

# 2011-2012 SIP Narrative of Helen B Stafford Elementary

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## School Improvement Plan Narrative Overview

### **Helen B. Stafford Elementary School**

#### PROGRESS TOWARD PREVIOUS YEAR'S GOALS

- Overview of neighborhood, organizational overview
- Identify strengths and weakness of current core academic program

Stafford Elementary is a newer school in Tacoma. The staff has bonded over a shared vision of student success rooted in performance learning, especially through the arts. The very diverse community has welcomed the school as a real center for community involvement. The school is fairly evenly diverse approximately: 25% white; 25% black; 25% Asian; and 25% Hispanic. These numbers have held fairly steady since the school opened. We have seen a major rise in our ELL population over the last five years, more than doubling to about 110 students.

Our students' progress in the area of Reading, as measured by the Measurement of Student Progress (MSP), demonstrated overall that our students did not make Adequate Yearly Progress in this area. See attached. We are not satisfied with our current indicators of growth on the MSP and are therefore will be intentionally focusing our efforts to significantly improve our students' achievement in this area. We look to higher achievement as measured by the 2012 MSP.

In the area of Mathematics, we did see a significant area of improvement. This was very exciting, but is certainly a challenge to improve further. We see our students as capable of much higher scores and are working tirelessly to support their learning.

Given our focus on writing this past year we are pleased to show significant improvement in this area for our fourth graders with 57% of them meeting the standard. While this gain was significant, it was certainly insufficient. We want them ALL to make it! We are focusing our efforts on non-fiction writing and written reflections on learning. We have high hopes for higher scores.

We started in the basement of scoring our first year of science. We made great growth in a short amount of time. Two years ago our science score was disappointing, but the 2011 score re-established our upward trend. We have blocked math with science so our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students get 60 minutes of science daily. At all grade levels we are emphasizing the writing connection to science instruction.

## 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 sessions. 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 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade math and science lessons by teachers who are exceptionally competent in teaching these subjects. 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 and/or SIP team of which includes parent representation. Our PTO's focus on supporting learning at the classroom level, specifically through the infusion of technology and the support of the arts as well as opportunities to work with various families through programs such as our Title One affords us the opportunity to both share and seek input from our stakeholders in the development of school areas of focus. This ongoing process influences our work and the establishment of our goals.

- Identify the strengths and weakness that you will be addressing

Our strengths at Stafford include making AYP in math 2009-2010 school year, and significant continued growth in math in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, our parent involvement, our arts core philosophy, high levels of satisfaction from all constituency groups and our willingness to do whatever it takes to meet the needs of our students. We will continue to support these areas as we look toward continued growth. Our weaknesses are in our high poverty subgroup in all academic areas, and our lagging overall scores in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading.

- Specify priorities and concerns for improving student achievement and meeting state's academic standards

Our weaknesses need to be our priority. We are establishing systems to support our high poverty students (extra interventions, homework club before school, ELO after school)

- Describe how teachers have been included in assessment decisions to improve student performance

Teachers have been trained in the interpretation of data from our TAD data system. We are also focusing on formative data as we teach all of our students to maintain math logs with proof of learning. Teachers pace their lessons and chose the re-teaching options based on the formative assessments given in their classrooms.

- Describe use of best practices and instructional strategies

We have adopted many of the best practices presented to the staff in trainings. We are using "targets" throughout the building to focus instruction. These targets are pulled from the state learning standards. We use various strategies to engage all students and to provide

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opportunities for students to voice their learning. We are developing rubrics so that students can score their own work and set their own goals.

- Describe strategies used for meeting the needs of all students

Stafford is providing multiple opportunities for students to be successful. They have a menu of venues through which they might demonstrate their learning. We try to infuse the arts in many subject areas, using that as an application opportunity for students to use their knowledge.

## **Review of Data to Establish Improvement**

### **Achievement**

Spring, 2010 MSP Data (expressed as percentage of students meeting standard):  
Stafford did not open until the 2006-2007 School year

<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Reading</b>	59.0	61.4	51.4	65.3	60.6
<b>Mathematics</b>	54.1	59.6	39.2	65.8	53.0

<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Reading</b>	68.2	62.2	65.6	53.8	55.7
<b>Mathematics</b>	34.8	36.5	40.6	54.5	65.8
<b>Writing</b>	53.0	45.9	37.5	53.8	57.0

<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Reading</b>	50.0	58.3	63.6	54.0	38.6
<b>Mathematics</b>	47.8	33.3	41.6	50.8	61.5
<b>Science</b>	4.3	35.0	42.9	19.0	45.6

### **Attendance (Average Daily Attendance)**

<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>
<b>94.35%</b>	<b>94.83%</b>	<b>95.08%</b>	<b>96.3%</b>

We are making some progress in promoting better attendance. Improving attendance statistics continues to be a high priority. Our work in this area is two pronged. First, we are rewarding students for good attendance, celebrating both individuals and classrooms for improved attendance. Second, we are attempting to re-educate our parents on the importance of good attendance. We are doing this through newsletters, parent meetings, conferences, etc. It was difficult for some of our families to acknowledge that school must be a priority. The principal makes personal calls and home visits to contact parents on this issue. The tide is slowly turning.

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## **Planning for Transitions** (between grade levels and grades)

Our plans for connecting with preschool families include the Ready to Read library program, communication with feeder preschool and daycare programs, and invitations to Open House opportunities for entering kindergarten families. This summer we offered an Open Forum for parents new to the school system that had students about to enter kindergarten. We shared tips for navigating the public schools, supported families in filling out paperwork and answered a lot of questions. Teachers, counselors, and title one staff were available for public or private questions. We made this an adult only event so that families would have the chance for open honest discussion of concerns and fears. We plan to offer this again next summer and expand it to families new to other grade levels.

In addition to the family workshops for students transitioning from home and preschool, we offer support for families making the jump to middle school. Parent information nights and student transition meetings are scheduled every spring. Students attend transition summer school and get a preview of middle school. This really lessens the stress for both parents and students.

We offer “heritage language” support in Spanish and Cambodian and Vietnamese and Korean on site. Other translations are available through the district office.

We are teaming in a “feeder school” pattern with other elementaries and middle schools that feed Mt Tahoma High School. Shared walk-through observations and discussions identifying areas of strength and challenge will enrich all participants and strengthen the system.

• Component #7

## **Characteristics of High Performing Schools**

*Please note the BEREC data is from two years ago and may not reflect the actual practices currently in place.*

1. Cleared and Shared Focus

BEREC score: 3

Our SIP goals and strategies are supporting continued work on learning targets for day to day instruction. Our larger view is shaped by student success on those targets as we reach for state standards. Our staff and students and larger community know our mission and it is in view around the school.

2. High Standards and Expectations for All students

BEREC score: 3 rigorous  
3 academic  
focus

In the district climate survey 2009-10, 91% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that Stafford has high academic standards. Our multiple opportunities approach to learning sets high expectations for all students and scaffolds systems for all of those students to meet those expectations.

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3. Effective School leadership BERC score: 3

School leadership is collaborative, distributive, and in continued evolution. SCDM and SRT and Staff meetings, as well as grade level teams have responsibility and authority over decision making. There is a high level of trust with the staff and they set high standards. New initiatives may come from the principal, from a teacher or from the grandma of the struggling third grader. We take all input and try to use it to make informed decisions that will assist our kids in being successful.
4. High levels of collaboration and communication BERC score: 3

“There is a climate of support and respect for staff members’ work and school leaders provide opportunities for a continuous cycle of innovation, feedback and redesign.” says BERC report. Teachers collaborate freely, frequently and productively. Communication is predictable (weekly staff news notes for example) and responsive—we need to consider this now.
5. Curriculum, instruction, and assessments aligned with State Standards BERC score: 3

We are very standards driven. It is a focus of our staff development and our personal planning for classrooms. The new math curriculum has been challenging, but we keep harking back to the learning and collection of evidence. The school is piloting/field testing the new Standards Based Report Card school-wide.
6. Frequent monitoring of teaching and learning BERC score: 3

Student work is continually assessed. We piloted “math journals” last year in one grade level. Students note their targets, provide proof of learning, and set goals. We are expanding this pilot to grades third through fifth. Younger students are encouraged to restate the targets and give verbal/performance feedback on their progress. TAD data is reviewed often. Students that are struggling are identified early and interventions are in place. There are three ELO opportunities after school and the more informal “homework club” in the mornings. Students are able to access individual help and re-teaching opportunities. Last summer we had an informal summer school for entering 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and 60 students attended regularly. This was in addition to the district supported ELL summer school and the Title One Science Camp summer school program.
7. Focused Professional development BERC score: 3

PD is provided in Standards based instruction, writing targets, arts infusion, technology support, math implementation, and cultural competency. This professional development is designed by needs addressed in staff Professional Growth Plans, by examining student needs and through staff discussions. Component #4
8. Supportive learning environment BERC score: 3

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The three sub areas for this characteristic are 1) Safe and orderly environment—97% parents in the climate survey agreed or strongly agreed that our school is safe. 2) Building relationships—BERC report: “...Stafford staff members spoke with respect and care for their students.” 3) Personalized learning for all--“Stafford provides opportunities to personalize the learning experience for students by offering a number of interventions and support programs.” Personalization will also be enhanced by the individual journals kept by students, the portfolio assessments being developed and by student-teacher goal setting.

9. High levels of family and community involvement                      BERC score: 2  
The BERC score in this area is not reflective of the actual practice. It was taken before our series of parent/family nights at the school and was from a very small sample of parents (four). Our climate survey of parents was far more positive: 95% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they are kept up to date on activities; 98% report feeling welcome; and 93% felt valued. Our attendance at evening events has been phenomenal.

Components #1, #9

### **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, 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 and on the webpage 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 Office 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 HOUSSSE Plan of Assistance is developed for the teacher.

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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.

Components #3, #5

## **Recognition of Additional Academic Learning**

Since opening in the fall of 2006 Helen B. Stafford Elementary continues with the values of its namesake--Helen B. Stafford. We are committed to equal access, to high quality work, to generosity of spirit, and to civility.

Stafford is already a unique school site. We have created a goal to provide art-infused instruction in many content areas. The result of these goals is evident around the school. Fused glass projects adorn the entry windows and library. These were created in conjunction with the Hearts for Kids program and the Pierce County Arts Commission artist in residence. Student work is celebrated in the halls and classrooms. The art room and computer lab are both used fully to support student learning.

Students are welcomed well before the start of the school day. There are classrooms open at 7:45 am for homework support and peer tutoring. After school we have the Hearts for Kids program which coordinates enrichment classes and ELO 's in reading and math. Our arts focus encourages opportunities for students to apply their learning to arts and performance.

We have a lot of community partners. Our resource fair every January brings over 100 agencies and service providers to our school so that families may easily access those services. These partners include agencies from the various ethnic groups represented in the student population at Stafford. The Kiwanis Club supports our Terrific Kid Assemblies. Costco provides materials and snacks for after school programs. The Korean Church offers space for performances. Catholic Community Services has an outreach program. The Elks provide holiday support for many of our families. The list goes on and on.

## **Safe and Supportive Learning Environment**

We value civil behavior and teach it daily. Staff has been trained in the Fish! Philosophy which stresses four tenets: Play, Make Their Day, Choose Your Attitude; Be There. We are teaching our students to operate by those principles. Discipline is taught student behaviors. We have few problems as students are *fully engaged* in learning. We are working with our neighborhood to diminish vandalism and nonsense at the school site during non school hours. A committee has been formed and already gotten new signage around the school and improved the supervision of the grounds. We hope to establish a Safe Streets organization on site. We sent a staff team to a Safe and Civil Schools Conference and have established a school-wide discipline/management system.

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## **Equity Issues**

- Describe how you are addressing the need for staff to become culturally competent
- Identify your achievement gap students and how you are addressing their needs

In a school as diverse as Stafford, it is critical that staff members are culturally competent. Our counselor and ELL staff led several trainings on this issue. We are working to establish Language Liaisons to facilitate communication between the various sub groups and the school.

We look at our student data and are beginning to track sub groups to ensure that all of our students are successful. In three of the six testing points, we have zero achievement gap demonstrated on the MSP. We hope to expand that to the other three categories. We have not tracked DIBELS scores according to ethnicity, but plan to take on that challenge this school year. Discipline data shows no gap and reflects the 25%/ 25%/25%/ 25% diversity of our population.

We have purchased and displayed flags from each of our students' heritage countries. These are a source of great pride to our families. We have a family wall where we display photos of all our families taken at night events. This has served to send a strong message to our community that this is THEIR school.

## **Technology**

We are a technology rich building. Every classroom has a SMART board, a document camera, an audio system and access through wireless internet. Every teacher has a lap top computer. We have a full Mac Lab and a mobile PC lab. Sets of netbooks are available on a smaller cart. Four of our teachers have participated in the state technology grant. We have Student Response Clicker Systems in four classrooms. A language master system is used in our Primary Adjustment classroom. We have a technology facilitator in our building as needed. She provides demonstration lessons and supports classroom teachers.

## **Parent, Family and Community Involvement**

- Stafford's parent involvement policy is attached. It was distributed at our Title One Open House the day before the school year starts.
- The school-parent compact was distributed at conferences
- The annual information meeting held to inform parents of specific Title I components was held August 31, 2011.

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- Parents are offered multiple opportunities to partner with the school in the school newsletter, at the Open Houses, at parent involvement nights and through our Parent Teacher Organization.
- Progress is reported to parents at conferences, through report cards, at informal meetings, through student journals and portfolios.
- Stafford is building capacity for parent involvement by strategically inviting all groups to participate in family/school activities, by providing translation services, and by making school and community resources available at the school.
- Strategies for family support networking include family activity nights, student celebrations, learning liaisons, and one to one outreach.
- Parent Involvement Calendar is included.

• Component #6

### Coordination of Services

#### Title I /LAP Schools

#### **COORDINATION OF SERVICES:**

Helen Stafford Elementary has a blended Title 1 /LAP model this year. Our school has 73.1% poverty and as a result we receive a Title 1 Allocation of \$201,383 and a LAP Allocation of \$35,000. Our Title 1 allocation is spent on 1.0 certificated teachers and a .5 Coach. The certificated staff member works with small groups of students focusing on prevention and identifies the skills students need to meet standard. The coach models, mentors and provides opportunities for staff to collaborate and provides them with feedback for improving instructional strategies. 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. We receive support from various district services including:

- Title I provides technical assistance and NCLB support
- Curriculum & Instruction provides professional development
- 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, 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 school-wide program goals. Through the work of the Professional Learning Community, school-wide planning and SCDM team, 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 Facilitators help teachers coordinate intervention

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instructional services for our students with high academic needs. Title I also works closely with homeless services within the district.

## **Title I School Attachments:**

### **Appendix A**

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

*A school-wide 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 HELEN STAFFORD categorical programs and basic education work together to meet the needs of all students and support our school-wide 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	Intent & Purposes
Title 1 A	\$201,383	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	\$1,742,323	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.