics;

Free or Reduced-Price Meals (Oct 2011)	71.0%
Special Education (May 2010)	3.0%
Transitional Bilingual (May 2010)	15.4%
Unexcused Absence Rate (2009-10)	0.2%

Our students' progress in the area of Reading, as measured by the 2011-11 Measurement of Student Progress (MSP), demonstrated overall that our students are continuing to make Adequate Yearly Progress in this area. Students in grade three performed with 77% of students meeting standard in Reading this has been a gradual and consistent growth over the past 3 years. Our grade four students performed with 70% of students meeting standard. This was an increase of students meeting standard reading compared to 2009-10 fourth graders. Our fourth and fifth grade student reading progress as measured by the MSP continues to be inconsistent with the number of students that meeting standard showing "dips" and "peaks" across the years. We are not satisfied with our current indicators of growth on the MSP and therefore we are intentionally focusing our efforts to significantly improve our students' achievements in this area. We look to see continued growth for our third and fourth graders and a significant increase for our fifth graders in higher reading achievement as measured by the 2012 MSP.

In the area of Mathematics, we see a significant area of improvement needed. Students in grade three performed with 62% of students meeting standard in math. This has again been a gradual and consistent growth over the past 3 years. Students in grade four performed with nearly 70% of students meeting standard in math. Again this was a significant increase of fourth grade students meeting standard in math. This is the highest percentage of students meeting standard in math within the district. A significant emphasis on mathematics, along with many layers of support across our school district and within our school are being put in place in order to effectively address the concerns in this area. We know we must look at doing things differently in math if we are to see a significant increase in the level of student performance in mathematics as measured throughout the school year with formative assessments and in a summative manner on the 2012 MSP.

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT 2011-12

Continuous Improvement Process and Stakeholder Participation

The content of this plan represents the ongoing work and goals established by our staff for the 2011-2012 year. The goals and strategies in this plan represent and are influenced by the ongoing work of our staff members within grade level teams and as a part of whole-staff training and professional development opportunities. The specifics of our attached Action Plan set forth our school-wide reform efforts and are a result of our staff's review of student assessment data, the prioritization of staff and team goals, and the articulation of specific next steps in our work toward student achievement. One change that we are piloting this year is creating 4th and 5th grade 'math teachers' who will teach all students math in their grade level. These teachers are both confident and competent in teaching this content area. We believe that this change will have a positive impact on our students reaching standard in math. A large focus for our staff revolves around teacher collaboration. In 2009-10 Fern Hill teachers started participating in a monthly grade level peer coaching model with an emphasis on providing active participation strategies to increase student engagement. This allowed monthly opportunities for teachers to plan, observe and provide non-evaluative feedback together in efforts to provide peer support to increase opportunities for ALL students to make adequate individual progress. This year's peer coaching model continues with an evolving focus on student voiced evidence of learning targets in expanded grade level bands to provide a broader approach to teamwork from grade level to grade level. The establishment of goals and focus areas for Fern Hill's work is established collaboratively through our SCDM which includes sharing the plan publicly with parent representatives and asking for feedback. Our school staff collaboration along with Booster Club common focus on providing more meaningful and frequent parent event opportunities will give us the opportunity to both share and seek more input from our stakeholders in regards to increase academic achievement for our students. This ongoing process influences our work and the establishment of our goals.

Review of Data to Establish Improvement

Achievement

Spring Data (expressed as a percentage of students meeting standard)

Grade 3	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Reading	56.8	63.6	76.2	70.5	83.3	76.7
Mathematics	45.7	56.8	69.8	67.2	74.1	62.3

Grade 4	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Reading	73.5	61.7	70.2	60.0	64.4	71.7
Mathematics	32.5	40.4	46	33.3	62.7	70.4
Writing	57.8	46.8	66.0	66.7	47.5	50.0

Grade 5	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Reading	72.5	66.7	54.8	61.2	44.6	41.5
Mathematics	30.8	46.7	32.6	32.7	28.6	52.8
Science	13.2	18.3	9.5	24.5	19.6	31.1

The school-wide data from the 2011 MSP indicates some strength in Reading performance. This data matches the progress as measured in our primary classrooms using district curricular programs in addition to district and classroom-based assessments. Our students' performance on the Reading portion of the 2010 MSP indicates that our students made adequate yearly progress in grades 3rd-5th as a combined cohort. But we know that we continue to see a disparity between student progress as students transition from "Learning to Read" to "Reading to Learn." Reading and classroom teachers are coming together to look at ways to support this transition with comprehension and vocabulary support and assessment of these areas. The Gates-McGinnitie assessment has been added for our 2nd - 5th grade students to progress monitor vocabulary & comprehension three times during the year with this standardized assessment tool. Additionally IRI comprehension assessments have been added to 4th & 5th grade as well. This work in this area continues to be teachers coming together to review student work and reviewing ongoing formative assessments to make instructional decisions that support student learning in the classrooms and layers of intervention that are provided through our LAP & Title I reading program. (See action plan for specific intervention strategies.)

In the area of Mathematics, a large percentage of our student's performance still did not meet the state standard. Our instructional focus in this area will be the continued implementation of our new math program as we work to increase the level of academic success in mathematics. The District's support of this work with the infusion of math coaches, ongoing professional development for teachers, coaches and principals combined with our school's monthly grade level collaboration sessions and the development of intervention and enrichment plans to respond to student achievement will all contribute to the work designed to significantly and positively influence our students' achievement. (See action plan for specific intervention strategies.)

In 2011 our 4th grade MSP Mathematics percentage of students meeting standard increased to 70%, which is a significant increase from 2009's 33%. Additionally our 5th grade percentage increased to 53% from 29% from 2010. All three grades taking the MSP in 2011 were amongst the highest within in the district math scores. We believe our specific collaboration around math implementation and coaching each other is making a difference for our students in addition to the intervention provided through our Title I and LAP assistance.

Attendance (Fern Hill Average daily attendance K-5)

2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-2011
94.6%	94.4%	94.5%	98.1%

A schoolwide attendance plan has also been put in place within our plan to address this area of increasing daily attendance for all students. (See action plan for specific intervention strategies.)

Planning for Transitions (between grade levels and grades)

Research tells us that students who struggle with school are most likely to "fall through the cracks" when transitioning from one grade span to the next, specifically from elementary to middle school. This year we plan to add opportunities for 5th graders to spend a day at the school they will be attending where they will meet teachers and "peer student mentors". We also plan to meet with middle school teachers to discuss academic and social support

systems to assist students in making this transition a positive, successful transition. Our implementation of the 4th & 5th grade “math teacher” along with our walk to reading “reading teacher” system support the transition from the elementary model of 1 teacher all day to multiple teachers for various content areas.

Characteristics of High Performing Schools

It is difficult to isolate just a few of the characteristics of high performing schools as they are so interrelated and foundational to the work. We know that we really need to move in each of the nine areas of school improvement as outlined by the state, however there are three that emerge as needing particularly attention in this year’s work. A **Clear and Shared Focus** is promoted through the strong alignment by all staff about our beliefs and values about working with children, about learning, and about our climate. Differentiating instruction around math so that our teachers are identifying and supporting the learning needs of our diverse student population will be what we will focus on this year. We work continually on promoting **High Levels of Collaboration and Communication**. We will address this characteristic through formal structures such as our weekly Wednesday Meeting collaboration time before, regularly scheduled staff meetings, and small team meetings including our LAP and Special Education support teacher that will work in conjunction with our more informal strategies for regularly communicating and working interdependently with all staff about school-wide initiatives, teaching and learning goals, daily routines and procedures, and connecting with our school community.. Our monthly extended grade level meetings allow additional collaboration time for teachers as well. Finally, **Effective School Leadership** is demonstrated by a range of staff members at Fern Hill Elementary. Our SCDM grade level team leaders gather and set goals and one or more team members takes the lead for moving tasks forward and sharing with the whole group. Various staff members participate in district and state level leadership opportunities in order to bring the work back to our entire staff and lead particular ventures. In these larger, and in daily small situations, staff members are empowered and take the initiative to make decisions and move our professional work forward for the benefit of students and their learning.

Professional Development Opportunities

A great deal of the staffs’ learning at Fern Hill is a result of our teachers coming together as a collaborative team to support and learn from each other as they constantly seek to improve their practice. This is in addition to our Fern Hill Peer Coaching Model allow us as professionals to grow our learning and improve our instruction strategies to benefit student learning in a systematic and collaborative manner. More formal professional development from the district will inform our school-based training especially around our focus area of math. Our academic coach and principal will continue to lead the work in implementing the elements of the 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning ensuring the appropriate use of Learning Targets and Student Engagement. Our BERC data from last year’s visit revealed a need to address the area metacognition with a need to increase conceptual and cognitive thinking along with thinking and questioning. Question stems and prompts and resources are being implemented to assist us as a staff in getting kids to “think about their thinking.”

Highly Qualified Teachers

- Provisions for staff training in Tacoma include opportunities, incentives and compensation. The district provides a broad spectrum of classes on assessment, standards-based instruction and best practices in the content areas. Staff members receive extra pay to attend these classes and clock hours/university credits are frequently offered. The district also supports and encourages school-based training that support the school's SIP goals with building-based optional day pay for certificated staff. In addition to classes, coaches at each Title I school provide ongoing, job embedded staff development. Para educators and other staff receive workshop pay to attend both district and school workshops. Para educators and other staff are encouraged to participate in all Reading and Math curriculum and assessment professional development.
- Parents are informed in the Parent Handbook of their right to know their teachers and para-educators qualifications
- Highly Qualified Para-educators meet a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate knowledge and ability in instructing reading, mathematics and writing.
- Tacoma actively recruits highly-qualified staff with our job fair, letters of intent, recommendations to hire and applicant searches. We seek to attract and keep highly-qualified staff at our school by providing opportunities for quality staff development and professional growth.
- All teachers in Tacoma are required to meet the NCLB highly qualified teacher requirement. Human Resources send each school a list of the teachers with their teaching qualifications. THE SCHOOL principal signs an attestation form to confirm all staff are highly qualified. In the event that a staff member does not meet the highly qualified requirements, a NCLB HOUSSE Plan of Assistance is developed for the teacher. To support teachers working to achieve highly qualified status, along with all staff striving to provide excellent instruction, our school's professional development/training is focused on best practices in reading and math.

Recognition of Non-Academic Learning

At Fern Hill Elementary, we believe in educating the whole child! This belief is demonstrated by a strong emphasis on creating a focused, structured, and nurturing environment. Fern Hill students are provided additional opportunities to explore the arts through drama, visual arts, music and movement through our Communities In Schools Afterschool program. Some choices available to students include: cooking, Xylophone, African drumming, Korean dance, basketball, YMCA sports, Zumba, Foreign Languages, Cheerleading, Arts & Crafts (offerings change three times throughout the year.) Overall, we work to provide enriching experiences that students might not other have opportunities to experience beyond our school offerings.

Safe and Supportive Learning Environment

The Fern Hill Elementary School staff is purposeful and intentional in its work to create a safe and supportive environment. Built upon the three school-wide expectations of Respect, Responsibility, and Safety, our staff believes in the direct instruction, modeling, and ongoing practice of expected behaviors and attitudes for learning within our school. Staff utilizes our Conflict Stopper lessons and

language to assist students in having the positive language to work through their peer conflicts. Having adopted the Compassionate Schools learning consistency exists across all classrooms and grade levels in this area and there is a pervasive attitude that all Fern Hill students belong to all Fern Hill adults. A no-tolerance approach to behaviors that violate safety and respect is combined with a supportive safety net through our comprehensive counseling program for whole groups, small groups, and individual students. Working together, we actively and explicitly promote a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

Equity Issues

The District's focus on cultural competency and the Action Plan for closing the achievement gap will drive our school's efforts this year. Our performance data trends on the WASL and now MSP show that our greatest gap is between our white student population and Latino students in both math and reading. Our professional development in math will address culturally competent teaching strategies that can be applied to all subject areas. Intervention activities that include additional time for students need additional support will be built into the day and provided before school as well. Because many of our students are on free or reduced lunch we acknowledge that their learning needs cannot be met if their basic needs at home go unmet. Our collaborative work as a staff around Eric Jensen's Teaching with Poverty in Mind book will assist us in our continuous focus on meeting the needs of all of our students.

Technology

Fern Hill Elementary continues to build upon the use of technology in a variety of ways to enhance student learning. Technology within the classroom includes regular access to SMART boards and computers in every classroom, the daily use of document camera/LCD projector bundles, opportunities for word processing, internet research for project-based learning, and the use of a portable laptop cart.

Fern Hill's librarian works collaboratively with teachers to support in integrating technology into their classroom lessons. Teachers update their SWIFT web pages regularly as a communication tool for families.

Parent, Family and Community Involvement

We believe strongly in the power of parent and family involvement in our school and have worked hard over the years to have developed a strong parent involvement component into our school program. We are fortunate to enjoy a growing and intentional support from our Booster Club as they funnel their energies and resources directly back to students and learning. Additionally, we have used our LAP money to provide for family curriculum nights where we have taught parents how to help students with homework. This year we will have several evenings where we bring parents onboard to learn about our specific curricular academic programs so that they know how to help their children at home. Specifically we are working to provide parent events provide for Spanish Speaking families this year in collaboration with our Communities In Schools program. We know that many of our parents work and are unable to volunteer in the classroom so we provide these opportunities so parents can be involved in other the very meaningful ways in their child's education. We do however, have a few of volunteers who want to regularly work with children to support learning, who help monitor progress in reading and math. We are working to capitalize more on the volunteers and aligning their "gifts" to our student needs. Beyond working with families, we regularly seek out ways to partner with our greater community through such strategies as mentors from the Boys and Girls Club, an annual food drive to support our families in need during the holidays, back to school supply donations, and Various Federal Holiday/Celebration presentations.

Coordination of Fiscal Services

Much of what we are able to do to support student learning comes from our LAP budget. This is of course over and above our district allocation which is actually quite small. We have also benefitted from CIS coordinated donations for student supplies. Fundraising through our Booster Club will allow us to provide more academic and cultural assemblies, field trips and opportunities for our students that a majority of live within the restraints of poverty.

School Improvement Plans aligns with Tacoma's District Improvement Plan. The staff at Fern Hill work to support the school's and district's improvement efforts. Title 1, Special Ed., LAP and Basic Ed. staff work in collaboration to provide and instructional program and intervention services to meet the needs of all Franklin students. To support school-wide implementation, Title 1 provides technical assistance and NCLB support, Research and Evaluation provides data and instructional support, Purchasing supports expenditures, Human Resources facilitates staffing and provides Highly Qualified information. The Tacoma School District provides technical assistance for school improvement including School, Family and Community Partnership liaisons, Finance, Elementary Directors and Instructional Coaches.

While categorical and basic education funds are tracked separately in Tacoma, the programs work together to meet the needs all students and support the schoolwide program goals. Through the work of the Professional Learning Community, schoolwide planning and SCDM team, Title I, Special Ed., LAP and the Homeless liaison team with Basic Ed. to improve academic achievement in Reading and Math, coordinating services for identified students and families. Title I Instructional Facilitators help teachers coordinate intervention instructional services for our students with high academic needs. Title I also works closely with homeless services within the district.

Fern Hill Elementary has a blended Title 1 /LAP model this year. Our school has 70.6% poverty and as a result we receive a Title 1 Allocation of \$160,538 and a LAP Allocation of \$35,000. Our Title 1 allocation is spent on .5 Coach and .5 certificated teacher and a .875 classified staff member. This certificated staff member works with small groups of students focusing on prevention and identifies the skills students need to meet standard for half of the day. The other half of her day as a coach, she models, mentors and provides opportunities for staff to collaborate and provides them with feedback for improving instructional strategies. She also works with the Title 1 para designing lessons and planning. The LAP allocation pays for a .875 classified staff member. Our LAP classified staff member works as an interventionist with the level 1 and 2 students who are identified as not meeting standard. These students are rank ordered and served according to most in need. The LAP classified staff member is supervised by the principal, Title 1 staff, and classroom teachers.

Appendix A

#10 Coordinated and Integrated Federal, State and Local Services:

A schoolwide program shall include coordination and integration of Federal, State and Local Services and programs, including programs supported under this NCLB Act, violence prevention programs, nutrition programs, housing programs, Head Start, adult education, vocational and technical education, and job training.

At Fern Hill categorical programs and basic education work together to meet the needs of all students and support our schoolwide program goals. While categorical and basic education funds are tracked separately in Tacoma for fiscal purposes, the Title 1 program, LAP and Basic Education coordinate services for the purpose of serving academically at risk students, with the intent that all students in the school be successful.

Funding Source	Amount Contributed	Intend & Purposes
Title 1 A	\$160,538	Ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments
Basic Education	\$1,601,471	Promote continuous improvement of student achievement of state learning goals and essential academic learning requirements (WAC 180-16-220 2bii)
LAP	\$35,000	Ensure that students not meeting standard receive additional intervention support above and beyond core instruction.

Title I

Fern Hill Elementary Family/Student/Teacher Compact

As a family, we will:

- Have our child well rested, at school and ready to learn every day (unless our child is too ill to attend school.)
- Encourage our child to be successful and build their confidence with positive support.
- Provide a quiet place to do homework without distractions.
- Communicate with our child's teacher about any concerns we have either academically or socially.
- Check our child's backpack every day.
- Sign and return all paperwork promptly.
- Participate in Fern Hill family events, such as Open House, Math & Science Nights, etc.
- Support our child in accepting responsibility for actions made at school.
- Monitor homework completion.
- Support zero tolerance guidelines for bullying, harassment, intimidation, verbal and physical violence, and participation of those behaviors.

As a student, I will:

- Be on time and ready to learn every day.
- Wear the appropriate school uniform every day.
- Take financial responsibility for all of my textbooks.
- Take care of my school supplies.
- Participate fully in the learning happening within the classroom.
- Complete all assignments and bring them to school on time.
- Read for pleasure at least 20 minutes at home every day.
- Treat others with respect and kindness.

As a teacher, I will:

- Plan and teach lessons that engage my students, individualizing the lesson as necessary throughout the day.
- Structure the lessons around the Washington state Grade-Level Expectations in all subject areas.
- Encourage good choices by establishing a positive classroom environment in which every student is respected and valued.
- Inform families of classroom happenings and events through regular newsletters, classroom website, and/or notes and phone calls home as necessary.
- Provide a safe and rewarding classroom environment.
- Respect all cultural, racial and ethnic identities of my students.
- Be available to talk with families.
- Maintain high expectations for both academic success and behavior choices for all students.

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Title I Fern Hill Elementary Family/Student/Teacher Compact

As a family, we will:

- Have our child well rested, at school and ready to learn every day (unless our child is too ill to attend school.)
- Encourage our child to be successful and build their confidence with positive support.
- Provide a quiet place to do homework without distractions.
- Communicate with our child's teacher about any concerns we have either academically or socially.
- Check our child's backpack every day.
- Sign and return all paperwork promptly.
- Participate in Fern Hill family events, such as Open House, Math & Science Nights, etc.
- Support our child in accepting responsibility for actions made at school.
- Monitor homework completion.
- Support zero tolerance guidelines for bullying, harassment, intimidation, verbal and physical violence, and participation of those behaviors.

As a student, I will:

- Be on time and ready to learn every day.
- Wear the appropriate school uniform every day.
- Take financial responsibility for all of my textbooks.
- Take care of my school supplies.
- Participate fully in the learning happening within the classroom.
- Complete all assignments and bring them to school on time.
- Read for pleasure at least 20 minutes at home every day.
- Treat others with respect and kindness.

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- Plan and teach lessons that engage my students, individualizing the lesson as necessary throughout the day.
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- Inform families of classroom happenings and events through regular newsletters, classroom website, and/or notes and phone calls home as necessary.
- Provide a safe and rewarding classroom environment.
- Respect all cultural, racial and ethnic identities of my students.
- Be available to talk with families.
- Maintain high expectations for both academic success and behavior choices for all students.

Student Signature

Parent Signature

Teacher Signature

Date