

School Improvement Plan  
Narrative Overview

**Foss High School**

PROGRESS TOWARD PREVIOUS YEAR'S GOALS  
2009-10

25.1 % of our 10<sup>th</sup> grade students met standards in the area of Mathematics as measured by the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE). This was an increase of 1.1% from the previous year result of 23.7%. This was not a sufficient amount of advancement to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

67.5% of our 10<sup>th</sup> grade students met standards in the area of Reading as measured by the HSPE. Although this is an increase of 1% from the previous year result of 66.4%. This was not a sufficient amount of advancement to meet AYP.

78.7% of our 10<sup>th</sup> grade students met standards in the area of Writing as measured by the HSPE. This is a decrease in gains by .7% from the previous year result of 79.4%. This was a setback in our goal to meet AYP.

26.8% of our 10<sup>th</sup> grade students met standard in the area of Science as measured by the HSPE. This is an increase of 6.7% from the previous year result of 20.1%. This was not a sufficient amount of advancement to meet AYP.

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

2010-11

In order to implement a continuous improvement process with stakeholder participation Foss High School must identify and learn to work effectively with the diversity that makes us the unique Foss Family. An appropriately aligned curriculum that specifies strategies/formats for improving student achievement and meeting state standards must be identified by the staff as we align our curriculum with district specifications.

Teachers need common planning time as departments in order to align the curriculum appropriately and effectively. Based not only on past experience, but on current research into the concept of small schools, the proposal has been made that we will formulate team teaching environments. Each team of three teachers would implement proven strategies for presenting information, assessing retention, and reinforcing essential learning in these subject areas.

Smaller class sizes, standards based grading, as well as school-wide assessment would be valuable tools in meeting the needs of all students. The continuing implementation and refining of the on-line classes would also help students to successfully complete required academic work. The use of Accuplacer testing would assist students in knowing if they are ready for post-high school learning opportunities – and what specific academic areas they need to focus on to be appropriately prepared for college and/or the workplace.

**Review of Data to Establish Improvement**

**Achievement**

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

<b>Grade 10th</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Reading</b>	61.5%	76.8%	74.6%	66.4%	67.5%
<b>Mathematics</b>	33.9%	41.3%	26.9%	23.7%	25.1%
<b>Writing</b>	64.5%	76.1%	85%	79.4%	78.7%
<b>Science</b>	17.8%	23.2%	27.4%	20.1%	26.8%

The results from the 2010 HSPE indicate that we have made minimal gains in our Reading performance. Due to the lack of gains, we did not make adequate yearly progress, and in order to meet our goal of 100% of our 10<sup>th</sup> grade students meeting standards in Reading by 2015, we are setting our annual target at a 6.4% increase, for the next five years. We will continue to use formative assessments and implement common assessments to guide instruction.

Our scores in Writing went down a fraction and we did not make AYP. With the implementation of common assessments and the adoption of a new writing program, and common scoring rubric, our work on improving our students writing skills will continue. By 2015, we will increase the current 78.7% of 10<sup>th</sup> grade students meeting standard in writing to 100%.

Last year we began our work with the teacher development group (TDG) and although we had an increase in our math scores of 1.4%, we did not make AYP. We will need to make annual gains of 15% in order to meet our goal of 100% by 2015. We will do this with continuing with the TDG and using formative assessments to guide instruction.

**Attendance  
(Average Daily Attendance)**

<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
<b>96.73</b>	<b>96.48</b>	<b>96.26</b>

Research shows that students who attend school regularly are more successful than those who do not. Regular attendance has been linked to higher achievement, stronger connections to the school and community, lower discipline issues and an increase in students attending an institution of higher education. For this reason, even though we are not far from obtaining our goal to have 97% of our students in attendance on a daily bases, we are going to make intentional efforts to reach out to that .74%. Our plan is to implement policies and programs that monitor, encourage, and reward student attendance. We will educate our parents and students on how attendance plays an important role in creating and maintaining an achievement-focused learning community.

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

Students who struggle with school are most likely to “fall through the cracks” as they transition from one grade to the next. This is particularly true as students move from middle school to high school. The expectations for freshmen are significantly greater than those they experienced in middle school. Students who have difficulty transitioning successfully to high school typically are students who are failing two or more classes and have very little connection to the school community. Knowing this, administration, guidance counselors, coaches, and the IB coordinator introduce Foss to the incoming freshmen the second semester of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. When the freshmen arrive at Foss in August for Falcon Days, they will already know some of the staff who will help them to meet the remaining staff and ASB officers. These freshmen should have a level of connection to high school that will be grown through Falcon Team Advisory classes. At the current level, the student-teacher contact time is once per month. This will be expanded to once per week under the current schedule and twice per week using a developed hybrid schedule.

### **Characteristics of High Performing Schools**

- We, the staff at Henry Foss High School, are working toward providing all of our students with a rigorous and unique learning experience by building a strong learning community. We set high expectations for all students and will implement all advance placement and international baccalaureate classes. We want students to choose Henry Foss because they want to be part of a high achieving academic family.
- We will begin the 2011 school year in grade level teams, students and staff will engage in activities to build trust respect. Common planning periods will help build our community and allow staff member the opportunity to collaborate and open lines of communications to promote a collaborative learning community.
- To help all students be successful, every department will map and align their curriculum vertically and horizontally, and aligned with state standards. Teachers will implement best practices techniques and use formative and summative assessments to adjust instruction to student needs. Data from assessments will guide decision-making and focus on improving instructional programs.
- Professional development
- No school can survive by itself; it needs the support of the community to be successful. Round table meetings will be scheduled throughout the year to keep an open line of

communication with parents and the community. This is in addition to Open House, Optional Enrollment, Arena Conferencing, and Student Lead Conferences.

### **Professional Development Opportunities**

Currently, staff development opportunities are offered on a limited basis through the district. Foss High School teachers need to have the opportunity to be trained in the areas that are specific to our needs. In order to attain the best training possible, we would like to see the district involve nationally recognized experts in the areas we have defined as necessary for our staff to teach specifically to our unique student population. Undoubtedly, other high schools in the district would also benefit from these experts training sessions and the costs could be spread across the district.

Common expectations and techniques need to be implemented across the curriculum by the Foss staff. In order to facilitate these decisions, we need common planning time possibly in the form of regularly scheduled late arrival or early dismissal days. We also need to focus on a curriculum alignment that is district wide.

Involvement of parents/guardians, families, and the community at large should be part of the on-going process of professional development. By sharing job and career information, services and goods for enhancing appropriate student behaviors, the adults from both the school and the community will be modeling positive and professional behaviors for our young people.

### **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 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**

At Foss High School the staff is dedicated to educating the “whole child” both during and after school. Foss offers a wide variety of academic options for students in the greater Tacoma area seeking an academically challenging program with a family feel. We are the only high school in Tacoma to offer the International Baccalaureate and Air Force Junior ROTC program. Students are encouraged to take challenging classes and join clubs and activities to increase their success as life-long learners. Foss offers many programs to help with students college planning including AVID, College Bound, Upward Bound, and the College Success Foundation.

Sports and clubs are integral part of the culture at Foss High School. Every student is encouraged to be involved in an extracurricular activity of their choice.

**Fall Sports-** Girls Soccer, Girls Swimming and Diving, Girls Volleyball, Boys and Girls Cross Country, and Football

**Winter Sports-** Boys and Girls Wrestling, Boys and Girls Basketball, Boys Swimming and Diving, and Girls Bowling

**Spring Sports-** Boys Baseball, Boys Soccer, Girls Fastpitch, Boys and Girls Track, and Girls Water Polo

**Academic Clubs-** AVID, Math Team, Knowledge Bowl, Comic Club, FBLA, Sustainable Design, National Honors Society, Air Force ROTC, and Robotics

**Music/Arts Clubs-** Orchestra, Choir, Henry Foss Band, Theater Club, and Break Dancing

**Community Clubs-** Habitat for Humanity, Key Club, Agnes Foss, Youth Leading Change, Native American Student Association, French Club, and Christian Students United (CST)

**Sports Clubs-** Cheer, Basketball, Fastpitch, Volleyball, Wrestling, Football, Ping Pong, Tennis and Bowling

**Tutoring Resources:** All teachers are available before and after school by appointment. Teachers are available one-half hour before school and one-half hour after school.

**Foss Community Partnerships and Resources** – These groups have graciously offered assistance to Foss students in need of extra support: Peace Community Center, Pierce County

Library, Tacoma Youth for Christ, Central Latino, St. John Baptist Church, University of Puget Sound Community Involvement Center, NSTEP Homework Help

### **Safe and Supportive Learning Environment**

Developing a positive climate school-wide is a priority for Foss High School. We need to have a clear and shared academic focus for students and staff. We believe that part of the means to attain this goal would be to eliminate all electronics so that everyone can stop multi-tasking and concentrate on appropriate classroom teachings. Research clearly shows that learning decreases in proportion to the number of distractions/multi-tasks being attempted. With high expectations for students, teachers, administrators, and staff the learning environment will be enhanced for better and more consistent academic learning experiences. Also, in accordance with current research findings, we would like to propose a 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. school day for high school teenagers. These hours encompass teens optimal learning window.

Positive referrals and positive recognition of students is a viable means to enhance student involvement and participation in a positive learning environment. Teachers will be encouraged to call parents/guardians with positive reports about students in the classroom, hallways, lunch room, athletic fields, etc. Special awards and/or privileges would also enhance student desire for positive behavior opportunities.

As a staff, we continue to focus on professional development opportunities to enhance our skills of professionalism in utilizing the best practices for presentation, reinforcement, and retention of academic proficiencies. The staff needs to meet regularly to focus on commonality of rules, regulations, and expectations so that students are not confused or frustrated by differing ideas between classrooms and teachers. Regular and frequent common planning times are essential.

Student safety is paramount to a positive learning environment. Suggestions have been made to require all students and staff to wear picture identification as well as conforming to district directed dress codes. Frequent common assessments in the core subject areas would enhance student's concepts of focus, expectations, and required proficiency levels as they complete each grade level. Walk-around scheduling would give students more control over the classes they want and need to take each year to meet graduation requirements. The establishment of teams would ensure that each student developed a sense of belonging and significant identity as well as the security of having the same teachers from sophomore through senior year for these two essential subjects. Freshmen would have their own teams and specific teachers where they would be matched with an upper class mentor – a program designed to assist in the transition from middle to high school.

Students, staff, and parents/guardians can come together to focus on making Foss High School a positive environment where teenagers come to be educated. By working together and focusing on the best ways to attain this goal, we will succeed.

### **Equal Issues**

In 2007 people of color represented only 15% of the general population of Washington. In the same year 44% of all K-12 students in the state were of children of color. This was up from 25% in 2002. In 2007 the U.S Census reported that 18.7% of the total U.S. population spoke a language other than English at home. Over 50% of that population speaks Spanish. By the year 2050, the U.S Census estimates that White, non-Hispanic population will comprise only 50% of the population. Hispanic/Latinos will make up 25% of the U.S. population, followed by African Americans with 14.5%, Asian Americans 8%, and all other races at 5%.

These statistics reflect the changing demographics of our nation and consequently the changing demographics of our educational system. As the demographics shift so are the cultural backgrounds that students bring to the classroom environment. It is vital that teachers are aware of, familiar with and embrace students' cultural norms and expectations. More importantly, it is important that teachers are prepared to educate and relate to students from a variety of cultural backgrounds. In order to educate all students in an unbiased manner, teachers should be made aware of their own cultural identities and how it impacts their teaching and expectations. By doing so, teachers will also come to value student's cultural backgrounds and what they bring to the table as learners and participants in the classroom. OSPI provides cultural competence training via consultation and technical assistance for schools and educational systems. They support educational institutions while integrating diversity into the school's structure, systems and culture. Training is also provided to help reduce or eliminate individual and organizational bias that is often placed on students.

In addition, the College Bound (TRIO) program through the Metropolitan Development Council in Tacoma, WA is implementing training for students and teachers in Preparing Underrepresented Urban Students for Leadership on Predominantly White Campuses. The workshops for this training would include exploring identity; examining the construct of race throughout history; identifying cultural lenses and how they directly affect how we view the world; evaluating the construct of college campuses and institutions and how our students' identity and cultural lenses allow them to operate within these institutions. By identifying our students' cultural needs and helping them navigate the world they live in and the world of current dominate culture; we hope to lessen the achievement/opportunity gap for all students who attend Henry Foss High School.

## **Technology**

The instructors at Henry Foss High School will continue to focus on the implementation of the use of technology in the classroom. Currently, teachers make use of newly acquired document cameras and LCD projectors on a daily basis to enhance the quality of their lessons, and students are required to participate in numerous internet research-based projects for a variety of different disciplines. Additionally students are required to make use of classroom technology through the composition of PowerPoint presentations in all classes in order to put into practice those multi-media skills that they learn in their ninth grade digitoools class. In the near future there will be efforts made to acquire additional SMART boards for those teachers who do not currently have access to one. Furthermore there will be a continued effort to push for school-wide use of our SWIFT web pages and on-line grades. Finally, Foss recently received a \$25,000 grant form Intel

that provided the school with an additional computer lab to deal with the ever-increasing volume of demand for technological equipment.

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

Henry Foss High School extends a warm and hearty welcome to parents and members of the Foss community who would like to become active members of the “Foss Family.” For Foss to provide the best education possible, all segments of the Foss community need to be involved. Volunteers are always needed and welcome to assist in activities such as tutoring and mentoring students, providing classroom support, assisting in HSPE testing and chaperoning at student activities. The Foss business community continues to provide financial and volunteer support on a regular basis, as well as fund-raising ideas.

Parent involvement information is communicated through newsletters, phone dialers, PTSA meetings, Back to School Nights, Parent conferencing, community resource group meetings, Tacoma 360 meetings. Moving forward Henry Foss High School will continue to extend out into the community and welcome them in by providing opportunities for discourse.

### **Coordination of Services**

Henry Foss High School is a 9-12 High School in an urban setting located in Tacoma. Henry Foss serves approximately 1,200 students with 58% of the students receiving free or reduced lunch. Our annual dropout rate is 5.8% with a 77.9% on time graduation rate. There are 75 classroom teachers averaging almost 14.8 years of experience. Henry Foss is very ethnically diverse with a white population of 35%, 32% black, 1.7% American Indian, 21% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 8.9% Hispanic. In the 2008-2009 school year our 10th grade scores were, 66.4% of students met standard in reading, 23.7% met standard in math, and 79.4% met standard in writing, 20.1% met standard in science.

The main focus of any school is to improve the learning and achievement of its students, and Henry Foss High School is no exception. Henry Foss offers several different academic programs to meet the needs of students. The (IB) International Baccalaureate program at Henry Foss attracts students from all over Tacoma and also from areas outside our district. The IB program encourages students to ask questions, learn how to learn, develop a strong sense of their own identity and culture, develop the ability to communicate with and understand people from other countries and cultures. As a result, students become active learners, well rounded individuals and engaged world citizens.

Henry Foss has a Learning Assistance Program (LAP) which provides extra support to students in reading and math. Henry Foss High School continues to provide the Navigation 101 program. Through Navigation 101, students attend an advisory class that meets regularly throughout the year to develop goals, assemble a portfolio and conduct student-led conferences. This unique opportunity gives students the chance to think and reflect on their own learning and then to share those ideas with family members.

We use several measures to monitor student progress and assess student achievement; these include not only the HSPE, but also the DRP test and the six-week district math assessment. All

of the scores and data from these assessments are posted in Tacoma's new Assessment Database (TAD). The data and its accessibility allow teachers to plan instruction tailored specifically to each student's needs. Students and Parents are also able to view their own data and track their progress as well as set goals.