



WAUWATOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT
•Your Educational Community•

Professional Learning Communities

School Collaboration Wednesday Reports
November/December 2008



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The Wauwatosa School District Professional Learning Community Report is published by the Communication Office. Additional copies of this report can be downloaded from the district's website at www.wauwatosaschools.org. Comments and suggestions regarding this report can be directed to:

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School Directory

The Wauwatosa School District has a neighborhood school system with nine elementary, two middle and two high schools. The district also operates a charter school, the Tosa School of Health Science & Technology. In addition, the district operates at various facilities at the Milwaukee County Medical Complex and adjacent county institutions.

East High School Nick Hughes, Principal	7500 Milwaukee Ave., 53213	(414) 773-2000
Eisenhower Elementary Kristin Bowers, Principal	11600 W. Center St., 53222	(414) 773-1100
Jefferson Elementary Tom Seidl, Principal	6927 Maple Terr., 53213	(414) 773-1200
Lincoln Elementary Dean Nemoir, Principal	1741 Wauwatosa Ave., 53213	(414) 773-1300
Longfellow Middle School Jason Galien, Principal	7600 W. North Ave., 53213	(414) 773-2400
Madison Elementary Lori Lester, Principal	9925 W. Glendale, 53225	(414) 773-1400
McKinley Elementary Mark Carter, Principal	2435 N. 89th St., 53226	(414) 773-1500
*Plank Road Programs Dave Boxill, Administrator	9501 Watertown Plank Rd., 53226	(414) 257-7128
Roosevelt Elementary Frank Calarco, Principal	2535 N. 73rd St., 53213	(414) 773-1600
Tosa School of Health Science & Technology Jenny Keats, Principal	1060 Glenview Ave., 53213	(414) 773-1900
Underwood Elementary Michael Leach, Principal	11132 W. Potter Rd., 53226	(414) 773-1700
Washington Elementary Anthony Bonds, Principal	2166 N. 68th St., 53213	(414) 773-1800
West High School Patricia Luebke, Principal	11400 W. Center St., 53222	(414) 773-3000
Whitman Middle School Jeff Keranen, Principal	11100 W. Center St., 53222	(414) 773-2600
Wilson Elementary Jenny Keats, Principal	1060 Glenview Ave., 53213	(414) 773-1900

MISSION STATEMENT

United with parents and community,
the Wauwatosa School District
delivers an outstanding education
that equips and inspires our students to
conquer their challenges now and in the future.



BELIEF STATEMENTS

- We believe all students can learn and excel.
- We believe in respecting and promoting diversity.
- We believe in continuous improvement.
- We believe that positive relationships are a foundation of successful schools.
- We believe everyone has the right to emotional and physical safety.
- We believe there is an essential unity between the community and its school district.
- We believe in excellence.

High Schools

East High School

Nick Hughes, Principal

The collaboration teams continue to meet on a weekly basis with the focus of their work revolving around the establishment of learning targets and benchmarks in the curriculum. The art department has recently created standard and benchmark documents for all courses. The department has also created a common rubric for use in the jewelry classes and has shared these documents with art teachers in the district. Other departments, like science, social studies and English, continue similar work with an emphasis on sharing the standards and benchmarks with teachers at West High School to guarantee that there is consensus across the district.

Collaborative teams are also using this time to discuss ways to improve the course offerings for students in the future. Teams continue to gather data to evaluate their individual goal related to reading and look to use the appropriate interventions and strategies in their instruction to meet their target. The World Language collaborative team has researched grade level reading materials for classes and will use these materials during the second semester to increase reading performance in the target languages.

As departments complete the standards and benchmark work, collaborative teams will start to develop and utilize common assessments within their content areas. The teams will use the data gathered from the common assessments to have further discussions about student performance and the proper use of learning interventions for the success of all students.

West High School

Patricia Luebke, Principal

Professional Learning Community (PLC) development at West High School has primarily been focused on individual department teams during the first semester. For example, the English department has been working with the district's content team to develop the necessary standards, benchmarks and curriculum to guide our English courses. The math department (which is also working on the development of common assessments), social studies and science departments are engaged in similar activities with the district's content teams along with their departmental work in the building. The world languages department has used PLC time to plan for interventions and instructional strategies, specifically in the area of reading strategies. Each department has adopted a departmental goal related to literacy and reading in their specific content area and is working together to look at student data to inform their instruction and develop strategies to address the various levels of reading within the student body.

As a building team, we continue to work at learning about PLC work, developing team norms for large group meetings and developing a statement of our core beliefs to support the mission statement that we developed last year. The combination of mission, vision and beliefs will serve as the basis for all of our PLC work, our work with students and the decisions that we make. During our most recent all-building team meeting, the faculty as a group read an article designed to assist us in reflecting on our progress to date and determine what steps we need to take next to continue the growth we've made so far.

Middle Schools

Longfellow Middle School **Jason Galien, Principal**

In this report, I want to celebrate and give recognition to the departments outside of the academic core areas. Specifically, I am going to highlight the work of our academic support areas of Personal Academic and Social Skills (PASS), School Within A School (SWIS), and physical education. As previously discussed, the journey to becoming a Professional Learning Community is the responsibility of all instructional departments. I am pleased to report hard work and dedication to a new way of working has permeated all departments. To the academic core areas: Keep up the good work and leadership you're providing to the building!

PASS and SWIS are Longfellow's primary academic support programs. In November and December, these teams worked in collaboration with house teachers to identify assessment data. The teachers in these programs finalized a rubric to monitor student progress and gather information to measure the appropriateness of the placement. The impact of these academic programs must be measured by students' performance on grades, assignment completion, and social-emotional growth. I am pleased to report that the creation of the rubric as well as information learned from performance on in-class assessments helps the teachers focus their support based upon need-not just what's routine. On our journey to becoming a professional learning community, our academic support staff will serve a vital role if we're going to be successful.

In the area of physical education, the team of teachers has done great work around the idea of common assessments. It was great to chart their journey from misconceptions, to finding a common definition, to negotiating the document and to implementation. However, the physical education department at Longfellow is doing some good work and embracing their responsibility on our journey. In fact, our team of physical education teachers collaborate to make sure the agreed upon standards and benchmarks are embedded within the assessment. They understand the notion that teacher autonomy doesn't need to be sacrificed when using common assessments.

Whitman Middle School **Jeff Keranen, Principal**

The teachers and administrators at Whitman Middle School continue to build capacity around the tenants of professional learning communities. As a team we continue to discuss content standards related to the different course offerings students choose from. We have also done some vertical teaming to share content standards across grades six, seven and eight.

In addition to content standard establishment we have begun to learn about common assessments and how they can impact student learning. As our content standards are developed assessments related to them will be our next step. Again, building capacity within our building related to assessment has been a critical piece of Professional Learning Communities.

As teams we have also looked at how assessment tools can help impact instruction. Data from MAPS testing and WKCE analysis is taking place on a regular basis. We have been reviewing data from assessment tools to guide instruction to increase student learning. Our teams have been concentrating on reading data to develop instructional strategies to improve reading within our building.

Elementary Schools

Eisenhower Elementary **Kristin Bowers, Principal**

The staff at Eisenhower School continues to use the early release time on Wednesdays to increase and support student learning. Staff used the time during November and December to analyze student data, share strategies for differentiating instruction, gathering new materials, revising assessments and rubrics, developing interventions and analyzing intervention results. Specific activities include:

- JK and SK continued to share instructional strategies used during Jolly Phonics, specifically using Jolly Phonics during journal writing time. Time was also used to share differentiation techniques to assist struggling learners. Teachers analyzed the Phonemic Awareness results, identified children in need and planned future interventions.
- First grade discussed the Units of Study book set by Lucy Caulkins and its correlation to Growing Readers. They were able to pinpoint learning targets to support mini-lessons taught through the book. Time was also used to learn how to use Earobics and analyze which students are in need of the intervention.
- Second grade designed lessons using the SMART board to assist in the area of literacy. Time was spent comparing student work and strategies were formulated to assist struggling learners.
- Third grade reviewed a resource book on building fluency and designed a writing project. Time was also spent sharing instructional strategies from an Everyday Math 3 workshop.
- Fourth grade modified its initial rubric to more accurately reflect the outcomes expected in the students' vocabulary notebooks. Weekly student vocabulary workbooks and an assessment page were created.
- Fifth grade wrote and discussed how to use pre-assessments before units and how to reassess if necessary afterward. Interventions were discussed, specifically who is receiving them, what are the current results of the interventions and what are some possible future interventions.
- Several grade levels reviewed and analyzed MAPs test results and identified areas of concern. Flexible grouping took place to plan for upcoming math units.
- All staff members were also provided with basic and advanced trainings on the use of the SMART board as an instructional tool to support student learning.

Jefferson Elementary **Tom Seidl, Principal**

The implementation of early release Wednesdays continues to provide consistent time for teachers and staff to focus on student learning at Jefferson School. Here is a sampling of what Jefferson staff has been working on in November and December:

- Intervention strategies for specific students.
- Incorporating services of specialists (Speech, Special Education, etc.) within the classroom.
- Working on addressing student deficiencies with math facts.
- Restructuring reading guided reading groups to match instructional levels.
- Reviewing student reading levels and worked on adaptations to ensure success in a biography unit.

We feel we are seeing improvement in student response and participation in the classroom. The conscious and continuous review of students' needs and learning styles will help ensure higher student achievement at Jefferson.

Lincoln Elementary
Dean Nemoir, Principal

The staff at Lincoln Elementary School continues to find the collaboration time on Wednesday afternoons to be invaluable time. It gives us time to focus all of our efforts on student achievement. Our collaboration time in November and December has been used to:

•Gain a better understanding of the knowledge and skills needed to “analyze text” on the WKCE. Staff identified the types of thinking readers engage in as they analyze both literary and informational texts

- Developed better read alouds, so students will be more engaged
- Discussed progress made on grade level goals and shared ways to make all students successful
- Planned interventions for struggling students
- Teachers collaborate and develop common curriculum
- Teachers create common formative assessments.

Lincoln will continue to use this time to focus on student achievement. Our number one goal is to have all students succeed.

Madison Elementary
Lori Lester, Principal

Our collaborative teams have been focused on our SMART goal for reading and our SMART goal for math on Wednesdays. We have worked on collaboratively scoring the district writing samples and constructed response items for mathematics. We have worked in vertical teams to assess the strengths and weaknesses of student work in reading, math and our instruction in all areas. We have involved the entire staff in our scoring and analyzing of student work on the first Wednesday of the month. This has been extremely beneficial for us as it has provided insight across the disciplines as it pertains to student learning. It is especially beneficial for the staff to have this time together to plan the next steps for instruction and interventions so we can have a positive impact student learning.

We continue to focus our discussions around the Four DuFour questions:

What is it we want students to learn?

Ie: The standard, benchmark, essential learning

How will we know when they have learned it?

Ie: Assessments, collaboratively scoring items

What will we do if they have not learned it?

Ie: Interventions, strategies, problem solving

How will we respond when some students have clearly achieved the intended outcomes?

Ie: Curricular extensions, compacted learning

Professional Learning Community Wednesdays are extremely beneficial for the students at Madison School because it allows the staff focused time to work on specific goals for student learning.

McKinley Elementary
Mark Carter, Principal

McKinley has continued to use its collaboration Wednesdays to grow and develop the tenants of a true professional learning community. During the past few weeks our instructional teams (grade level teams) have used the valuable collaboration time to learn more about the different learning styles of our students. Our areas of focus were:

- Analyzing/Interpreting data from our common formative assessments in reading to develop grade level action plans that will promote student learning in the area of evaluating and extending text (McKinley Building Goal).
- Developing instructional interventions for struggling learners in literacy and math.
- Effective use of district level reading intervention strategies.
- Creating daily instructional strategies that are based on best practices to make learning relevant for every student.
- Developing common grade level expectations for students in all areas of the curriculum. Planning/creating common assessments for future measurement of student growth in targeted reading areas.

As a learning community we plan on focusing more time and effort in areas that pertain to differentiation of instruction and using data to drive instruction. Effective utilization of these techniques will enable us to answer the questions that all professional learning communities must answer: What do we want students to learn? How will we know when they've learned it? What do we do we they don't learn? What do we do when they've already learned it?

Roosevelt Elementary
Frank Calarco, Principal

The Roosevelt Learning Community continues to make great use of collaboration Wednesdays. Our focus continues to be two-fold: use the time for staff development and for collaborative teams to focus on their action plans based on a reading goal. Here are some of the ways we have used this valuable time:

- As a school we reviewed and updated our school action plan to improve the reading skills of our students.
- Introduced a portfolio that we will use for our striving students. This portfolio was developed by a team of teachers here at Roosevelt.
- Staff development was provided on the use of Learning Goals/Targets.
- Second thru fifth grade teacher and EEN staff received more training on MAP testing data and how to use this to inform instruction.
- A focus on how we actually talk to children and the words we use. As a staff we read, *The Power of our Words*, by Paula Denton. There were 5 main points that really hit home with the staff: Be direct, Convey Faith in Student's Abilities and Intentions, Focus on Actions, Not Abstractions, Keep it Brief, and Know when to be Silent.
- Grade level teams created common formative assessments and administered them to their students. The data was then analyzed by grade level teams and next steps were put in place.

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Roosevelt Elementary, continued

- December was spent looking at standards: both the Professional Teacher Standards and the DPI Standards for what children need to know in Math and Comm. Arts. Teachers used these documents to self reflect on their practice and make sure that all of their goals were aligned with state standards and frameworks.

Grade level teams also spent time specifically looking at how they used their intervention/extension times on a weekly basis.

Overall Collaborative Wednesdays have been an incredible way for all the members of the Roosevelt staff to improve their practice, focus on student learning, and strategically plan for student improvement in the area of reading. Please feel free to check out the Roosevelt Elementary School website for a more detailed summary.

Underwood Elementary
Mike Leach, Principal

November 2008

Our staff examined our current Response to Intervention (RTI) awareness, completed and assessment of our current understanding of RTI. Staff will organize a committee of RTI persons willing to explore the implication and applications of this evaluation model for Underwood and for the larger context of Wauwatosa. We examined Tier I practices when a child “does not get it” in the classroom (for all strugglers). We examined our Math Matrix Data on every child. This compilation of data has helped to determine progress of students and how they are handling our Pre and Post Test structure in the area of mathematics secure skills.

Junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten teachers went to visit Roosevelt Elementary school and worked on ideas for obtaining language activities to achieve some of their action steps. First and second grade teachers worked to analyze student achievement in math and broke down item by item the areas of weakness per unit to isolate skills for improvement with our learning coordinator.

Third thru fifth grade staff worked with our Title One consultant to assess what a math lesson looks like, length of activities, intervention areas within a lesson and developed strategies of improving on student engagement.

Special Education staff worked on supporting classroom teachers in developing accommodations for students and the groups set a winter SMART goal to examine interventions based on priority.

December 2008

Our whole school learned about Formative Assessment from three teachers in our building who attended the Solution Tree Conference in November. This knowledge is being used to start conversations about the greater need for formative assessment and use of assessment for learning. The discussion that ensued will be used to alter how we intend to flexibly group students across grade levels in the future.

JK and SK teachers reflected on site visit and developed implementation plan for the strategies learned at last month’s visit. They adjusted action steps to include monitoring of the Everyday Math Website users. Their goal is to get students online to play extension and remediation math games for learning.

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Underwood Elementary, continued

First and second grade discussed literacy needs in their classroom with the reading specialist and has set up interventions for students with our Literacy Aide.

Third thru fifth grade has continued work with our math coach and several staff have attended the district level math training and shared some of the things that they learned about good math instruction and learning. Special Education team members discussed the research around social stories in a web discussion format.

Washington Elementary
Anthony Bonds, Principal

Early Release Day Wednesdays have truly been invaluable. Teachers continue to meet in grade level collaborative teams to further their shared grade level goals in literacy or mathematics. Below are some examples of our third grade teams' collaborative work and discussions:

November 5 - The collaborative team developed a constructive response assessment for evaluating informational text responses.

December 3 - The grade level team discussed learning targets and clarified teaching strategies for upcoming nonfiction readings. They also checked curriculum for pacing in reading and math.

Wilson Elementary and Tosa School of Health Science & Technology
Jenny Keats, Principal

At Wilson and TSHST, grade level teams have expanded their collaboration to create vertical teaming, or teaming between grade levels. These discussions have made a direct impact on student learning. First and second grade teachers have organized block scheduling for reading and math so they may flexibly group students across the grade levels, providing instruction more closely matching student

Our learning communities have expanded to include first and second grade teachers and charter school teachers who are studying the Six Traits writing program as part of their professional development. The Six Trait program identifies common threads in the writing process dating back to research from as early as 1974 and divides them into specific aspects, or traits. According to Vicki Spandel, author of *Creating Young Writers: Using the Six Traits to enrich Writing Process in Primary Classrooms* (2004), these traits are identified as: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. It cannot be overly emphasized it is the meaning behind each trait, and not the terminology identifying it, that is important.

The concluding outcome to our collaborative planning time in 2008 furthered our common literacy goal. The intermediate grades have identified two state "power" standards to guide their instructional focus. They are as follows:

A.4.1 Use effective reading strategies to achieve student purposes in reading.

- Use a variety of strategies and word recognition skills, including reading, finding context clues, applying knowledge of letter-sound relationships, and analyzing word structures

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Wilson Elementary and Tosa School of Health Science & Technology, continued

- Infer the meaning of unfamiliar words in the context of a passage by examining known words, phrases and structures
- Read aloud with age-appropriate fluency, accuracy, and expression
- Identify a purpose for reading, such as gaining information, learning about viewpoint, and appreciating literature.

A.4.2 Read, interpret, and critically analyze literature.

- Recognize and recall elements and details of story structure, such as sequence of events, character, plot, and setting, in order to reflect on meaning
- Extend the literal meaning of a text by making inferences, and evaluate the significance and validity of texts in light of prior knowledge and experience.

The faculty plans to use Wednesday afternoons in January 2009 to assess our progress toward our goals. If our goals have been met, we will set new goals and continue the process of examining student work, and improving instruction and student achievement.



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