

Section 6: Implementation of the Plan and Documentation of Results

Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the School Improvement Plan

School Name: TC Henderson Elementary School

Principal: Tony Meachum

Submitted On: Monday, November 2, 2009

I. Introduction

A. General Comments

The TCH School Improvement Team has been actively involved in providing leadership and support for the implementation of the current School Improvement Plan since its approval in October of 2007. Members of the TCH SIT meet and review progress in each of the five strategic priority areas on an ongoing basis. The priority subcommittees also meet regularly, as they work towards achieving the goals of the School Improvement Plan. These priority sub-committees also actively track, with data, our school's progress towards the attainment of the various goals.

We ended the 2008 – 2009 school year by looking at the amount of progress made towards each of the goals identified in our current 2007 – 2010 School Improvement Plan. The 2009 – 2010 school year is beginning with a continuation of this important process. Throughout this report, you will find an in-depth analysis of the progress we are making toward achieving our goals of: Producing Globally Competitive Students, Attaining Education Professionals who have 21st Century Preparation and Access to High Quality Professional Development, Promoting Healthy, Active Lifestyles Among our Students, Leadership Development, and the Implementation of 21st Century Systems.

The composition of the TC Henderson School Improvement Team changed recently due to the inclusion of new parent and Board of Education member representation. The principal, teacher representatives, instructional assistants' representatives, and support representatives remained basically the same as for the 2008 – 2009 school year. Meetings of the full School Improvement Team are held monthly. Strategic Priority Sub-Committees meet as needed, and are chaired by regular members of the School Improvement Team.

All goals and objectives remain the same for the School Improvement Plan for the 2009 – 2010 school year. However, some strategies have been eliminated from last year's course of action. Some additional strategies have already been implemented for this school year, and other strategies have been modified to more closely meet our current needs. Details follow regarding the progress made during the 2008 – 2009 school year.

In general, the School Improvement Team has made excellent progress toward meeting the goals as outlined in our current School Improvement Plan. We continue to search for effective, research-based (high yield) strategies to improve academic performance, as measured by growth and proficiency rates on the End-Of-Grade Tests.

B. Globally-Competitive Students

One of the major initiatives for the 2008 – 2009 school year in the area of promoting high student academic performance, was a school-wide focus on writing and teaching specific spelling rules. These two "points of emphasis" were implemented as a means to ensure that students would improve their writing conventions across all curricular areas.

In addition, we identified particular students who were struggling in at least one aspect of their lives - academically, personally, socially, psychologically, physically, etc. - and connected them with a volunteer mentor. This school-wide mentoring program was moderately successful and will be continued and expanded for the 2009 - 2010 school year.

In order to put children more in “charge of their learning,” we began implementing student-led conferences during the past school year. Students in grades 2 – 5 were trained and then allowed to lead their own parent/student conferences, during the 2008 – 2009 school year. In other words, students were placed in charge of their own learning, and in communicating this progress to their parents.

Other initiatives in this area that seemed to have a positive impact on student growth included: implementation of the “Mountain Math” program, expanding the utilization of our Accelerated Math program, more use of our Math and Reading Renaissance programs, expanding our use of Accelerated Reader, continuing focused instruction with Essential Questions, attendance awards for our students, implementing an after-school “Academic Coaching” program, implementing our Safety Net Plan, utilizing a school-wide Math Fact program, utilizing Corrective Reading and Reading Foundations, expanding the use of Word Walls and Marzano’s “High Yield Best Practices.”

We continued the utilization of academic coaches to provide intensive intervention for students in grades 3 – 5 during the school day and after school.

C. 21st Century Professionals

During the 2008 – 2009 school year, the major initiatives undertaken at TC, as a result of the School Improvement goals in the area of professional development, included: “Student-Led Digital Portfolio Conferencing,” Math and Reading Renaissance training, LCD Projector training, “Research-Proven Best Practices” training, on-line Writing Moodle Training, Grades 3-5 Corrective Reading training, and the beginning of Math Partners training. We also continued grade level meetings, where the topics usually centered around curriculum and student learning. As a result, we are in the growth and development stage of creating and building a true Professional Learning Community at T.C. Henderson.

In December of 2008, we implemented High Quality staff training on SRA Corrective Reading for grades 3-5 classroom teachers and support personnel. This training was implemented, beginning in February of 2009, in order to improve student performance in reading.

We have placed a special emphasis on professional development and follow-up coaching during the past school year. This was a result of our recent staff customer survey results, which indicated a real need for focused, quality professional development opportunities.

However, we still need to accomplish one of our goals in this area. We need to create one specific location on the web or in the school to post all High Quality professional development opportunities.

D. Healthy and Responsible Students

The major initiative was to promote a healthy, active lifestyle where students are encouraged to make responsible choices. The action steps taken to obtain this goal in 2008 – 2009 were: (1) Longitudinal tracking of students’ B.M.I. (Body Mass Index), (2) Providing daily physical education for every student for 40 minutes with a certified P.E. Teacher, (3) The President’s Challenge Physical Fitness tests were administered three times during the school year to track student fitness levels. (4) Before-School Intramurals was expanded during the past school year, in order for additional students to benefit from this extra physical activity. We expanded this

program to four mornings per week. (5) Students were trained to be peer mediators during the 2008 – 2009 school year in order to assist with settling disputes between other students within our school. (6) A letter from the principal was distributed last year reinforcing the importance of bringing/sending healthy snacks to school for snack or lunch.

The “Healthy Snack” program funded by the Eblen Foundation was abandoned last school year.

E. Leadership

The major initiative undertaken in this area was to improve the leadership within and outside of the school. Action steps were continued and implemented to further our initiatives here include: expansion of our school-wide mentoring program, an increase in our school’s business partnerships, an expansion of our “Coffee with Principal” events, implementation of our “Reading Buddies” program, increasing our school-wide time devoted to D.E.A.R., documentation of volunteer hours, an expansion of our Student Forums, and the delegation of school-wide duties to some of the identified “informal school leaders,” in an effort to grow our future school leaders from within.

During the past school year, we continued to notice a “real need” by a significant number of our students, who needed a positive role model and student advocate to come into their life. As a result, we collected their names, and attempted to pair them up with a volunteer mentor. This volunteer assisted his student in various areas, as needed, such as: acting like a “Big Brother,” a lunch companion, a tutor, etc. This new program was very successful, as documented by different data, both objective and subjective.

During the current school year, our staff is making a concentrated effort in making “home visits” to families, whose parents are reluctant to come to school for conferences, meetings, or just visits.

During this school year, we have created a Business Partnership Committee and a Mentoring Committee, in our attempt to increase the number of both business partners and mentors for our school/students. We anticipate both of these new committees being very successful.

F. 21st Century Systems

Employing school surveys as an indicator, our major initiative in this area, during the past school year, was to implement strategies that would make our students feel safe and secure while at school. According to the student satisfaction survey results, 88% of our students indicated that they felt safe while at school. This placed our school in last place among the county’s elementary schools for the second consecutive year. The other elementary schools reported that 93% of their students said that they felt safe while at school. Although our positive response rate increased 1% from the previous school year, much work remains to be accomplished in this area.

After having looked at the “hard data” during the 2008 – 2009 school year, as a staff, we decided what we needed to implement in order to combat this relatively “unsafe impression.” Mrs. Snow, our guidance counselor, continued our peer mediation/conflict resolution program at TC. One component of this program was to teach a group of respected students how to effectively mediate student conflicts. These mediators were then empowered to carry out their tasks, by conducting conflict resolution counseling sessions with student combatants. In addition, a school committee created school wide rules and expectations. Along with the rules, came consequences, both positive and punitive. All of this was thoroughly explained to the students by our certified staff.

During the 2008 – 2009 school year, we also conducted fire drills and lock down procedures. In addition, we conducted a variety of safety-related student classes, such as “Stranger Danger,” fire safety, and gun safety.

One addition that we are planning to make includes a preliminary survey, to be administered to students that will ask more specific questions regarding safety at our school. We want to find the areas in which our students do not feel safe. We hope this will enable us to address these areas in our current school safety plan, and implement steps that will lead to an enhanced perception of peace and safety at our school .

II. Summary of Results

A. Globally-Competitive Students

For the 2008 – 2009 school year, T.C. Henderson was recognized as a “School of Distinction with High Academic Growth.” Our E.O.G. Composite score was 84.79%. This means that 84.79% of our students in grades 3 – 5 scored at or above grade level on their E.O.G. Tests in mathematics, reading, and science in the 5th grade. In addition, we met and exceeded all of the goals as dictated by the federal “No Child Left Behind” legislation, or A.Y.P. Our overall mathematics proficiency rate for students scoring at levels III or IV rose from 77% in 2007 – 2008 to 86% in 2008 – 2009. Of course, we will continue to strive to improve on this mark. Our goal is to achieve a proficiency rate of 90% by the end of the current school year. In reading our proficiency rate increased from 67% in 2007 – 2008 to 82% in 2008 – 2009! Obviously, we will continue to work on increasing this rate to ultimately 100%. We know that this huge increase was because of several new initiatives, including our new Corrective Reading program.

In addition, during the past school year, 100% of our students in grades 3 – 5 conducted their own student-led digital portfolio conferences. In fact, many of our 2nd graders also led their own conferences during the 2008 – 2009 school year.

In terms of our student mentoring program, students who worked with a mentor increased their E.O.G. Math scores by an average of 7 points more than their non-mentored peers. They also increased their E.O.G. Reading scores by 9 points more than their non-mentored peers. Our volunteer mentors donated 1,050 hours to our students during the past school year. We are working diligently to increase the number of volunteer hours during this school year.

Also, our students who were in the Corrective Reading Program increased their E.O.G. Reading scores by an average of 4.3 points more than their peers who did not participate in the Corrective Reading program.

We have made substantial and real progress towards meeting our goals in the current School Improvement Plan. We will continue this progress until we have fully achieved all of our goals, and until we have 100% of our students at and above grade level on all of their E.O. G. tests.

B. 21st Century Professionals

As a result of the goal in our current School Improvement Plan, which states that, “every certified staff member will participate in, and complete, at least one CEU of High Quality staff development annually,” we emphasized professional development and follow-up coaching during the 2008 – 2009 school year.

As of 2009, 100% of our certified teachers in grades 3 – 5 received extensive training in digital student portfolios and student-led conferencing. This High Quality staff development was highly successful, as evidenced by the fact that 100% of our students in grades 3 – 5 conducted their own student-led digital portfolio conferences with their parents prior to the end of the 2008 – 2009 school year. This year all students in grades 2 – 5 will conduct student-led conferences.

One of the indicators used to determine our level of success is that “the annual Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey will increase to 100%.” For the area of “Staff is committed to ongoing professional development,” the percentage that agreed increased from 96% in 2007 – 2008 to

100% in 2008 – 2009. For the area, “There are adequate opportunities for professional staff development focusing on instruction,” the percentage that agreed increased from 92% in 2007 – 2008 to 96% in 2008 – 2009.

One area that still needs to be improved upon is the area, “There are adequate opportunities for professional staff development focusing on technology.” The percentage that agreed with this statement dropped from 88% in 2007 – 2008 to 79% in 2008 – 2009. We will continue to focus on offering Highly Effective staff development especially in technology.

The second indicator used to determine our level of success is an increase in the grades 3 - 5 reading and math E.O. G. test scores. In math, the percentage of students scoring at or above grade level increased from 77% in 2007 – 2008 to 86.6% in 2008 – 2009. In reading, the percentage of students scoring at or above grade level increased from 67% in 2007 – 2008 to 81% in 2008 – 2009. We know that this is a direct result of our Highly Effective professional development opportunities.

100% of all certified staff that have LCD projectors in their classrooms had been trained at the end of the 2008 – 2009 school year. We have reached our goal with 100% of those select certified staff members trained. During the 2009 – 2010 school year, we plan to train all assistants in the use of LCD projectors.

We exceeded the goal of providing every certified staff member with at least one CEU of High Quality professional development during the 2008 – 2009 school year. In fact., many of our certified staff members exceeded this goal.

As illustrated by data, our school’s plan for creating 21st Century Professionals has been very successful. All indicators show that all areas are continuing to improve. We are continuing our efforts to improve the professional staff development this year. We have plans to provide the following training this year: Partners in Math, ThinkCentral.com, the new evaluation instrument and new Teacher Standards training for all certified staff, AIMSWeb training, K-2 reading Mastery, and Proactive Technology training.

Currently we have fteachers who are National Board certified. As a result, we are encouraging other teachers at TC to also begin working towards this prestigious achievement.

C. Healthy and Responsible Students

Our goal to increase overall fitness scores showed improvement from fall 2008 to spring 2009. In the fall, we had one student achieving the Presidential Award, and we increased that number to thirteen students by the spring. In the fall we had fifteen students scoring at the National Fitness Award level, and by the spring we had increase d that number to twenty-eight students.

Students will continue to be tested three times throughout the year, and data will be utilized to evaluate our needs, based on individuals and classes as a whole.

One concern that we noted was that our BMI scores showed a slight increase last year as compared to other years, where we saw them decline throughout the school year. Compared to other schools in the county, this was not a statistically significant increase; however, only one school in the county noted a decrease in their BMI scores.

The before school intramural program continued, and had over 60 students participating in it on a bi-weekly basis. This will be expanded this year to 5 days per week, in order to accommodate even more participating students. Archery Club has been added for 4th and 5th grade students on Fridays.

Peer mediators were trained last year and additional ones will be trained again this year, in an effort to help resolve disputes amongst peers. Last year, 8 students were trained as mediators, and this year we are training 8 additional students to assist us in this arena.

Here at TCH, we also take advantage of the resources that are available through the "Center for Dialogue," assisting us in mediating attendance and chronic tardy issues. This has been most effective, as each student who has participated in this mediation, along with their parents, have significantly improved their attendance issues.

In addition, in our ongoing efforts to improve the level of physical fitness of our students, we implemented the following activities during the 2008 - 2009 school year: "Relay For Life," Fields Days, the "Mile Run Fitness" test for all of our students, etc. We will implement "Jump Rope for Heart" this school year also.

D. Leadership

Our goal for volunteer hours for TC Henderson for the 2008 - 2009 school year was 3,500, which represented an increase of 10% over the previous school year. However, in actuality, we only accrued 3,350 volunteer hours during the 2008 - 2009 school; thus, we missed our goal by 150 hours. We believe that this was the case due to the poor economy, which forced many volunteers to seek employment, thus making them unavailable to volunteer as much or as often. For the current school year, we will aim for another 10% increase in volunteer hours, for a goal of 3,685 hours.

We continue to actively seek an increase in our volunteers hours and numbers this year through our newly-created Mentoring Committee. We also expect to increase our business partnerships this school year, from a total of 11 partnerships during the 2008 - 2009 school year to 14 this year. Our Business Partnership Committee is charged with this task! In addition, we had 70 businesses to donate to our annual "May Day Festival" last May.

Our Reading Buddies program was a huge success last year. Every class and every student at TC obtained a reading buddy. We will aim for that 100% participation rate again this year.

We will continue and expand upon our "Coffee with the Principal" events this school year. During the past year, 4 such events were held, with an average of 12 parents attending each event. In our efforts to increase parent attendance at these informal gatherings, we will vary the times of these meetings. (During the 2008 - 2009 school year, each event occurred in the media center from 8:00 - 9:00 AM.) This year, we will hold events at: 8:00 AM, 12 noon, 3:00 PM, and at 7:00 PM, in order to allow folks with work schedules, etc., to be able to attend an event. We will continue to have refreshments for the participants.

Student Forums with the principal will continue this year. We have once again scheduled 6 such events with our students.

E. 21st Century Systems

According to 2008 – 2009 student customer satisfaction survey results, 88% of our students indicated that they felt safe while at school. This placed TC Henderson in last place among the four elementary schools in our district. In fact, during the past six years, TC has always been rated by its students as the least safe of the four elementary schools in Transylvania County.

In order to combat this perception, we have trained a number of students to become conflict mediators, and they have already conducted approximately 50 conflict resolution sessions with students during the 2008 – 2009 school year. We also conducted 10 fire drills and four lock downs during the 2008 – 2009 school year. Officer Thomas, our SRO, conducted 9 sessions of the following lessons to each of our 10 classes during the past school year: gun safety, fire safety, stranger danger, bus safety, etc.

Also, our number of Out-Of-School Suspensions during the 2008 – 2009 school year decreased to 0 incidents, where there were 8 for the 07 – 08 school year. Our In-School Suspensions during the 2008 – 2009 school year numbered 7 incidents, which was a dramatic decrease from the 2007 – 2008 school year, when there were 22 such incidents.

III. Reflections and Lessons Learned

School Improvement efforts were very effective in making positive change during the 2008 – 2009 school year. A consistent need is to continue to focus efforts to increase our proficiency rates in the areas of both mathematics and reading for grades 3 – 5 on End-Of-Grade tests. However, finally we have reversed our recent 6-year trend of declining E.O.G. Scores. During the past school year, 2008 – 2009, our overall proficiency rate as a school increased to 84.79% from a proficiency rate of 71.8% during the 2007 – 2008 school year. This shows a remarkable increase of (12.99) percentage points during the past year. As one can see, we have a real reason to celebrate. However, our goal for this school year is to achieve an overall school proficiency rate of at least 90%. This will enable our school to improve its standing from being designated a “School of Distinction” to a “School of Excellence.”

We also achieved the designation of “High Growth” as a school. We were one of only 3 schools in our system to achieve this status. We intend to continue that during this current school year.

Every year since its inception, TC Henderson has met and exceeded all of the dictates of A.Y.P., and we did so again last school year. Of course, we intend on doing that again this year.

Based upon data, both objective and subjective, the following initiatives decreased/improved during the 2008 – 2009 school year over the preceding year: decrease in bus referrals, decrease in out-of-school suspensions, decrease in in-school-suspensions, decrease in the number of students referred to the office, big increase in math scores, huge increase in reading scores, huge jump in science scores (we achieved the highest science scores in the district), increase in the number of business partners, decrease in the number of volunteer hours, increased utilization of the Math and Reading Renaissance Program, increased use of “Mountain Math,” increased emphasis in physical education, increased number of students participating in our before school Intramurals program, increased emphasis in healthy snacks, 100% participation in our Reading Buddies program, an increase in the number of “Coffees with the Principal,” enhancement of our Student Forum initiative, increase in implementation of our Corrective Reading program, increased utilization of manipulatives, increased planning and implementation of interdisciplinary units, increased emphasis on projects and cooperative learning units, increased utilization of technology to support the education program, increased use of “High Yield” strategies, increased emphasis and implementation of professional development opportunities at school, an increase in the number of students needing and receiving differentiated and individualized instruction, and our summer-long “Reading Program,” that was held each Monday night at TC in our media center during the summer months. During these summer reading nights, we averaged between 10 and 20 students attending, along with a guardian each session.

In conclusion, we have finally “turned the corner “ on our declining EOG scores. However, we will never be satisfied until every student reaches his or her potential.

IV. Next Steps

Our school will continue to focus our efforts on meeting the needs of each of our students. We will continue to concentrate on educating and nurturing the “whole child.” As a result, the structure and very nature of our academic coaching,, tutoring, and mentoring programs will be redefined and expanded to meet the diverse needs of our students. By utilizing data such as teacher observation, formal and informal assessments like AIMSWeb, Accelerated Math, Accelerated Reading, etc. we will be better able to differentiate each child’s education. These individualized plans are being written on student PEPs and shared with both the child and their parents. In addition, we have already begun and will continue to expand and fine-tune our use of “High Yield” strategies, flexible skilled groups, and the creation of more inter- and multi-disciplinary units.

Our staff development efforts for the school year will concentrate on: technology used to support the educational program, Reading Mastery, Proactive Parent Messaging, “Research-Proven Best Practices,” Math Partners, a book study on “Working the Work,” “ThinkCentral. Com,” and AIMSWeb training. New this year, we are offering a series of trainings to our instructional assistants, as we want them to be “educators” also, not just secretaries. This year they will receive training in the following areas: use of LED projectors, Accelerated Reader, Accelerated Math, AIMSweb, Math Partners, writing training, differentiation and individualization of instruction, remediation efforts, acceleration efforts, digital portfolios, United Streaming, Reading Mastery, etc.

Differentiation and academic rigor will continue to be key issues for all stakeholders in order for TC Henderson to once again achieve the label of “School of Excellence,” as defined by the ABC’s of North Carolina. Regular grade level meetings and peer CWTs will continue this school year. Collaborative planning will also continue and be expanded during this school year. We will also closely track the results from our AIMSWeb assessments in order to best meet the needs of our students.

Some additional strategies will be implemented/expanded/fine tuned during the current school year. They include: expansion of Vertical Articulation meetings, “Eat Smart, Move More” initiative, Energizer activities, Ultra Keys, a school-wide writing plan, grade level planning, interdisciplinary units, school-wide discipline plan and school-wide rules, class web pages, the school’s web page, teacher newsletters, our anti-bullying plan, conflict resolution initiative, Good News postcards, peer tutoring, AIMSWeb assessments, reading buddies, business partnerships, mentors, tutors, and other “High Yield” instructional/learning strategies. The following strategies will also begin this year at TCH: Jump Rope for Heart, the “Word of the Day,” etc.

The principal is sending home monthly newsletters to all parents informing them of various activities and issues, as well as progress towards our school improvement goals. These initiatives are also being communicated through teacher newsletters, class web pages, the principal’s web page, and the school’s web page. Communication efforts are also enhanced through the utilization of our Proactive Alert system and “Good News “ postcards.

In addition, an increased focus on the personalized education plan (PEP) will become an even more critical tool for building relationships with parents of students who have not met state and local standards.

At this time, we will not be amending any goals or objectives for the 2009 – 2010 school year. However, we are implementing, eliminating, and expanding certain focused initiatives and

strategies that we know will assist us as a school in meeting our school improvement goals. Most of these initiatives have been communicated at some point in this summary documentation.

We will closely “track” our ongoing data and assessment results so that we may modify our plan, goals, strategies, etc., as needed in order to best meet the needs of our students.

We have elected staff members and parent representatives for this year’s School Improvement Team already in order to have the new team in place in time to complete this summary and to help move our school forward in the future. We are very excited about the future possibilities for our school.