

Veterans Memorial School

School Improvement Plan

2010-2011

Last Updated: October 2010

VETERANS MEMORIAL SCHOOL

SCHOOL SITE COUNCIL

2010-2011

Principal: Uri Harel

Assistant Principal: Kelly Moss

Teachers: William Palmerini
Dale Wadsworth

Parents: Bob Slane
Trish Murphy
Denise Cadigan

COMPONENT A

Analysis of Student Performance and Achievement

After not reaching AYP for two years and being labeled a school in need of improvement, the Veterans Memorial School achieved the mathematics AYP goal in 2006-2007. In our 2007 MCAS mathematics scores, while we exceeded our aggregate and low-income target, we did not achieve AYP in our special education subgroup. We also did not reach AYP in English Language Arts.

In looking at the 2009 MCAS results, we exceed our target for English Language Arts, but fell short of making AYP in math. Consequently, we were designated as a school in Corrective Action in Mathematics. Our 2010 MCAS results were very promising, as we made AYP in both subject areas and in all subgroups. If we continue this trend in 2011, we will no longer be an identified school.

In analyzing the mathematics grade 3 MCAS data for 2010 in grade level teams, we have concluded that relative to other students in the state and district, our third graders are either on par or slightly above their peers. Our areas that still require improvement are open response items and geometry. In the language arts data, we scored lower than the state and district in language and multiple-choice items.

Relative to other students in the state, Veterans Memorial 4th graders performed better than their peers in most areas. In math, this includes patterns/algebra, geometry, data analysis, and open-response items. Our areas of weakness included measurement and short answer items. In language arts, our strengths were in language, multiple choice and open response items. We scored relatively lower in English conventions and the writing prompt.

In 5th grade, our math scores were increasing compared to the district and state averages. Students were especially weak in their performance in number sense, measurement, short answer and open response items. Relative strengths were in data analysis and geometry. In language arts, we were on par with the state and district in language and reading/literature with a higher performance in open response.

In looking at the performance trends at each grade level of the last three years, the following observations can be made. In Grade 3, our language arts performance has remained relatively stable, but has started to rise. In math there has been some increase in scores, especially in removing many students from the warning area. In Grade 4, after a dip in 2008, our language arts performance continues to increase. For the 2010 MCAS results, there is only one ISSP that needs to be completed, a large achievement.

The 2010-2011 School Improvement Plan (SIP) lists goals and objectives to improve student performance in math, to ensure reading readiness for K-3 students, ensure higher level comprehension skills in grades 4-5, to increase participation and success of special education and ELL populations in regular education curriculum, to increase parent and community involvement at the school, to increase the level of security, to continue to reduce disciplinary incidents, and increase staff morale. Steps to implement these goals are listed in the Action Plan.

COMPONENT B

Statement of Needs or Identification of Gaps in Student performance

In Language Arts, weakness is evident with the following:

- Structure of English/Language Arts

In Mathematics, weaknesses are evident with the following:

- Open response item performance
- Measurement
- Number sense and operations (Grade 5)
- Geometry (Grade 5)
- Higher level number sense
- Math vocabulary

COMPONENT C

Identify Barriers to Meeting the Needs or Closing the Gaps

After carefully reviewing and analyzing the MCAS scores, there are several factors that act as barriers in achieving our goals and often create an environment that interferes with learning. The barriers are as follows:

CLASS SIZE

During the 2010-2011 school year (and in previous years), class sizes averaged 26-28 students in grades 1-5 with the exception of grade 3 (20). This significantly impacts a classroom teacher's ability to focus on the curriculum and individualize instruction, especially since more time is taken up in classroom management. We believe that it is no coincidence that the 4th and 5th grade classes in 2006-2007, whose class sizes averaged 20 students because of the modular expansion, scored significantly higher on the mathematics MCAS. Two years ago, the two modular teachers added to reduce class size were eliminated.

LACK OF CURRICULUM UNIFORMITY

Before the 2005-2006 school year, each classroom teacher had been implementing the new Scott Foresman mathematics series in their own way. This variety exhibited itself in how lessons are taught and emphasized and how skills and content are assessed. Two years ago, we completed the development of pacing guides in grades 3-5 along with common assessments for each unit taught. Two summers ago, curriculum guides were created district-wide in all subject areas K-5. In the fall of 2008, a new updated math program (Envisions) was purchased for grades 1-5. This Summer and Fall, we began the process of updating the curriculum guides and creating common assessments across the district.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

While teachers feel we have acquired the right materials in the last few years, we are still lacking in instructional technology that is needed to implement the language arts and math programs. Netbooks have been purchased for both general education classrooms and those with disabilities, with more Smartboard technology arriving soon.

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

In the middle of 2006-2007, teachers began teaching mathematics and language arts for at least 60 minutes a day. This has continued into the 2010-2011 school year, with some teachers allocating 75 minutes for math.

TOO MUCH TO COVER, TOO LITTLE TIME

Last year, teachers found that they were not able to cover all the material assessed on the mathematics MCAS in time. Many teachers said that they did not have time to adequately cover chapters on topics such as fractions, measurement, geometry, and measurement before the test. Reports from teachers pacing guides and the technology specialist helped alleviate these burdens.

We will continue to meet to review the curriculum guides and develop appropriate pacing to our students' needs.

ACADEMIC DIVERSITY

The Veterans School serves students with a wide range of instructional needs. The percentage of students on Individualized Education Plans is 19% with approximately 12 students needing to take the MCAS-Alternate each year.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Overall, teachers feel that they need more professional training in effective practices to help promote MCAS achievement. This includes how to teach students problem-solving strategies for open response questions, differentiated instruction, and hands-on illustrations of mathematical concepts. Collins Writing has been expanded to all grade levels K-6 and this training will continue into this year. Deb Antl, a consultant, came in to model lessons for open response in math. Our HILL consultant continues to help us develop an effective core literacy program with accompanying response to intervention model.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

In the Fall of 2010, a detailed survey was given to Veterans School Families, with a 70% return rate. The overall ratings for the school were excellent, with all categories receiving between a 4 and 5 average rating on a scale of 1-5. For the most part, parents felt their students were safe and had friends at school. Parents also felt on the whole that we were doing a good job serving struggling students and those with disabilities. Areas that parents felt were a priority to focus on were improving academic achievement (by a high margin), with technology and social skills tying for 2nd and 3rd place.

COMPONENT D

Establishing Objectives

The Veterans Memorial School Improvement Council for the 2010-2011 school year has established the following objectives:

- To reach our AYP goal for mathematics instruction and be removed from the NCLB identified list
- To ensure reading readiness for all students in K-3 and higher level comprehension skills in grades 4-5
- To continue to develop in-house special education programs, increasing participation and success of special education and ELL populations in the regular education curriculum
- To increase parent and community involvement at the school in order to enrich student experiences and well-being, particularly focusing on attitudes towards math
- To increase level of security at school
- To continue to reduce disciplinary incidents and expand bullying prevention measures

ACTION PLAN #1

Student Improvement Objective: To Reach Our AYP Goal for Mathematics Instruction

Action Steps	Who is Involved	Specific Timeline	Implementation	Evaluation of Progress
Revise curriculum guides in grades K-5 and create common assessments	Classroom teachers, special education teachers, specialists	August 2010 - March 2011	Ongoing	Curriculum Guides, Common Assessments
Continue monthly grade level meetings to discuss results of common assessments and instructional techniques relevant to curriculum guides	Grade level team leaders, classroom teachers, inclusion specialists, Irene Ladd	August 2010 - June 2011	Monthly grade level meetings	By using data supplied by Irene Ladd, teachers will be able to adjust instructional techniques and focus on common lessons
Use consultant to teach open response workshop and model in class lessons	Deb Antl, Grade 3-5 teachers	October 2010 - April 2011	October, April	Ongoing open response items and common assessments
Train intervention teachers in the use of Touch Math research-based intervention	Special education, Title I teachers	January 2010-June 2011	Spring	Number of students exposed to TouchMath intervention
Stagger Title I teacher schedules to provide more after school support for struggling students in 4 th grade	Title I teachers	September 2010 – June 2011	Ongoing	Number of students receiving after school help and their growth rates as measured on Stanford SDMT

Continue Use Of FASTTMATH computer program to target students who are struggling with math facts	Computer specialist, classroom teacher	November 2010 - June 2011	Daily	Student's math facts will be strengthened
Expand <i>Mathletics</i> program to allow classroom teachers to work with struggling students before and after school	Grade 4-5 teachers, Title I director, Principal	Winter and Spring 2010, 2011	Weekly	Increase in math scores for struggling students on envisions test and MCAS according to DESE growth model

Continue reward program for student effort on MCAS test	Grades 3 – 5 teachers, MCAS test administrators, PTO	March 2011 – May 2011	After completion of MCAS test sections	Student’s effort on MCAS test will improve as demonstrated on individual rubrics
Secure funding through SBEC and LEA to provide math and MCAS preparation after school to individuals/small groups	Afterschool MCAS Tutors	January 2010 – March 2011	2 afternoons weekly	Students will be better prepared to achieve higher scores on MCAS test

ACTION PLAN #2

**Student Improvement Objective: To Ensure Reading Readiness For All Students in K – 3
and Higher Level Comprehension Skills in Grades 4 – 5**

Action Steps	Who is Involved	Specific Timeline	Implementation	Evaluation of Progress
Expand 90 minute literacy blocks in grades 1 and 2 to grades 3 and 4, including differentiated instruction and center work with 30 minutes small group intervention block built in	Classroom teachers grades K-4	August 2010 - June 2011	Daily	Increased performance on MCAS resulting in higher scores and as seen on DIBELS NEXT progress monitoring
Implement DIBELS Next testing and data meetings in grades K-5	Reading specialist, grade K-5, classroom teachers	August 2010 - June 2011	Daily	DIBELS NEXT
Expand Reading Triumphs and/or Foundations Intervention and Wilson, and LIPS program for struggling students in special education integrated and co-taught classrooms along with provision of training to teachers	Special education teachers, classroom teachers	August 2010 - June 2011	Daily	WADE, Foundations, and LIPS Assessments
Continue using LEXIA reading software in providing intervention to at-risk students	Classroom teachers	August 2010 - June 2011	Daily	LEXIA reading assessment

Continue HILL data meetings and consultations to tailor our reading program to meet individual student needs, focusing this year on consultant supporting interventionists	Reading teachers, special education teachers, classroom teachers	August 2010 - June 2011	Monthly	HILL data assessment
Full implement Accelerated Reader program to develop reading comprehension skills, serve as an additional data point, and foster a love of reading – increasing percentage of students making goal to 75%	Computer specialist, classroom teachers, administrators	August 2010 - June 2011	Daily	Accelerated Reader data assessment
Secure funding to expand summer reading intervention program	Title I, Reading Teachers	June 2011 - August 2011	Ongoing	Reinforce reading skills over the summer to increase MCAS scores
Offer Fall & Spring Workshop to Parents of Struggling Readers	Principal, Eleni Steadman (HILL)	November/April 2011	2 Sessions	DIBELS scores of at-risk students; attendance at sessions
Implement use of student writing folders and grade level FCAs	Principal, Classroom Teachers, Gary Chadwell (consultant)	September 2010- June 2011	Ongoing	MCAS scores; examination of student writing portfolios

ACTION PLAN #3

Student Improvement Objective: To Increase Participation and Success of Special Education and ELL Populations in the Regular Education Curriculum

Action Steps	Who is Involved	Specific Timeline	Implementation	Evaluation of Progress
Establish a language-based classroom to eliminate developmentally delayed classroom	Special education teachers, classroom teachers	August 2010 - June 2011	Daily	DIBELS, MCAS
Fully Implement LIPS and Foundations as Interventions	Special education teachers, reading teachers	August 2010 - June 2011	Daily	Intervention program's data used to improve strategies to increase MCAS scores; IEP Progress Reports
Use a dedicated ELL teacher for the growing population of non-English speaking students	ELL teacher	August 2010 - June 2011	3x/week	MEPA and ELL program assessments

Expand comprehensive coordinate intensive needs model based on ABA principles to 4 classrooms at Vets	Cynthia Joyce and district-wide team	June 2010 – June 2011	Ongoing	Reduction of out of district placements; progress monitoring on ABLIS assessment; monitoring of ABA data systems
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ACTION PLAN #4

**Student Improvement Objective: To Increase Parent and Community Involvement at the School
in Order to Enrich Student Experiences and Well-being**

Action Steps	Who is Involved	Specific Timeline	Implementation	Evaluation of Progress
Expand a Grades 1-5 cohort student teaching model with Gordon College	Classroom teachers, student teachers, Kelly Moss	August 2010 - June 2011	Ongoing	Number of student teachers signed up; reports of teachers; pool of candidates for openings in FY 12
Continue After school enrichment program similar to that implemented at the Lynnhurst School	Assistant Principal, stipend staff members	November 2010	Three times weekly afterschool	Number of students enrolled
Expand parent workshop offerings from last year to cover topics such as ADD, anxiety, helping students with homework, struggling readers	PTO, Administrators, Title I	November 2010 And March 2011	Five times a year	Number of parents interested and enrolled
Offer Fall Math Night to Increase Involvement and Promote Positive Attitudes Towards Math Achievement	School Council, Principal, Teachers	October 2010	1-2x/Year	Number of families attending

ACTION PLAN #5

Student Improvement Objective: To Increase Level of Security/Safety at School

Action Steps	Who is Involved	Specific Timeline	Implementation	Evaluation of Progress
Regularly monitor new security cameras that cover playground, front and back of school	Principal, Assistant Principal, custodians	August 2010 - June 2011	Ongoing	Increase safety of building and reduce vandalism
Work with Saugus Police Department to review and strengthen lockdown and evacuation drill procedures	Principal, Assistant Principal, custodians, Saugus Police	September 2010	Ongoing as necessary	Increased building safety
Create a carpool incentive plan with Safe Routes to School to reduce traffic	School Council, Administration, PTO	November 2010 - June 2011	Daily	Reduced traffic at dismissal time; numbers of walker/carpoolers
Refresh existing staff and orient new staff to emergency/lock down procedures	Principal, Assistant Principal, all staff members	September 2010	Ongoing	Increased building safety
Maintain computerized system for restricted dismissals	Principal, Assistant Principal, office staff, classroom teachers	August 2009 - June 2010	Ongoing	Increased student safety
Continue use of Walkie-Talkies for outdoor noon aides to communicate with principal in the cases of unauthorized adults on playground along with nurse and custodians	Principal, Assistant Principal, office staff, noon aides	August 2010 - June 2011	Daily	Increased building and student safety
Fully implement use of name badges for all visitors	Principal, Assistant Principal, office staff	August 2010 - June 2011	Ongoing	Increased building and student safety
Hiring a full time nurse assistant	Principal, Nurse, Superintendent	September 2010	Ongoing	Nurse referrals; monitoring of student health needs and level of service

ACTION PLAN #6

Student Improvement Objective: To Continue to Reduce Disciplinary Incidents and Implement Bullying Prevention Measures

Action Steps	Who is Involved	Specific Timeline	Implementation	Evaluation of Progress
Continue cafeteria scoring and reward system, weaning students off tangible rewards and increasing free seating rewards	Principal, Assistant Principal, noon aides	August 2010 - June 2011	Daily	Reduction of disciplinary incidents
Implement more structured Behavior Plan form when developing systems for students with behavioral issues; develop and share with all staff that work with student	All Veterans School staff	August 2010 - June 2011	Ongoing	Reduction of disciplinary incidents
Expand Youth and Recreation Program with Chris Tarrantino that focused on pro-social skills (all of grades 4 and 5)	Principal, Chris Tarrantino, Classroom Teachers	August 2010 - June 2011	Ongoing	Reduction of disciplinary incidents
Expand offerings of “things to do” for students at recess (playground equipment, organized games, legos)	Principal, PTO	August 2010 - June 2011	Daily	Reduction of disciplinary incidents
Expand Peer Proof (Campfire) program from Grade 4 only to	Principal, Peer Proof, SBEC Funding	Fall, Spring 2010-2011	Weekly	Reduction of disciplinary incidents (especially teasing and exclusion)

Grades 3-5				
Provide Parent Workshops Regarding Bullying and Internet Safety	Principal, Greg Nikolas	Spring 2010; Winter 2011	1x/Year	Reduction of bullying and internet related reports