

School Improvement Plan
Narrative Overview

Arlington Elementary School

PROGRESS TOWARD PREVIOUS YEAR'S GOALS
2010-2011

Our students' progress in reading, as measured by the Measurement of Student Progress (MSP), demonstrated overall that we did not make Adequate Yearly Progress in this area. Students in grade three performed with 52% of students meeting standard. In fourth grade 40% of students made standard. In fifth grade 36% met standard. We are not satisfied with our current indicators of growth on the MSP. We are intentionally focusing our efforts to significantly improve our students' achievements in this area. We look to higher achievement as measured by the 2012 MSP.

In the area of mathematics, we see a significant need for improvement. Our students' performance as measured by the 2011 MSP did not meet our established targets. An emphasis on mathematics, along with many layers of support across our school district and within our school, is needed to effectively address the concerns in this area if we are to see an 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.

Fourth grade students are also tested in writing. Our scores improved this year 40% meeting standard. We are pleased with the progress in this area, but need to continue to work harder. Our science scores in fifth grade improved to about 26% meeting standard this year and we are looking forward to improvement next year as teachers have the opportunity for professional development in science instruction.

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
2011-12

Continuous Improvement Process and Stakeholder Participation

The content of this plan represents the ongoing work and goals established within our school for the 2011-2012 year. The goals and strategies in this plan represent and are influenced by the work of our staff members within grade level teams and as a part of whole staff work sessions. The specifics of our Action Plan establish 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 that we are piloting this year is creating 5th grade math and reading specialist teachers who are exceptionally competent in teaching these subjects. We have a math coach who works with teaches at all grade levels to help them with planning, instruction and data collection. Our SCDM team is working together with a renewed focus on student achievement. A Parent Involvement Associate, funded through Title 1, along with our Booster Club play an important role in recruiting volunteers and encouraging family support and participation in our school community. We believe that this change will have a positive impact on our students reaching standard in these areas.

Review of Data to Establish Improvement**Achievement**

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

Grade 3	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Reading	66.7	59.1	65.4	56.8	56.8
Mathematics	57.7	62.2	47.1	37.8	37.8

Grade 4	2007	2008	2009	2010	2010
Reading	52.2	63.6	54.4	40.9	40.0
Mathematics	39.1	25.7	23.2	20.0	27.5
Writing	39.1	44.1	16.1	57.1	40.0

Grade 5	2007	2008	2009	2010	2010
Reading	65.6	67.9	53.1	47.6	35.9
Mathematics	59.4	57.1	38.8	27.3	41.0
Science	21.9	39.3	26.5	0.0	25.6

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 3-5. Our work in this area continues with teachers coming together to review student work and ongoing formative assessments to make instructional decisions that support student learning in the classrooms and a planned framework of intervention that is provided through our Title I reading program.

In the area of Mathematics, our students' performance at all grade levels 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 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.

Attendance

(Average daily attendance K-5)

2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-2011
93.9%	93.3%	93.9%	94.1%

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, as part of our counselor’s guidance activities, 5th grade classroom visits to talk to students about middle school expectations occur after winter vacation and later in the spring middle school counselors come to our school to develop their 6th grade schedules. Towards the end of the year 5th and 6th grade teachers will exchange information regarding students who have exceptional learning needs. This year we plan to add opportunities for 5th graders to spend part of a day at the school they will be attending where they will get a feel for their new school. We also plan to build in summer activities for students that include home visits for those students who have had 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.

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 regular collaboration time, 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 Arlington 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 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 learning for the Arlington staff 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 coaches 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. We have also started work with the Compassionate Schools Initiative and a professional book study involving twenty staff members.

Highly Qualified Teachers

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. Arlington’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 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.

Para educators and other staff receive workshop pay to attend both district and school workshops. Administration and teachers work with Para educators to focus on successful student performance on the State Standards. All Para educators 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 Arlington's trainings.

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. Through the Professional Learning Community, staff has a voice. Our goal to provide a supportive learning environment includes support for staff.

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 to support teachers includes the following: Standards Based Classrooms, Assessment and using data to inform instruction, Goal Setting, Grade level instructional strategies. Teachers receive substantive feedback through formal observations, required by the district and informal observations. Staff also receives feedback as part of their Project Quality Professional Growth Plans. The Instructional coach provides ongoing support and feedback for teacher's instructional practices along with professional development.

Recognition of Non-Academic Learning

At Arlington 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. Children are offered alternative and enrichment experiences such as an indoor game room, jump rope club and art club as recess alternatives, before school band and orchestra explorations, Home Builders Association and an after school Science Club are offered. 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 Arlington 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. Having adopted the Compassionate Schools program, and providing Love and Logic training to staff, consistency exists across all classrooms and grade levels in this area and there is a pervasive attitude that all Arlington students belong to all Arlington adults. A no-tolerance approach to behaviors that violate safety and respect is combined with a supportive safety net through Love and Logic practices, as well as a 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 the MSP show that our greatest gap is between our white student population and African American students, primarily in math. 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, our counselor will continue to work with partnering agencies to assist in fulfilling needs in this area.

Technology

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

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 rich and intentional support from our Booster Club which funnels energies and resources directly back to students and learning. Additionally, we have used our Title I money to provide for family curriculum nights. This year we will have meetings where we bring parents onboard with our new math program so that they know how to help their children at home. 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 number of volunteers who regularly work with children to support learning, who help monitor progress in reading and math, and who make classroom presentations in the arts. Beyond working with families, we regularly seek out ways to partner with our greater community through such strategies as mentors from Bellarmine High School, an annual food drives to support our families in need during the holidays, back to school supply donations, and Veterans' Day presentations.

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. Title I has provided most of our professional development over the last few years. We have also benefitted from a technology grant that provided additional technology resources to the school.