

Zionsville Community Schools

School: Zionsville West Middle School

Address: 5565 South 700 East

City/State/Zip: Whitestown, Indiana 46075

Phone: 317.873.1240

Corporation: # 0630

School: # 0510

Grades: P, 5-8

Enrollment: 56 (P), 973 (5-8), 1029 (P, 5-8)

Zionsville West Middle School Improvement Plan
2016-2018

School Improvement Team

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Dr. Scott Robison, Superintendent
Mrs. Shari Alexander-Richie, President, Board of Education
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Committee Members

Julie Breuninger, Counselor
Liz Ferrand, Teacher
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Jeff Zurawski, Teacher

1. Introduction

Zionsville West Middle School (ZWMS) opened in 2005 serving fifth grade students and has grown to a comprehensive 5-8 middle school. As one of Zionsville Community Schools' newer campuses, ZWMS serves the western area of the corporation fed by Eagle, Boone Meadow and Stonegate Elementaries. The framework for the ZWMS continuous improvement plan is based on the trend data of Zionsville West Middle School and our three feeder schools.

Zionsville West Middle School serves approximately 973 students in grades five through eight and 55 in Preschool. The attendance rate for 2015-16 was 97.01%. Zionsville, located in Boone County on the northwest side of Indianapolis, is a growing community that two years ago voted to consolidate with all of Eagle and Union Townships. The current population of Eagle and Union Township is approximately 16,000 people. The average household consists of 2.9 people. The socio-economic makeup of the Zionsville community is comprised primarily of middle to upper income families. There is little cultural diversity in the community. Approximately 15% (14.5% of ZW middle school students, 23% of ZW preschool students) of students receive special education services in 2016-17.

Zionsville West Middle School operates in a rigorous academic environment with a focus on developing basic skills, thinking skills, and 21st century skills. Students take seven classes per day including science, math, social studies, and language arts within their team environment. Fifth grade students are offered a daily music class (band, orchestra or chorus) and they also receive instruction in four nine-week exploratory courses: physical education, health, research and art. These offerings continue in sixth grade. Seventh and eighth grade students are offered a world language class such as French, Mandarin or Spanish. Students who do not take a world language take a supplemental language arts or math class. All seventh and eighth grade students are enrolled in a daily fine arts class (band, orchestra, chorus, or art), and receive instruction in two of three semester-long exploratory courses. All 7/8 students take physical education and health for a semester, and can choose between Art/Computer Skills and Project Lead the Way/Computer Skills for the other semester of Exploratory study.

Zionsville West Middle School students participate in the ISTEP+ test. Zionsville West MS has been an A-rated school since the inception of the letter grade system of school accountability in Indiana. Additionally, all students participate in Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA). The NWEA assesses student progress in mastering basic skills in math, reading and language usage. The data is used to determine whether an individual student or an entire grade level is making satisfactory academic progress.

2. Statement of School Mission, Vision, Beliefs

Vision

Each ZWMS student is prepared to create a successful and productive future within the world community.

Mission

ZWMS provides a customized 21st century learning experience that insures maximum student growth leading to productive citizenship in the world community.

Beliefs

- a) Students act honestly, respectfully and responsibly.
- b) Interdisciplinary curricular activities exist in a teaming environment.
- c) School-wide policy on student expectations is presented, explained and enforced.
- d) Zionsville West Middle School staff recognizes the importance of modeling life-long learning to all students in grades five through eight.
- e) Visionary, enthusiastic, and ethical staff demonstrates visible, strong educational leadership.
- f) Qualified personnel fulfill the school's goals. Teachers are certified in grade level, subject area, and/or specialty.
- g) All staff members are regularly evaluated in a fair, systematic procedure that includes establishing personal and classroom goals that support the school's mission.
- h) Student-centered goals focus on academic learning and are evidenced by a challenging curriculum.
- i) Opportunities for fine arts are provided in the curriculum and are highly valued.
- j) State-of-the-art technology, integrated into the curriculum, is used as an educational tool.
- k) Library media services exceed accreditation recommendations, are fully automated, and are used proficiently by students and staff.
- l) Teachers actively monitor student performance and give feedback to students and parents. The professional staff holds regularly scheduled conferences and often communicates with parents regarding student progress.
- m) Placement and grouping practices are flexible and determined by students' needs.
- n) Special education and other related services, under Article VII and Section 504, are provided following the RTI model through inclusion, full or part-time assistance by the resource staff, and other programs determined by students' Individualized Educational Plans (IEP's).
- o) Extra-curricular opportunities for fine arts, athletics, academics, and other student interests are provided. These are gender equitable.
- p) Zionsville West Middle School is state accredited.
- q) All students can pass the ISTEP+ state examination as a minimum demonstration of mastery of basic skills.
- r) Zionsville West Middle School will achieve Four Star School status with attendance rate expected to exceed 97%.
- s) A positive climate for learning and mutual respect among all groups within the school should be present.
- t) School/Community interactions increase in both the number of activities and participants. These programs include school/business partnerships, booster clubs, PTO, and other volunteer programs.

3. Summary of Data

Zionsville West Middle School continues to achieve at high levels on the majority of metrics as reported in Indiana's A-F rating. Further study of disaggregated ISTEP+, NWEA and local assessment data provides insight into relative strengths and weaknesses that can be used to focus future school improvement planning.

Analysis of Student Achievement

The analysis presented here reflects the student achievement trends of Zionsville West Middle School over the past four years. The data analyzed for each achievement area included performance data from the current year's ISTEP+. Using longitudinal data of actual student performance compared to predicted performance, and corroborated with data from Northwest Educational Association (NWEA) online testing, the following conclusions were drawn:

In general, in all content areas over the past four years, the percent of girls passing the content standards is consistently higher than the percent of boys passing the standards.

Language Arts: With a pass rate 5.71% below the district average, the ISTEP pass rate in 7th grade language arts is a relative weakness. Analyzing data over the last several years, language conventions appears to be a specific area of relative weakness in grades 5-8.

Mathematics: With a pass rate 10.14% below the district average, the ISTEP pass rate in 7th grade math is a relative weakness. Analyzing data over the last several years, measurement and data analysis/probability are areas of relative weakness.

Attendance: Average attendance (97.01%) at Zionsville West Middle School is above the state average. The administration, staff, and parents work together to maintain an engaging environment which encourages this exceptional school attendance rate.

4. Conclusions

Analysis of Curriculum and Curriculum Standard Areas

Zionsville Community Schools are in transition in our process for K-12 alignment of standards and curriculum. In our current process, the existing scope and sequence documents are reviewed and aligned with master curriculum maps one year prior to the textbook adoption year that has been identified for the Indiana textbook adoption cycle. Copies of the Indiana Academic Standards and the local curriculum are maintained electronically on the state and school district websites. Curriculum Maps are available for each subject area at www.zcs.k12.in.us/academics/academic/scope.html. Using aggregate ISTEP+ data as the foundation for our curriculum audit, the review of drilldown data indicates student success in all grades and standards. Our high overall ISTEP+ pass rate and meeting the state expected scores are both cited by parents and students as evidence of their support of our local curriculum. In our committee discussions, developing and implementing local formative assessments and cross-curricular planning were highlighted as areas for on-going professional development.

Analysis of Instruction, Assessment and Evaluation

Currently we use an integrated professional growth plan that encourages administrative coaching and individual reflection as the primary tool to guide instructional techniques. This process has produced pockets of instructional excellence across all of our staff. In our committee discussions, we identified the need for additional teacher interaction time to share, collaborate, and improve effective practices across all classrooms. We also discussed the need to collect and analyze additional instructional practice data to help inform decisions related to RTI, areas identified for improvement in the literacy audit, and the implementation of 21st century skills instruction.

Analysis of Technology as a Learning Tool

Technology resources are available to students and teachers at ZWMS. All learners have access to the seven computer labs, multimedia equipment, MIMIOs/Brightlinks, document cameras and video editing equipment. Additionally, teachers actively seek to integrate technology into the curriculum in an effort to enhance both the content of the subject and the acquisition of 21st century skills. In the 2008-09 school year, we implemented a 21st century skills pilot with the deployment of one hundred student laptops with a sixth grade team. Since then, all our students in grades five through eight are in a 1:1 environment.

Analysis of Climate and Parent and Community Influence

The climate of Zionsville West Middle School is one which embraces the culture of continuous improvement and achievement. The building supports quality teaching and learning experiences with state of the art facilities, infrastructure, and technology.

Parents are an integral component of the school's success. They are decisively engaged in standing and volunteer committees in an effort to maintain open communication and unified direction. The faculty and parents work in partnership to support the achievement of each child. The willingness of parents to participate in these decision-making processes has had a significant impact upon the students' high level of achievement. Active PTO and parent volunteer programs exist and are considered integral to student success.

Positive student behavior and attitude toward learning are key elements to the success of ZWMS students. The need for minimal expulsions and out-of-school suspensions are indicative of a safe and disciplined learning environment.

In our committee discussions, it was agreed that we need to continue to offer opportunities that foster acceptance.

Analysis of Leadership and Communication

Our effective school communication plan begins with parent/teacher interactions. All of the teachers at ZWMS maintain a classroom website with information on activities, assignments and instruction that is occurring their classrooms. Through effective use of technology tools such as MISi, parents and teachers are also able to access daily data such as grades, standardized test scores, disciplinary records, and attendance information. In the school wide communication plan, other channels such as the PTO newsletter, staff handbook, weekly parent email update, standing committee meetings, and parent nights are indicative of the effort to reach all stakeholders.

In our committee discussions, three areas identified as needing improvement are time for vertical articulation, recognition in the local press, and opportunities to promote student leadership through internal public service announcements.

Analysis of Professional Development

Our professional development starts with our New Teacher Academy where the ZCS teaching standards are explained. All new teachers are provided with a mentor to assist them throughout the year along with continued new teacher meetings. We have corporation wide staff development opportunities focused on linking our K-12 instruction. Within our building, administration along with the school improvement committee has been active in planning activities targeting areas identified as needing further development by group reflection, assessment results, and evaluation data.

Along with the professional growth needs identified in the other analysis areas, topics related to special education, the use of instructional assistants, and the implementation of RTI were noted for continued professional development.

Cultural Competencies

The ZWMS community understands that the learners within this setting must master cultural competency in order to succeed in today's world. They understand the importance of the five essential elements that contribute to a system's ability to become more culturally competent. The system should (1) value diversity, (2) have the capacity for cultural self-assessment, (3) be conscious of the "dynamics" inherent when cultures interact, (4) institutionalize cultural knowledge, and (5) reflect an understanding of diversity between and within cultures. Cultural competencies should be reflected in the curriculum, the educational delivery system, and the organization itself through attitudes, structures, policies, and service delivery.

5. School Improvement Goal & Strategies

Goal 1: Students will excel in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in a language and print rich environment while participating in a variety of interactive experiences.

Data Statements/Sources

- On 2016 ISTEP+, ZWMS students in grade 5 demonstrated mastery of content in the standard Reading: literature - vocabulary at a rate of 78.48%.
- On 2016 ISTEP+, ZWMS students in grade 7 demonstrated mastery of content in the standard Writing: Conventions of Standard English at a rate of 79.82%.
- Language Arts skills as identified in the targeted standard/area of weakness through teacher analysis of other assessment data (especially NWEA) and dialog regarding such data.
- Best Practices in Literacy Instruction 3rd edition by Gambrell, Malloy, and Mazzoni

Strategies and Interventions

- Communicate language arts vision, beliefs and comprehensive framework
- Provide professional development in all components of a balanced literacy program
- Support the development of classroom libraries
- Establish a common framework of assessments and use of resulting data
- Use assessment data to identify student learning needs, guide instruction, monitor student progress and continuously adjust instruction to meet students' needs
- Foster activities in authentic contexts for applying their reading and writing skills
- Identify the core, subject-specific vocabulary students need to master at each grade level and for each content area
- Identify the core assessment-specific vocabulary students need to master at each grade level
- Increase reading volume and exposure to print – including the use of strategies like daily SSR, Readers/Writers Workshop, etc.
- Foster student ownership for and engagement in reading by giving students more choice in what, when and how they read
- Replace less engaging activities during literacy instruction with activities that require students to read and write for authentic purpose
- Maximize the role of K-12 media specialists to include instruction, informational literacy skills, integration of technology and information literacy instruction
- Provide tier 2 and tier 3 instructional interventions
- Imbed 21st century skills in the instruction of language arts

Goal 2: Students excel in their mastery of number sense and computation while applying these skills in engaging and authentic activities

Data Statements/Sources

- On 2016 ISTEP+, ZWMS students in grade 5 demonstrated mastery of content in the standard Number Sense at a rate of 69.75%.
- On 2016 ISTEP+, ZWMS students in grade 5 demonstrated mastery of content in the standard Computation at a rate of 63.45%.
- On 2016 ISTEP+, ZWMS students in grade 7 demonstrated mastery of content in the standard Number Sense - Computation at a rate of 67.98%.
- Math skills as identified in the targeted standard/area of weakness through teacher analysis of other assessment data (especially NWEA) and dialog regarding such data.

Strategies and Interventions

- Communicate mathematical understanding, knowledge, skills, vision, beliefs and comprehensive framework
- Provide professional development in all components of a balanced mathematics instruction
- Establish a common framework of assessments and use of resulting data
- Use assessment data to identify student learning needs, guide instruction, monitor student progress and continuously adjust instruction to meet students' needs
- Provide students with practical applications for applying their mathematic skills
- Identify the core, subject-specific vocabulary students need to master at each grade level and for each content area
- Replace less engaging activities with activities that require students to apply mathematics for authentic purpose
- Provide tier 2 and tier 3 instructional interventions
- Imbed 21st century skills in the instruction of math

6. Benchmarks

- The percentage of students in grades 5-8 who do not meet typical growth in reading on NWEA will not exceed 25%.
- The percentage of students in grades 5-8 who do not meet typical growth in math on NWEA will not exceed 25%.

7. Professional Development

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

Goal 1: Students will excel in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in a language and print rich environment while participating in a variety of interactive experiences.

Goal 2: Students excel in their mastery of number sense and computation while applying these skills in engaging and authentic activities.

Elements of an Effective Professional Development Program

- Has the goal of improving student learning at the heart of every school endeavor
- Fosters a deepening of subject matter knowledge, a greater understanding of learning, and a greater appreciation of students' needs
- Helps teachers and other staff meet the needs of students who learn in different ways and who come from diverse cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds
- Provides adequate time for inquiry, reflection, and mentoring, and is an important part of the normal working day
- Is rigorous, sustained, and adequate to the long-term change of practice
- Is directed toward teachers' intellectual development and leadership
- Is teacher designed and directed, incorporates the best principles of adult learning, and involves shared decisions designed to improve the school
- Balances individual priorities with school and district needs
- Makes best use of new technologies
- Is site-based and supportive of a clearly articulated vision for students

The above bulleted points taken from:

Professional Learning Communities at Work

Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement

Pages 260-61

Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker

Statutes to be waived: None anticipated.

8. Three-year Timeline for Implementation, Review, and Revision.

Following the principles outlined in Section 7, we will create ongoing professional development activities utilizing the professional learning communities' framework with a focus on 21st century skills, literacy, and assessment for learning as applied to our two goals:

Goal 1: Students will excel in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in a language and print rich environment while participating in a variety of interactive experiences.

Goal 2: Students excel in their mastery of number sense and computation while applying these skills in engaging and authentic activities

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Goal	Implementation Date	Review Date
Teaming Time PLCs	Began in August 2011	Annual Review Continues- May of each year
Curriculum Develop and implement local formative assessments and cross-curricular planning for on-going professional development		
Curriculum Standard Areas Provide adequate time for inquiry, reflection, and mentoring for cross curricular planning		
Instruction Collect and analyze additional instructional practice data to help inform decisions related to RTI, areas identified for improvement in the literacy audit, and the implementation of 21st century skills instruction		
Leadership and Communication Plan for vertical articulation, recognition in the local press, and opportunities to promote student leadership through internal public service announcements		
21st Century Skills	Began in August 2011	Annual Review Continues- May of each year
Technology Implement collaborative planning conversations, preparatory processing time, and one to one classroom site visits		
Climate and Parent & Community Influence Implement opportunities that foster tolerance and create engaging work		
Teachers as Instructional Leaders	Began in August 2011	Annual Review Continues- May of each year
Assessment and Evaluation Collect and analyze additional instructional practice data to help inform decisions related to RTI, areas identified for improvement in the literacy audit, and the implementation of 21st century skills instruction		