

Larchmont Elementary School

Vision:

We will succeed in reaching our full potential.

Mission:

Larchmont Elementary is a community where students, staff, and families work collectively to ensure that all students meet their full potential. Larchmont Elementary is committed to providing high academic standards and expectations while forming strong partnerships between students, staff, and families. Together we will provide a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment where all children have the opportunity to develop into responsible productive citizens.

Larchmont Elementary School was built in 1969 and remodeled in 1989. The remodel added more classrooms, a science and art lab, two developmentally handicapped classrooms, closed circuit TV and the ability to network classroom computers, as well as two computer labs, laptop carts, and document cameras. In 2001, a beautiful new addition was added to the building to house our new first through fifth grade multi-Orthopedic programs and two preschool multi-orthopedic classrooms that originated from Seward Elementary School. In 2004, the school received new Macintosh computers to replace the outdated PC computers in the computer lab. Larchmont is located in a diverse neighborhood. The grounds are beautifully landscaped and the building has large spacious classrooms and brightly lighted hallways that celebrate multicultural backgrounds and traditions

PROGRESS TOWARD PREVIOUS YEAR'S GOALS 2010-11

In the spring of 2011, Larchmont conducted a needs assessment which included a thorough review of longitudinal assessment data as shown in the Tacoma Assessment Database (TAD), comparative data among schools of like demographics in Washington State, a detailed analysis of the teaching practices used school wide and by individual teachers that reflect the best practices working with students of Larchmont Elementary demographic categories and special education students.

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 60.0% of students meeting standard in Reading. In Fourth Grade, students performed with 59.1% meeting standard in Reading. In Fifth Grade, 37.7% of the students met standard in Reading. While growth did occur in both Third and Fourth Grade, in the area of reading it declined in the Fifth Grade. 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 2012 MSP.

In the area of Mathematics, we see a significant area of improvement needed. Our student's 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 2011-12

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 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 main themes that emerged from our comprehensive needs assessment are: Reading and Math Student Achievement, Family and Community Involvement and Supportive Learning Environment and Closing the Achievement Gap. 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. 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. This ongoing process influences our work and the establishment of our goals.

The strength of our current program is the system wide focus on standards based instruction. Each teacher understands the expectation of aligning the lesson and its outcomes. The teachers work together to share data and discuss student progress and students are moved through instructional groups fluidly as their academic skills increase. This past year, several teachers have been involved with the Arts Impact program which integrates math and the arts.

The challenges of the current program are: high mobility rate, high absenteeism rate, high poverty rate, large number of McKinney-Vento and students with incarcerated parents. Larchmont is also a regional school for asthma and diabetes support. An additional area of weakness is that Larchmont staff members are applying best practices with varied results. Larchmont needs to focus on continuity of implementation of instructional practices.

Review of Data to Establish Improvement

Larchmont regularly reviews assessment data as part of waiver day, grade level meetings and professional development. Grade level meetings are designed to provide teachers opportunities to look at and share student achievement data and design instruction based on the data. Professional development is also guided by assessment data and instructional walk-throughs. Spring parent surveys provide baseline and improvement information, while attendance at conferences and parent events provide additional data.

Achievement

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

Grade 3	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Reading	61.4	66.7	53.4	55.6	60.0
Math	63.2	62.7	38.4	17.8	45.0

Grade 4	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Reading	71.7	74.0	66.0	53.6	59.1
Math	51.7	74.0	36.0	36.2	59.1

Writing	56.7	72.0	36.0	62.3	54.5
Grade 5	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Reading	57.8	73.8	77.4	60.7	37.7
Math	59.4	47.5	51.6	48.2	44.3
Science	12.5	18.0	14.5	28.6	32.8

The school-wide data from the 2011 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 2011 MSP indicates that our students made adequate yearly progress in grades 3-5. 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 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. Math Expressions curriculum, adopted by the Tacoma School District will be utilized with fidelity this school year. Students will receive 90 minutes of math instruction daily with an additional opportunity for interventions as needed. 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. (See action plan for specific intervention strategies.)

Attendance

(Average daily attendance K-5)

2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
92.4%	92.9%	93.1%	93.1%

Strategies to enhance school attendance

Larchmont staff uses several strategies to help create a sense of urgency around good student attendance. Research shows that students who do not regularly attend school do not do as well, academically. Here are a few strategies Larchmont uses to ensure students attend school regularly. Our Attendance Secretary does a daily safety call to all students’ homes that are absent to ensure parents know that they are absent, to ask for a phone call if a note has not been sent in explaining the reason for an absence and to alert parents who did not know they needed to send a note or give the school a call. Classroom teachers at Larchmont also emphasize the importance of being at school and how much academic information is lost when they are not in attendance. If absences become chronic then the Becca Bill is put into action. We have created an attendance incentive where our attendance secretary keeps track of each classroom’s attendance. We will recognize one upper and one lower primary class each month with the highest attendance and award the classes with a trophy and certificate. We will also recognize the students who have a perfect attendance each month at our monthly Spirit Assemblies. Larchmont will track our monthly attendance with a large graph in the main hallway by the office. At the end of each school year, students with perfect attendance and almost perfect attendance are recognized at our end of the year

awards assembly. Larchmont students, staff and parents all know the importance of good school attendance.

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. Larchmont’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 walking tours, program previews, parent meetings, classroom visits and collaboration between teachers. Pre-school teachers collaborate with Kindergarten teachers to support pre-school to kindergarten transitions and 5th grade staff meet with middle School counselors & staff. 5th grade students tour Baker Middle School and attend middle school transition summer school as needed. Vertical teaming in K-5 grades provides academic support in Math and Reading. Staff meets to discuss struggling students and collaborate on interventions to assure successful transitions. Kindergarten and new families to Larchmont parents are invited to an orientation on the first day of school in order to learn about how Larchmont works, information about how to help their child be more successful, and how to navigate the school system.

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.

-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. In the spring of 2011, the school-wide plan was reviewed and will be monitored and adjusted annually based on current assessment data. The School Improvement Team will meet regularly to monitor the School-wide/School Improvement Plan and adjust as needed based on current assessment data. Larchmont’s School Improvement Plan has been aligned with the Tacoma School District’s Improvement Plan (DIP). Larchmont will conduct an annual data review to evaluate the plan in order to ensure that progress is being made toward the goals of the plan.

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. Grade level meetings will be held as a building, weekly, on Wednesdays, before school from 8:15-8:45 in the library. Teachers will come prepared to meetings with appropriate data to discuss student progress and will work in these teams to develop community agreements regarding assessment decisions. Twice a month will focus on student progress and twice a month will be spent on professional development such as book studies, teaching strategies, vertical grade level sharing, or staff celebrations. A communication system to share between grade level teams and support staff will be established (i.e. weekly emails with skills that are being taught in each subject). In these teams, they look at individual and classroom assessments in order to make decisions about instructional practices. Teachers analyze various assessment tools in order to determine the needs of the student. The instruction is intentionally based on the data and is closely monitored and personalized for each student. MSP and district assessments are logged into the Tacoma Assessment Database. Annual

MSP data is reported on the School Performance Report which can be found on the state/ district/school website. In 2011-2012, all teachers will be using the online standards based report card.

Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching- Teachers will work together to use a variety of resources (TAD, DDS, DIBELS scores, Progress Monitoring in reading fluency, program assessments in both reading and math, District Math Assessments, teacher input) to identify students who are experiencing difficulty meeting standards. We will have a ninety minute reading block on instructional level and thirty minute intervention/workshop time in reading. The thirty minute intervention time will take place four days a week (Monday-Thursday). Program assessments, progress monitoring, and Diagnostic Decoding Survey will be given to all students to determine where students need extra assistance. Reading interventions will be planned based on that data. At grade level meetings, hot list students will be identified and intervention plans will be developed for students as a team. Math time will be during a 60 minute block plus an additional 10 minutes during the day. At grade level meetings, math hot list students will be identified and intervention plans will be developed to provide additional instruction time for targeted students.

Professional Development Opportunities

The Administration and Instructional Coach provide on-going and embedded support and follow-up to professional development. The administration ensures implementation of effective instructional strategies in the classroom through informal and formal observations. The coaches provide assistance, modeling and feedback on the use of instructional skills and strategies and the use of learning targets in the classroom. Coaches may video tape teachers and share strategies at meetings, or coaches or substitutes may take over a class so teachers can visit other classrooms. All staff will participate in training on what student engagement looks like and the use of learning targets with Marilyn Simpson training. At our end-of-year staff retreat, a survey to staff was utilized to find out what sort of professional development is needed (book study, student engagement, standards based, compassionate schools, CHAMPS, and math strategies) are needed.

The priorities of needs are: Reading and Math Intervention times for targeted students, a focus on the use of data for targeting and planning classroom instruction, and evidence of the 5 Dimensions of instruction monitored by walk-throughs.

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. Larchmont'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 is focused on best practices in reading and math.

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. 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. HQ Para-educators meet a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate knowledge and ability in instructing reading, mathematics and writing. Parents are informed in the Parent Handbook of their right to know their teachers and para-educators qualifications.

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

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.

Recognition of Non-Academic Learning

At Larchmont 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. In the morning before school, we offer students choices to go to breakfast, the gym to play basketball or to read in the library. The first Friday of every month, we hold a Spirit Assembly to recognize all students, Kindergarten through fifth grade, in academic and behavioral areas. We also recognize students who have written exemplar essays using “Learning for Life” curriculum. Students who have earned points in our Accelerated Reader program are also honored. In addition, a grade level, along with the school choir, performs using recorders, drums or vocals.

Safe and Supportive Learning Environment

The Larchmont 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, consistency exists across all classrooms and grade levels in this area and there is a pervasive attitude that all Larchmont students belong to all Larchmont adults. A no-tolerance approach to behaviors that violate safety and respect is combined with our anti-bullying/harassment training. We conduct school wide, and an intensive training for 3rd-5th grades using the “Get Real about Violence” curriculum. The curriculum is used for 8 weeks by the principal and school counselor; as well as a comprehensive counseling program for whole groups, small groups, and individual students. In addition, we have adopted the “Bully Blockers” anti-bullying video to train K-5 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 MSP show that our greatest gap is between our white student population low income and Special Education students in the 4th grade in the academic area of reading. Our professional development in reading/ 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 counselor will continue to work with the Tone School, McKinney Vento, and St. Leo’s Food Connection to assist in fulfilling needs in this area. In addition, we will supply ELO tutoring opportunities for grades Third-Fifth to receive support

in reading through the Read Naturally program, and math using Think Central, and Problem-solving strategies in combination with Supplemental Educational Services (SES).

Technology

Larchmont Elementary 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 lap tops and computers in every classroom, the daily use of document camera/LCD projector bundles, opportunities for word processing, and internet research for project-based learning, Larchmont is fortunate to have two computer labs with two different plat forms to work with. We have a PC and a Mac Lab where students can work on reading, math and writing skills.

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. At conferences, we meet with parents and students, establish academic goals and review compacts for the year. Along with compacts, parent policies are shared with parents at the beginning of the school year and reviewed and evaluated annually with parent input. Title I parent involvement funds have been allocated to our school to support building meaningful parent involvement activities. Parents and staff work together to develop and support parent involvement training/activities for 2011-2012.

Larchmont elementary sends home to parents and families monthly newsletters with information about upcoming events, items of concern and opportunities for involvement. Teachers send home weekly 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. This coming school year, a parent involvement component will be included in each of the curriculum committees to support the increase of parent engagement. Staff is encouraged to send personal invitations to events at school—have students write invitations, call, email and increase two-way communication in their newsletters.

To support and increase parent involvement, Larchmont staff will provide several opportunities for parents to attend academic programs. Larchmont Elementary will hold a Celebration of Learning organized by the Math and Literacy Committees, which will focus on the learning during the year in Math, Reading, Science and Writing, include a “Young Authors’ book publication, and Read Across America reading day. In addition, Larchmont will hold a "Math-Nificent" night where students and parents will learn and play Math games with their children. Larchmont will also hold its Open Annual meeting at Open House in September along with music concerts twice a year. Parents will be involved in decision-making and goal setting during conferences which are held two times a year as well as needed. Student academic progress is shared with parents during conferences in October, December and March.

Larchmont Elementary is a regional school for asthma and diabetes, with two nurses, one LPN and one RN, on site daily. Nurses and counseling staff provides support for parents with no medical coupons and connects them with other resources, as well as individual counseling for students with health issues. Larchmont partners with St. Leo’s church to offer a backpack program where families can take home a backpack filled with food for the weekend. As part of the Compassionate Schools project, Larchmont staff will be trained on how to support students and families with adverse childhood experiences.

Larchmont partners with the YMCA and sends our 5th graders to Camp Seymour for 3 days and 2 nights for Environmental Science lessons. For the past two years, the YMCA has given Larchmont grant monies so that all our students can afford to participate. In addition, Fifth Grade parents have an opportunity to chaperone at Student Achievement’s “Biz Town.”

Coordination of Fiscal Services

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, 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 instructional services for our students with high academic needs. Title I also works closely with homeless services within the district. Larchmont receives Title I funding as flow through from the school district. Our Larchmont PTA financially supports our Accelerated Reading Program leveled books and incentive rewards.

To support school wide 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, and Instructional Facilitators.