In Mount Vernon, the Lincoln School's "Recipe for Success" shares goals and implementation strategies for raising achievement and closing the gap.

Setting High Standards

Unconditional Commitment

Curriculum Alignment with Standards

Communication and Collaboration

Effective leadership

Staff and Student Accountability

Staff and Student Support

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Mount Vernon, Lincoln School
Study Year: 2010-11
LINCOLN SCHOOL’S RECIPE FOR SUCCESS IN RAISING ACHIEVEMENT AND CLOSING THE GAP

- The Establishment of a School Mission
  
  A commitment to educational equity and excellence by consistently acting on the belief that all students can, must, and will learn.

- Setting Goals and Maintaining High Standards to Support the School Mission

- Implementing Strategies and Putting Standards into Practice to Accomplish the School Mission

KEY INGREDIENTS

I. Effective Executive and Instructional Leadership

II. Standards-based Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

III. Professional Development and Support to Maintain Quality Teaching

IV. Parent and Community Involvement

V. Student Support Services

VI. Developing the Whole Child
I. Effective Executive and Instructional Leadership

Goals:

To clearly communicate the school's mission and goals

To facilitate a shared commitment with staff, students, and community alike

To ensure that all children receive an equal opportunity for an excellent education

To sustain a school environment that produces excitement about learning among students and staff alike

To recruit and retain quality staff

Implementation Strategies:

- Maintaining a strong visible presence and projecting a positive image and attitude on a daily basis throughout the school building

- Working collaboratively and facilitating collaborative action with staff, students, and the community

- Capitalizing on the talents and expertise of staff by delegating tasks and empowering others

- Inspiring confidence, trust, and mutual respect and producing high morale by continually recognizing and rewarding staff achievements and contributions

- Maintaining a high degree of teacher accountability through careful monitoring of curriculum, instruction, performance, and assessment on a regular basis

- Managing the physical plant to ensure a quality-learning environment that is safe, orderly, clean, attractive, and well equipped

- Continually exercising creativity in seeking and coordinating human, material, and financial resources through fund-raising events, grant writing, and partnerships with large corporations, local businesses, institutions of higher education

- Recruiting exceptional teachers, administrators, and professional support staff by networking with professional organizations, arts groups, and local universities

- Keeping abreast of current research and practice in education and enhancing personal leadership by actively participating in professional organizations
II. Standard-based Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Goals:

To ensure that instruction is aligned to the Standards, planning is appropriate to the development of each student and incorporates a variety of strategies and learning styles.

To ensure that all students will meet and/or exceed the State Learning Standards.

Implementation Strategies:

1. Developing a curriculum framework that supports the mission and goals of the school, is aligned to the Standards, and is a tool for planning instruction

2. Developing equitable and effective scheduling

3. Utilizing current and comprehensive programs in all curriculum areas

4. Monitoring the planning and delivery of instruction of all staff members by informal and formal classroom visitations by the principal throughout the school year

5. Scheduling meetings with staff to facilitate collaborative action in the development and implementation of effective teaching that leads to improved student achievement (grade level meetings, curriculum meetings, faculty meetings)

6. Providing Push-in/Pull-out academic Intervention services by specialists based on student needs

7. Providing mentoring to help staff drive instruction towards the Standards

8. Providing after-school enrichment/tutoring programs in ELA and Math for third and fourth graders to help them progress in the Standards
9. Administering formal and informal assessments to evaluate students as well as programs:

- NYS Assessments/TONYSS
- Developmental Reading Assessment (K-3)
- Portfolio Assessment
- Instructional Program Assessments
- Rubrics for Student Self-Assessment
- Diagnostic Practice Tests correlated to the NYS Standards
- Ongoing NYS Replica Testing:
  - to help drive instruction towards the Standards and monitor students' progress
  - to familiarize students with the format of the test to reduce anxiety and build confidence in their test-taking ability

10. Utilizing assessment data to make decisions and to plan for improvement:

- developing instructional policy
- directing resources and expenditures
- revising curriculum
- driving classroom instruction so that all students meet the State Learning Standards
- identifying gaps in student performance
- identifying students “at risk”
- developing academic intervention or support services
11. Implementation of a comprehensive **Balanced Literacy Program** to ensure that teachers continually engage students in a variety of literacy experiences on a daily basis in order to help them progress in the standards.

- Consisting of six major processes: Teacher Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Guided Reading, Independent Reading, Guided and Independent Writing
- Involving the scheduling of uninterrupted Literacy Blocks
- Using the Developmental Reading Assessment in the primary grades to ensure that students receive instruction and materials at their level of success
- Flexible grouping based on ability, interest, and/or choice to meet the diverse needs and developmental differences of students
- Creating classrooms that are rich literate environments which provide students with meaningful opportunities to read, write, explore, and create independently while teachers work with guided reading groups

12. Fostering a love for reading and promoting literacy by:

- Staging numerous school-wide reading incentive programs that reward students who accomplish the goals and are supported by the PTA and sponsored by large corporations and local merchants
  
  “Reading is a Gift you Give Yourself!” – December  
  “Reading is at the Heart of Everything We Do” – February  
  “Spring into Reading” – April  
  “Reading and Race Across America” – June (end-of-year major event)

- Instituting a “Book-in-a Bag Reading Program” that provides students with appropriate books, requires them to read for a minimum of 20 minutes a night, to keep a home reading record, to respond to their reading with creative or written activities, and to have parents sign-off.

- Creating a “Book Swap Shop” in the school

- Scheduling of “Celebrate Reading Days” and D.E.A.R. Time

- Instituting a Summer Reading Program accessible to parents on the District Website
III. Professional Development and Support

Goals:

To provide high quality professional development in order to keep the staff abreast of current educational practices and trends and to maintain effective teaching

To capitalize on the talents and expertise of “in-house” staff members to provide professional development in order to enhance the curriculum framework that supports the mission and goals of the school

Implementation Strategies:

A. Workshops and Curriculum Meetings held throughout the school year on a variety of topics, such as:
   - Balanced Literacy
   - Learning Centers/Flexible Grouping/Guided Reading
   - N.Y.S. Standards/Assessments
   - Curriculum Mapping
   - Sharing Best Practices (staff members presenting workshops on individual areas of expertise)

B. Mentoring Program – specialists and classroom teachers are appointed to new teachers to provide support and share expertise throughout the first year

C. Specialists as Consultants – to provide support and teaching strategies through “push-in” programs

D. Monthly Staff Meetings – to routinely address current teaching practices and programs and allow time for the sharing of ideas

E. Creation of an “on-site” Teacher Resource Center – to provide the staff with additional resources and materials that enhance the curriculum and help meet the needs of all students

F. School Visitation Days – Staff members are encouraged to visit other schools that are using new programs and techniques that foster academic excellence

G. In-Service Training through the SUNY Purchase Teacher Center

H. Access to the Internet
IV. Parent and Community Involvement

Goal:

To encourage and increase parent and community involvement in developing and supporting shared beliefs, values, mission, and goals for the school.

Implementation Strategies:

A. Parent Meetings held throughout the school year:
   - Meet and Greet Night (September)
   - Kindergarten Tea (Early Fall)
   - Parent Conference Nights (Fall/Spring)
   - Standards Meeting for Parents of Fourth Graders (Fall)
   - New Compact Meetings
   - P.T.A. Meetings (Monthly)
   - Child Study Team Meetings (As Needed)
   (Flexible conferencing time for working parents, babysitting services, and translators for non-English speaking parents will continue to be available)

B. Parent communications sent home on a regular basis:
   - Monthly Calendar of Events
   - Notices and Reminders
   (All communications are available in different languages)

C. Staff communications with parents regarding student progress:
   - Five-Week Reports
   - Phone Calls
   - Report Cards
   - Progress Reports

D. School Activities and Programs that involve parents:
   - School-wide Reading Incentive Programs
   - Science Fair
   - Volunteers in the classroom
   - Winter and Spring Musical Productions
   - Open School Week
   - Class Visitation Day
   - Winter Sing-along

E. Effective Use of the Media:
   - Use of local cable station to inform parents and community of special events
   - News coverage through press releases and onsite visits from the media to keep the community aware of the school’s mission

F. Encouraging support, donations, and sponsorships from local businesses, corporations, and private benefactors
V. Student Support Services

A. Child Study Team – consisting of school psychologist, school nurse, resource room teacher, speech pathologist, social worker, classroom teacher, parent, and other personnel pertinent to the situation meet to discuss students who are demonstrating learning difficulties. The team offers strategies for parents and teachers, as well as screening, testing, and services by school specialists.

- A 504 Accommodation Plan is developed when the child meets specific criteria, which provides accommodation specific to an individual’s educational disability.

- A list of community agencies is provided to the parent for outside support or evaluation is necessary.

- When all building level services are tried and proved to be unsuccessful, children are referred to CSE.

B. Push-in/Pull-out academic intervention services by reading, resource, and speech specialists that are congruent and involve co-planning with the classroom teachers.

C. Counseling, advisory, and support programs by school psychologists and social workers.

D. Kindergarten Screening by classroom teachers, speech pathologist and psychologist.

E. After school and lunchtime tutoring programs.

F. After school homework club.