

School Improvement Plan
Narrative Overview

Lincoln High School

PROGRESS TOWARD PREVIOUS YEAR'S GOALS 2009-10

Our students' progress in the area of Reading, as measured on the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) dropped slightly this year, from 70% meeting standard to 66% meeting standard last year. While up considerably over the last five years, we are not satisfied with our current indicators of growth on the HSPE and will be focusing our efforts to significantly improve our students' achievement in this area. We look to higher achievement as measured by the 2011 HSPE.

We continued to make gains in writing with an 8 point gain this past year and a 34 point gain over the past five years. We will continue to work on our performance in this area and expect our gains to continue.

In the area of Mathematics, we see a need for significant improvement. Our student's performance as measured by the 2010 HSPE fell far short of our goals and we are below state and district averages. We have placed a significant degree of attention on mathematics and will continue to do so this year. With our efforts as well as support from the school district we expect 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 2011 HSPE.

Our Science scores improved this past year and we expect bigger gains in coming years. We improved from 16% meeting standard to 21% meeting standard this year. This is clearly too low, but our science staff have worked hard to improve instruction and their collaboration will continue to pay off for our students.

Finally, our efforts with the extended day Lincoln Center model are paying off with enhanced gains (relative to the rest of Lincoln High School of 19 points in reading, 16 points in writing, 2 points in math and 13 points in science.

School and Community Context

Lincoln High School is situated at the nexus of the south end, east side and hilltop neighborhoods. It has a proud history but has struggled academically over the last 20 years. This is due in large part to the fact that Lincoln is the most impoverished school, has the most special needs students, has high numbers of English Language Learners, has the most mobile

population, and has the most under-prepared incoming students of any high school in Pierce County.

Over the years we have made attempts to reform how we work with our students and have had some success with small schools and our most recent intervention, the Lincoln Center extended day/year model. Our test scores are rising, grade data is improving and student's college readiness is also improving.

As part of the school improvement process we have had great participation from staff and the building and this commitment was recognized by the Department of Education granting Lincoln with a 1.75 million dollar grant to continue our good work in the areas of teaching and learning.

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT 2010-11

Continuous Improvement Process and Stakeholder Participation

Lincoln has many things in action based on our School Improvement Process planning from the 2009-10 school year – work that is continuing with our active SIP teams focused on the following:

- *Communication and Collaboration;*
- *School and Student Identity;*
- *Cultural Competence; and*
- *Teaching, Learning and Professional Development*

We are looking at performance in all core academic areas, employing some specific strategies in various domains (e.g., using the Teachers Development Group strategies for math) while using building-wide approaches in all content areas.

Specifically, we need to improve performance in all areas and see math as our biggest area of deficiency. To that end math teachers have been working in the TDG model, reviewing DMSA data, attending math webinars and meeting regularly to review student progress. We also plan to continue work with our middle school colleagues to align and improve our instruction (we used three waiver days last year for this purpose).

As for the larger school, we have committed to building wide use of AVID strategies and as a part of our DOE grant we will be using David Conley's College Knowledge standards and receive in house professional development coaching from the Coalition of Essential Schools NW coaches under contract with the school district.

Staff members have been part of the SIP process (approx. 40 teachers and staff members over the span of two years), and another 40 or so have participated in study groups. We also agreed

to professional learning time every Wednesday morning from 7:05-7:50 to look at departmental data and problems of practice groups.

Finally, you should see standards-based learning in every classroom with clearly posted learning targets as well as a snapshot of the work that day. You should also see evidence of standards-based grading, common strategies such as Cornell Notes, Costas Levels of Questioning and the like from the AVID toolkit, and the beginning stages of implementation of Conley’s College Knowledge standards. By employing these approaches and making frequent checks for understanding, all students should have their needs met.

Review of Data to Establish Improvement

Achievement

Spring, 2010 MSP Data (expressed as percentage of students meeting standard):

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Reading	45	53	62	70	66
Mathematics	16	17	18	17	19
Writing	49	51	69	70	78
Science	9	9	11	16	21

As evidenced above, sizable gains have been made over the past five years. The biggest areas of resistance continue to be math and science. They will continue to be areas of focus while we reinforce reading and writing in all content areas to maintain our growth on those assessments.

**Attendance
(Average Daily Attendance)**

2007-08	2008-09	2009-10

Attendance is a major concern at Lincoln. We have a very active attendance office that tracks attendance, communicates with parents and prepares BECCA filings and interventions. We also work closely with the TSD truancy office and our local TPD officers. One thing we have found is that the challenging work presented to students in the Lincoln Center model has resulted in greater student achievement as well as improved attendance. We expect our changes in classroom practice to attract more students to school and keep them in school.

Planning for Transitions (between grade levels and grades)

Over the years we have held many waiver days with our feeder middle schools. This year we have not met for waiver days but maintain close communication with our feeder schools. We have met with First Creek Middle School in order to help them plan the opening of their

extended day model at the start of 2nd semester. We also plan on having some student days for middle school students to attend and see our academic, arts and club/sports offerings. We also offer our LAP-funded summer school for incoming 9th graders and as our Lincoln Center model grows (185 ninth graders this past year), more students will have a summer school transition in addition to the LAP-funded summer school.

Characteristics of High Performing Schools

One of the things we know about good professional development as well as good goal setting is to have a focus. You can pay attention to all and improve in all areas, but given our needs the following characteristics are essential to our success this year:

*In our SIP work the importance of **high standards and expectation for all students** was key. Whether reading the work of Carol Dweck on self theories or looking at schools where huge turnarounds have occurred, it came from the high standards and expectations for students. The corollary of this is the high standards and expectations for staff since their teaching has to compel students and be taught at a standard for students to rise to the occasion.*

*A second area is **high levels of collaboration and communication**. With our Lincoln Center model, there is a feeling of “difference” in the school and a strong desire for more and better communication between academies and within content areas. To assist, we have worked on better communication and built in weekly collaboration time that will be every Wednesday morning for 45 minutes. Staff members will meet in academies, departments, professional development groups and as a whole staff. The work they do will be public and reviewed by our professional development lead team on a regular basis.*

*The third area of focus is our **focused professional development**. This year we have many offerings on the table, from AVID, to TDG, to AP training to professional development with in-school coaches. To bring this together, we have our professional development lead team in place, collecting data via instructional rounds with our coaches and building a coherent plan for this year and years to come. We will meet the basic needs of teachers with book studies (Lemov and Conley), AVID trainings, and other interventions. When teachers are in a position to benefit, we will be working in the model used by Tacoma with the CESNW coaches known as College Preparedness Project. This will be the capstone, so to say and be something we realize this year and in years to come based on staff readiness.*

*Of course, all of these characteristics fall under the umbrella of **effective school leadership** – both from staff and administration – and we will hold ourselves accountable for the success in the characteristics mentioned above.*

Professional Development Opportunities

Lincoln’s professional development plan includes the following components/areas of focus:

Math: *Our teachers will meet five times during the course of the year with the facilitators from the Teacher's Development Group. They will also work with the school math coach to continue this work weekly throughout the year. The department will also meet to review assessment data and meet two weeks a month on Wednesday mornings (the other Wednesdays will be for staff and academy meetings).*

Reading: *Staff will be trained in a variety of reading strategies through our AVID strategies (WICR), AP training and attendance in our professional development lab setting in which teachers will work with staff by demonstrating lessons after school with our extended day Lincoln Center model. Finally, our instructional coaches will work with staff on the College Knowledge standards in a classroom coaching setting. This includes standards for comprehension, reading endurance, paraphrasing and questioning strategies.*

Writing: *Staff will be trained in a variety of writing strategies through our AVID strategies (Cornell notes and WICR), AP training and attendance in our professional development lab setting in which teachers will work with staff by demonstrating lessons after school with our extended day Lincoln Center model. Finally, our instructional coaches will work with staff on the College Knowledge standards in a classroom coaching setting. This includes standards for college level writing.*

Teaching: *This work comes mostly in the form of AVID professional development, attendance at the lab classrooms sessions, AP training, book studies and the in-building coaching. We realize all staff exist on a continuum and our instructional rounds and data gathering will assist us in meeting the needs of staff to be able to teach at the highest levels.*

All of these efforts will assist students in achieving at higher levels. We have seen this work with our Lincoln Center model, and seeing as most of the LC staff teach in the manners we will be training for, we expect students performance and student efficacy rise.

Highly Qualified Teachers

Provisions for staff training at Lincoln and in Tacoma include opportunities, incentives and compensation. The school and district provide 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, instructional facilitators 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. HQ 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 sends 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 Additional Academic Learning

Lincoln High School introduced the extended day/week/year Lincoln Center model three years ago. This program is unlike any other offered in Tacoma schools and the State of Washington. It offers extended support to students who are in the program with approx. 540 hours of additional academic contact time during the course of the school year. As well, we built a model that incorporates learning in the form of club activities that all Lincoln students can attend. This has led to robust participation in clubs and athletics. This matters since students who participate in clubs and sports, have an on-time graduation rate of approx. 90%.

We also have tutors in the school, teachers who are compensated for assisting students in math after school, credit retrieval opportunities and tutors from the following college prep advising agencies we have in school:

- *TRiO;*
- *College Bound;*
- *Upward Bound; and*
- *The College Success Foundation.*

Finally, we have close relationships with universities, social service agencies, governmental entities and non-profit agencies. These include, but are not limited to:

- *Tacoma 360;*
- *The University of Puget Sound;*
- *Goodwill;*
- *Pierce County Health Department;*
- *St. Leo's Food Connection; and*
- *Community Health Care*

We recognize that if we do not meet the needs of the students, their families, and to an extent their communities, we will not have the success we need to have in the classroom.

Safe and Supportive Learning Environment

Over the last seven years Lincoln has worked very hard to create and maintain an orderly learning environment which is safe for all – physically, socially and emotionally. This includes: introducing rules that create order; supporting the needs of students who are being bullied by intervening with administration, guidance or school social worker to end the treatment and educate all involved; and being fully aware of gang issues in and out of school and working with Tacoma Police when needed.

We have also supports students by working with students and staff on creating safe zones for students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. That support extends to the creation of various multicultural clubs, clubs such as Girl Talk and meeting the needs of our students wherever they may be.

Finally, we model respectful behavior and hold all students to high expectations with plenty of support to meet those expectations.

Equity Issues

Over the years we have focused on cultural competence in our professional development offerings, our waiver day trainings and staff conversations. We have identified cultural competence as one of our four areas of focus in our SIP work and had large numbers of staff engaged in the readings and discussions of this committee.

We have professional development planned in this realm using both our committee work and the work of Tacoma's Cultural Competence committee. We also plan on engaging students in this work by engaging in a staff/student book study with Bernadette Ray's class of seniors.

While we work on our professional development, we continually remind staff that this is an ongoing process, not a class you take and you simply become culturally competent.

Technology

We make great use of technology, both in day-to-day teaching as well as in our professional development. Classroom teachers use their computers, projectors and smart boards to engage students while using simple strategies such as collecting every learning snapshot in a power point for review at the end of the semester/year.

For professional development we use the following:

- *Use of commercial DVDs focused on classroom practice. These include:*
 - *The DVD from Doug Lemov's Teach Like a Champion*
 - *DVDs from the University of Washington's CEL 5D framework*
 - *Online videos from Success at the Core (www.successatthecore.com)*
- *Use of video cameras to tape teacher practice (4 flip cameras and multiple high end hand held cameras*

These resources in addition to webinars and other web-based planning tools and templates lead to improved performance by all staff.

Parent, Family and Community Involvement

Lincoln has made many efforts to engage parents and community. Over time some efforts have worked better than others, and we have improved attendance at student led conferences, but still need to improve. One strategy we have used is to have parents joining Lincoln Center sign contracts re: parent involvement. This has not improved involvement too much, but it is better.

We offer a myriad of opportunities for involvement, including conferencing, tutoring, performances, award ceremonies, high school and beyond nights, and so forth. With the new DOE grant and resources from AVID and Navigation 101 we will employ more opportunities for students to present their academic achievements to parents.

Lincoln is very engaged in the community with numerous events taking place here in partnership with Lincoln such as the Race and Pedagogy Youth Summit (Lincoln was the only TSD participant involved in the planning for a citywide effort), Northwest Sinfonietta, The Grand Cinema and many other partners. Most importantly is our relationship with our immediate community (we host the Lincoln Neighbors group here at school) as well as our presence at community events involving our students.

Coordination of Services

Lincoln spends our money in the following ways to support student learning:

Basic Ed: *We use our basic budget to pay for a myriad of supplies. However, reserve funds for the following academic/professional development expenditures:*

- *Identified department needs;*
- *Books for our language arts book closet (due to a poor selection);*
- *Class coverage for the purposes of classroom observations and instructional rounds; and*
- *Additions to the large school professional development library (resources for individual teachers, Wednesday morning PD groups, and book study groups).*

LAP: *We break out our LAP staffing in the following manner:*

- *1.0 reading teacher; and*
- *2.0 in math divided up into ten sections for teachers to double dose students who struggle in algebra 1*

Navigation 101: *We have a grant with the state for our advisory model, Navigation 101. We fund staff attendance at advisory trainings and hope to use additional funding to work more closely with Dr. David Conley and his college readiness standards.*

AVID: *We also have a grant with Achievement Via Individual Determination (AVID) and we send five staff to the AVID summer institute every summer. We also receive Americorps tutors under the AVID funding umbrella.*

DOE Grant funding: *This \$1.75 million dollar grant (five year window) pays for the following:*

- *1.7 fte to pay for staff members to direct the grant, look for college funds for students and have a full time graduation support advisor;*
- *120 days of in school coaching by the CESNW instructional coaches (this declines by 10 days every year to promote a sustainable approach to this work);*
- *AP training for teachers;*
- *Release time for instructional rounds;*
- *Release time for planning and professional development for the 9-person professional development lead team (PDLT); and*
- *Cover the costs of six staff members to attend the annual Coalition of Essential Schools National Conference.*