

School Improvement Plan Narrative Overview

McKinley Elementary School

McKinley Elementary school built in 1906 is a landmark located on McKinley Avenue, a long established area in East Tacoma. This is a rich, culturally diverse community. A revitalization of the neighborhood is prompting an increase of small businesses in the area. Moffet Library is two blocks away with a new revitalized city park on the edge of the neighborhood. Churches of many faiths serve our neighborhood.

McKinley Elementary school has served the needs of the students who live in the McKinley community since 1906. Many community members, along with current parents and grandparents walked our halls. Within our three floors and one portable are housed 18 classrooms, a special needs preschool, LRC, Title I, and ELL classrooms, a library resource center, a computer lab, music center, and our multi-purpose room. Community partnerships with the McKinley Parent Involvement Center and youth organizations are important to the families of McKinley Elementary. McKinley Elementary School is located at 3702 McKinley Avenue. We invite parents and community comments and input for our plan. Ms. Anita Roth, McKinley's principal, can be reached at (253)571-4340.

Shared Vision

Taking Time to Cultivate Hearts and Minds: Imagine, Believe, Inspire

Mission Statement:

Through our commitment, compassion and collaboration, we empower students to develop and reach their academic and social potential. In partnership with families and the community, we help children cultivate strong roots from which to grow into caring, resilient and productive members of society.

Guiding Principles:

We believe each student:

1. Experiences enhanced success when basic needs are met.
2. Needs a strong academic and social foundation.
3. Needs to feel safe, valued and nurtured in the school environment.
4. Can be successful at learning given clear expectations, direct modeling and specific feedback.
5. Deserves instruction that matches individual learning styles, strengths and differences.
6. Will thrive in a consistent, structured, engaging environment with well-defined routines and procedures.
7. Is an important member of the classroom, school and community who wants to learn, can learn and can experience success.
8. Needs opportunities to participate in service, leadership and to establish quality relationships.

PROGRESS TOWARD PREVIOUS YEAR'S GOALS 2009-10

Our students' progress in the area of Reading, as measured by the Measurement of Student Progress (MSP), demonstrated overall that our students are continuing to make Adequate Yearly Progress in this area. Students in grade four performed with nearly 60% of students meeting standard in Reading. While this progress represented growth in our fourth grade scores, we did not achieve the expected results as measured by our third and fifth grade students as measured on the 2010 MSP. We are not satisfied with our current indicators of growth on the MSP and are therefore intentionally focusing our efforts to significantly improve our students' achievements in this area. We look to higher achievement as measured by the 2011 MSP.

In the area of Mathematics, we see a significant area of improvement needed. While our fourth graders doubled their growth from the 2009 WASL this growth has not been sustainable. Our student's performance as measured by the 2010 MSP did not meet our established targets for our third and fifth graders. A significant emphasis on mathematics, along with many layers of support across our school district and within our school in order to effectively address the concerns in this area is needed 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 2011 MSP.

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT 2010-11

Continuous Improvement Process and Stakeholder Participation

The content of this plan represents the ongoing work and goals established within our school for the 2010-2011 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 work. The specifics of our attached Action Plan set forth our school-wide reform efforts and are a result of a 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 we are making this year is an increased focus on team collaboration and standards based report cards. Third, fourth and fifth grade teams are building rubrics, having students collect evidence towards meeting academic standards and journaling their learning targets. We believe that this change will have a positive impact on our students reaching standard in these areas. The establishment of goal and focus areas for our school's work is also established in partnership with our SCDM of which includes parent representation. Currently McKinley does not have a PTA, instead an increased effort has been made to begin a parent leadership team. Using opportunities for our Spanish speaking parents to fully participate in parent involvement activities, and surveying parents for ideas of how they can be involved in McKinley's ongoing goal setting is the focus for this year.

The school wide program is monitored periodically throughout the year. Data in reading and math is collected 3 times a year. Adjustments are made as needed at these times. At the end of the year, MSP data is reviewed and the impact on Student Achievement is evaluated. At this time the school wide plan is revised based on the data and community input.

Review of Data to Establish Improvement**Achievement**

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

Grade 3	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Reading	37.1	57.4	46.5	60.0	52.9
Mathematics	45.7	46.8	46.5	53.7	32.4

Grade 4	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Reading	47.8	46.9	59.0	42.9	60.0
Mathematics	26.1	18.8	59.0	28.6	55.0
Writing	51.1	43.8	35.9	52.4	35.0

Grade 5	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Reading	65.9	60.0	61.5	52.6	43.6
Mathematics	42.9	38.0	46.2	42.1	43.6
Science	30.4	14.0	19.2	18.4	7.7

The school-wide data from the 2010 MSP indicates marginal strength in Reading performance. This data matches the progress as measured in our primary classrooms using district and classroom-based assessments. Our students' performance on the Reading portion of the 2010 MSP indicates that our students did not make adequate yearly progress in grades 3 and 5. Our 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 Title I reading program. (See action plan for specific intervention strategies.)

In the area of Mathematics, our student's performance at third and fifth grade did not meet the state standard. Our instructional focus in this area will be the 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.)

The main themes that emerged from our comprehensive needs assessment are: Academic Excellence in Reading and Math, Family and Community Partnerships, Early Learning, and Safety. Based on the needs of our students and community, goals in these areas were developed, aligned with state standards and address state AYP targets. Our goals set high standards and expectations and reflect a clear, consistent and shared focus. Research-based materials and instructional strategies are implemented for all students through our reading and math strategies and activities. Aligned assessments identify misconceptions, helping teachers focus re-teaching to be more effective.

Attendance

(Average daily attendance K-5)

2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
94%	92.3%	94.4%

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. Knowing this, middle school counselors and teachers will come to our school in the spring to talk to the 5th grade classroom about middle school expectations and to develop their 6th grade schedules. As a feeder school to the newly established SIG School our counselor will be working with the middle school 6th grade teachers to plan a transition day. We also plan to build in summer activities for students that include personalized phone calls, mailings for students’ with chronic attendance problems in elementary school. Between grade level transition activity will be conducted between the outgoing and incoming teachers who will discuss every child’s areas of strengths and concern.

McKinley's school wide program provides support to parents and families of students who will be experiencing a significant grade transition (P-K; K-1; 5-6). This support includes a kindergarten open house, parent meetings and August classroom visits. Our special needs preschool collaborates with Kindergarten teachers to ensure students have been introduced to the behavior and academic expectations. Vertical teaming in K-5 grades provides academic support in Math and Reading. The staff meets to discuss struggling students and collaborate on interventions to assure successful transitions.

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 collaboration time that’s built into the school day, regularly scheduled staff meetings, and small team meetings in our Title One and Special Education programs 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.. Finally, **Effective School Leadership** is demonstrated by a range of staff members at McKinley Elementary. Small teams 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 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 McKinley is a result of our teachers coming together around student work and learning from each other as they constantly seek to improve their practice. More formal

professional development from the district will inform our school-based training 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.

McKinley's school wide program goals are focused on helping students meet state standards in math and reading. Our professional development is focused on effective reading and math instructional strategies and strategies to provide supportive learning environments, and work to align, curriculum, instruction and assessment with the State Essential Learnings. Each year, the district surveys the staff, students and parents for needs and interests. This data, coupled with our student data, serves as the foundation for planning building trainings. Administration and teachers work with para-educators to focus on successful student performance on the State Essential Learning's. All paraeducators that work with students in the instructional setting meet NCLB highly qualified requirements. Ongoing professional development is offered at the district level. As an integral part of our staff, para-educators are encouraged to attend all of McKinley's professional development activities.

Administration and the instructional coach provide on-going and embedded support and follow-up to professional development. The administration through informal and formal observations ensure implementation in the classroom. The IC provides coaching, modeling and feedback on the use of skills and strategies.

Highly Qualified Teachers

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. McKinley's 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 focus on best practices in reading and math.

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. McKinley and Pacific Lutheran University have formed a partnership to provide 2-4 mentor teachers for a year long student teaching experience. Our goal to provide a supportive learning environment includes support for staff. For the last 3 years, our staff turn-over rate has been around 18%, with most changes due to staff mobility.

Professional Growth Plans for each teacher includes Standard III, 'Demonstrates knowledge of subject content and the elements of effective instruction' and focuses on Component IIIA, 'Demonstrates command of content-area knowledge and state standards as well as implements district-adopted resources and curriculum'. Staff development so support teachers include the following: Standards Based Classrooms, Assessment and using data to inform instruction, Goal Setting, and Grade level instructional strategies.

Teachers receive substantive feedback through formal observations, required by the district and informal observations. Internal observation feedback is provided by the Principal and instructional coach, as well as district and state facilitators and peers. Staff also receive feedback as part of their Project Quality Professional Growth Plans.

Provisions for staff training in Tacoma include opportunities for compensation. The district provides a broad spectrum of classes on assessment, standards-based instruction and best practices in the content areas. Staff 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 coaches at all schools 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.

Recognition of Non-Academic Learning

At McKinley Elementary, we believe in educating the whole child! This belief is demonstrated by a strong emphasis on creating a focused, structured, and nurturing environment. We look for opportunities to recognize and promote non-academic learning with a particular focus of integrating the arts throughout the curriculum. Students are provided opportunities to explore the arts through drama, visual arts, music and movement. Primary grades are participating in Art Impact opportunities including arts focused field trips to local theater productions. In addition all fourth and fifth graders receive one semester of exploratory strings program. Last year through a donation McKinley was able to purchase nineteen youth sized violins. Girl Scouting in the school day provides our Kindergarten through third grade girls a week opportunity to explore learn citizenship and leadership skills. Overall, we work to promote the values of helping others, giving back to community, and the building of a collaborative work culture.

Safe and Supportive Learning Environment

The McKinley Elementary School staff is purposeful and intentional in its work to create a safe and supportive environment. Built upon the four school-wide expectations of Respect, Responsibility, Safety and Active Learning, our staff believes in the direct instruction, modeling, and ongoing practice of expected behaviors and attitudes for learning within our school. Having implemented a response to intervention model for academics and positive behavioral supports provides consistency across all classrooms and grade levels. There is a pervasive attitude that all McKinley students belong to all McKinley adults. A no-tolerance approach to behaviors that violate safety and respect is combined with a supportive safety net through our positive behavior model includes buddy classrooms for students to regroup if not being productive learners, as well as small groups, and individual students pro-social skills lunch time classes. 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. Due to McKinley's small student population there were not enough students in some AYP categories to evaluate achievement gap data. Our performance data trends on the WASL and now MSP show that our greatest gap is between our Caucasian student population and African American and Hispanic in both reading. The gap in math was significantly smaller with our Hispanic students out performing both our Caucasian and African American students. 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 struggling students will be built into the day and provided after 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, therefore, our Parent Involvement and Community Partnership Committee will continue to seek supports for our students and families.

Technology

McKinley Elementary continues to build upon the use of technology in a variety of ways to enhance student learning. Technology within the classroom includes the daily use of document camera/LCD projector bundles, opportunities for word processing, internet research for project-based learning, and the use of a technology-supported student publishing center. Currently due to lack of an elevator McKinley

has a split laptop cart, providing fourteen laptops for kindergarten through third grade and another fourteen laptops on the top floor of the school for our fourth and fifth graders. In addition a computer screen was added by the front entry door of the school with weekly information about school activities, pictures and videos of student activities to engage parents and visitors.

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 develop a strong parent involvement component into our school program. We have used our Title I 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 with our new math program so that they know how to help their children at home. These evenings are provided in Spanish and English. 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 very meaningful ways in their child's education. Beyond working with families, we regularly seek out ways to partner with our greater community through such strategies as mentors from Girl Scouts of America, PLU intern students, student recognition programs with Kiwanis, Masonic Lodge and a private donor.. Students and parents provide canned and dry food for a large annual food drive to support the food bank. Our partnerships with local service organization, churches and businesses provide our students and families in need resources for holiday, back to school and daily living needs.

Increasing parental involvement is one of our main goals. At Partnership Conferencing we meet with parents and students, establish academic goals and set up compacts for the year and translators are provided. The Title I staff holds mini parent workshops on reading and math. These are then monitored on an ongoing basis throughout the year. In addition parents earn points for attending parent events, parenting classes, signing homework and reading the newsletter which are then entered for over \$500 in college savings bonds at the end of the school year. This year McKinley began offering curriculum nights on two separate nights, one English and the other in Spanish. To support our Spanish speaking families a Spanish information line was established to help them stay connected to school activities. Two of our Spanish/English speaking parents check the phone line daily to respond to parents questions about school events.

McKinley elementary sends home to parents and families bi-monthly newsletters with information about upcoming events, items of concern and opportunities for involvement. Teachers send home progress reports and are documenting parent contacts monthly for baseline data. The district also has in place a communication system that allows our school to send personalized voice messages to parents in English and Spanish to encourage parents and families to be actively involved in their children's education. We also provide translators for all parent/student conferences and at most building events.

Student academic progress is shared with parents during Partnership Conferencing in October, December, and March. At these times academic goals are set, assessments and report cards explained, and compacts and expectations shared. Progress reports provide additional information on student progress. Along with compacts, parent policies are shared with parents at the beginning of the school year. We have included our parent involvement plan in our building plan. Title I parent involvement funds have been allocated to our school as required to support building based meaningful parent involvement activities. Each year, the School Family Compact, and Parent Involvement Policy are reviewed and revised with parent input. Parents and staff work together to develop and support parent involvement training/activities for 2010-2011.

McKinley's counselor and nurse work with local county programs to help families connect with needed health and social services. The district McKinley-Vento liaison connects homeless families in our school with social services and provides ongoing support. McKinley elementary provides extra support to families by funding a portion of a Counselor position in order to meet the needs of our families. This

position is responsible for coordinating parent meetings, supporting families in need with resources and providing parent trainings. For the second year in a row Title 1 funds have provide our parents with an evening parenting class in both Spanish and English.

Coordination of Fiscal Services

Much of what we are able to do to support student learning comes from our Title I budget. This is of course over and above our district allocation which is actually quite small. We have also benefitted from a technology grant that provided for our SMART boards and some laptops. Fundraising will allow us to purchase more technology, such as white boards and specialized word processors. In addition we will use these funds for enrichment field trips tied to the state standards and district curriculum.

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, school wide planning of the School Centered Decision Making Team (SCDM), Title I, ELL, Special Ed. 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 Coach helps teachers coordinate intervention instructional services for our students with high academic needs. Title I also works closely with homeless services within the district.

McKinley's School Improvement Plan has been aligned with the Tacoma School District's Improvement Plan (DIP). It includes an integration of McKinley's Title I Schoolwide Plan, English Language Learners (ELL), Special Education and Special Education Preschool and the McKinney Vento Act. These programs work cooperatively to provide quality education to all McKinley students.

McKinley's staff works with the district's Homeless liaison to identify and provide intervention services for homeless students and their families.

To support schoolwide implementation, Title I provides technical assistance and NCLB support, Curriculum & Instruction provides professional development, research and instructional support, Purchasing supports expenditures, Human Resources facilitates staffing and provides Highly Qualified information, Research & Evaluation provides data.

The Tacoma School District provides the following technical assistance for school improvement planning in addition to the Title I/LAP Program Specialist; Curriculum & Instruction, School, Family and Community Partnership liaisons, Human Resources, Finance, Elementary Directors, Instructional Coaches.