

School Improvement Plan
Grant Center for the Expressive Arts

Welcome to Grant Center for the Expressive Arts! Grant CEA offers a Special Education Preschool with 2 sessions, a Kindergarten/First Grade Integrated Autism Program, General Education K-5 grades and Expressive Arts specialists that include Drama, Music, Visual Arts and Dance. Our teachers have been trained in Arts Impact Education to ensure all students have the expressive arts infused in the core curriculum. Grant CEA receives additional funding through the Learning Assistance Program (LAP), to assist students with reading and math achievement. Students who matriculate from Grant CEA usually attend Mason Middle school or Jason Lee Middle School. Grant CEA is located at 1018 N. Prospect St., Tacoma, WA 98406. We welcome parent and community input on our plan. Ms. Jennifer Cooper, Grant CEA's Principal, can be reached at (253)571-5400.

Goal Statement:

We believe in creating a school learning environment that is positive, safe and democratic and that fosters mutual respect for individual differences. We believe in teaching and learning methods which promote a sense of individual well-being and which teach people to be constructive and effective contributors to the community of which they are apart.

**PROGRESS TOWARD PREVIOUS YEAR'S GOALS
2010-2011**

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 three performed with 63% of students meeting standard in reading, students in grade four performed with 69.6% of students meeting standard and students in grade five performed with 68.4% meeting standard. We did not achieve the expected results as measured on the 2011 MSP. As a professional learning community, we are studying our current indicators of growth on the MSP and are intentionally focusing our efforts to significantly improve our students' achievements in this area. We look forward to higher achievement as measured by the 2012 MSP.

In the area of Mathematics, we see a significant area of improvement needed. Our students' performance as measured by the 2011 MSP did not meet our established targets. 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 2012 MSP.

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT 2011-2012

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 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. The establishment of goal and focus areas for our school's work is also established in partnership with our SCDM and leadership teams of which includes parent and community representation.

The main themes that emerge from our comprehensive needs assessment are: math and reading student achievement, family and community involvement and supportive learning environment. The Grant CEA staff believe that our kids will be academically proficient in the core curriculum. Furthermore, we believe that we are responsible for ensuring each child meets their academic, social, and emotional potential while addressing the whole child through the expressive arts.

At Grant CEA, every student in Kindergarten through Fifth grade receives 90 minutes of core instruction in reading. Grant CEA's staff adheres to quality instruction congruent with Grade Level Expectations. Grade level teams meet weekly to monitor and adjust instruction based on data. Assessments are aligned to improve student understanding, to intervene, re-teach and inform instruction. The staff provide daily learning targets to increase the level of student engagement and purpose in daily instruction.

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	78.9	72.5	72.5	77.4	63.0
Mathematics	70.4	82.4	58.8	52.8	50.7

Grade 4	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Reading	81.4	76.3	92.2	78.2	69.6
Mathematics	62.8	49.2	49.0	50.9	42.9
Writing	51.2	57.6	58.8	58.2	57.1

Grade 5	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Reading	79.0	87.8	88.1	81.5	68.4
Mathematics	67.7	67.3	67.2	53.7	70.2
Science	24.2	53.1	56.7	37.0	59.6

The school-wide data from the 2011 MSP indicates our greatest strength is in our Reading performance. Our students' performance on the Reading portion of the 2011 MSP indicates that our students did not

make the progress goals that we had set the previous year. Our work in this area continues to be teachers collaborating 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 LAP reading program.

In the area of Mathematics, our student's performance at all grade levels either remained stagnant or increased significantly. Our instructional focus in this area will be the explicit instruction of our math curriculum as we work to increase the level of academic success in mathematics as well as student voice. 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 weekly 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.

Students are assessed throughout the year, using district and classroom based assessments in addition to state assessments. Progress towards meeting academic benchmarks is reported during Partnership Conferencing and through report cards.

Attendance

(Average daily attendance K-5)

2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
94.87%	95.02%	95.77%

Planning for Transitions (between grade levels and grades)

Research tells us that struggling students are most likely to fail their academics when transitioning from one grade level to the next. Grant CEA's school-wide program provides support to families of students who will be experiencing a significant grade transition (PK-K and 5-6). Our plan for transitioning incoming Kindergarteners include: staff meeting to discuss incoming services, Kindergarten Open House to educate families of the expectations with academics and social skills, contacting District Early Childhood Office for transition support and information. Grant CEA will have a school wide atmosphere that supports transition from Pre-School to Kindergarten, grade to grade, and 5th grade to Middle School.

Transitioning to Middle School from 5th grade to 6th grade includes working with middle schools to provide input for smooth transition of students to middle school and 5th grade students are introduced and given support for their Middle School transition through Middle School visits, MS transition meetings with Tacoma School District Middle School Administrators, and Transitional Summer School to provide extra support. Vertical teaming in K-5 grades provides academic support in Math and Reading. Staff collaborate to discuss struggling students and the effectiveness of 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 our work as educators. We know that we need to move forward 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, integrating the expressive arts in the core curriculum, and about our school 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 while maintaining our expressive arts focus. We work continually on promoting **High Levels of Collaboration and Communication**. We will address this characteristic through formal structures such as our weekly grade level collaborative meetings that are built into the school day, monthly staff meetings, and monthly arts specialists meetings. The Grant CEA staff understand the importance of infusing the expressive arts into our curriculum while maintaining high standards and expectations with instruction. Finally, **Effective School Leadership** is demonstrated by a range of staff members at Grant CEA. 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 community learning opportunities in order to bring the work back to our entire staff and lead particular ventures. In these broad settings, 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 while maintain our arts focus.

Professional Development Opportunities

Grant CEA's school wide program goals are focused on helping students meet state standards in math and reading. Our professional development on standards-based instruction is an example of our work to align curriculum, instruction and assessment with the State Standards. With a new math curriculum adoption this year, professional development activities are focused on implementing the curriculum with fidelity and incorporating the five core structures in math instruction. In addition to academic focused professional development, we will participate in Arts Impact Education through Puget Sound Educational Service District to support the infusion of the expressive arts while maintain high expectations for student achievement.

Administration and our Instructional Coach will provide on-going and embedded support and follow-up to professional development. The administration, through informal and formal observations ensures implementation in the classroom. The Math Instructional Coach will provide coaching, modeling and feedback on the use of skills and strategies.

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 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 Improvement Plan's goals with building-based optional day pay for certificated staff.

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. Grant CEA'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. Administration and teachers work with para educators to focus on successful student performance on the state standards. Ongoing professional development is offered at the district level. As an integral part of our staff, para educators are encouraged to attend Grant CEA's training.

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 have a voice. Our goal to provide a supportive learning environment includes support for staff.

Recognition of Non-Academic Learning

At Grant CEA, 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 as well as the opportunity for every staff member to teach an enrichment class. 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 Grant CEA staff is purposeful and intentional in its work to create a safe and supportive environment. This year, the staff will be involved in the implementation of using a Safe and Civil schools Matrix to support an environment where all children understand expectations. Working together with our families and community, 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 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.

Technology

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

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 with our PTA. Nurturing our strong parental involvement is an ongoing focus at Grant CEA. At Partnership Conferencing we meet with parents and students, establish academic goals and set up compacts for the year. These are then monitored on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Student academic progress is shared with parents during Partnership Conferencing in October and March. At these times academic goals are set, assessments and report cards explained, and expectations shared. Progress reports provide additional information on student progress.

Grant CEA and our PTA send monthly newsletters to all families with information about upcoming events, items of concern and opportunities for involvement. Teachers send home weekly newsletters as well as post important information on their websites. The district also has in place a communication system that allows our school to send personalized voice messages to parents to encourage parents and families to be actively involved in their children's education.

Coordination of Fiscal Services

Grant CEA Improvement Plan aligns with Tacoma's District Improvement Plan. The entire staff at Grant CEA work to support the school's and district's improvement efforts. Basic Ed, Special Ed. and LAP staff collaborate to provide instructional programs and intervention services to meet the needs of all Grant students. In addition to LAP providing technical assistance and NCLB support, the district provides the following support for schoolwide implementation: Curriculum & Instruction provides professional development, research and instructional support, purchasing supports expenditures, Human Resources facilitates staffing and monitors Highly Qualified information, Research & Evaluation provides data.

Grant CEA's LAP Specialist meets with the School Improvement Leadership team to evaluate, review, and revise the schoolwide plan. In addition, the Tacoma School District provides support for school improvement planning through the following: Curriculum & Instruction, Human Resources, Finance, Principals, and Instructional coaches. 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 Facilitators.

While categorical and basic education funds are tracked separately in Tacoma, the programs work together to meet the needs of all students and support the school wide program goals. Through the work of Professional Learning Community, school wide planning and SCDM, 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. Our Math Instructional Coach helps teachers coordinate intervention and instructional services for our students with high academic needs.

At Grant CEA we have an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) that organizes and raises additional money to support our implementation of the expressive arts through our annual auction. The funds raised are placed into our Arts Trust that is accessed by our staff to enrich the arts programs and activities for our students. The Trust also provides opportunities for our students to participate in engaging activities with Artists in Residence, Local Authors and Musicians.

