

East Side School Improvement Plan Fall 2007

The primary function of Hamilton County Community Unit District #10 is to serve the children and youth of our community by providing them with a comprehensive education that is adapted to the differences among people, their vocational interests and aspirations, and their ability to enable all students to become contributing members of our democratic society.

It is the responsibility of the school, home and community to work cooperatively to help all students develop an understanding and a respect for themselves as well as for the integrity, opinions, dignity and worth of others in their daily lives.

East Side School's motto, "Learning Takes Place Here", reflects a continuing effort to implement this philosophy. East Side School is one of two elementary buildings in Hamilton County Unit District # 10 and it serves students from kindergarten through sixth grade. The average building population at East Side is approximately 450 students.

East Side has an experienced staff and provides a safe environment for students. The learning environment is concerned not only with the physical condition of the school and classrooms but also with conditions which impact student learning – including the appropriateness and use of resources available to support learning. It also refers to the relationships that exist among students, teachers and administrators.

East Side has an active PTA and has a number of parents and community members who serve as Partners in Education Parent Volunteers. Active parents provide invaluable services to children at the school. Also, parents and community members provide a method of evaluation for the school by providing feedback about the school.

East Side provides extracurricular activities for students. Families and members of the community provide support and participate as spectators for these events. East Side has 4th, 5th and 6th grade boys and girls basketball. Scholastic Bowl clinics are available for 5th and 6th grade students. In conjunction with Rend Lake College, dance classes are offered after school for preschool and elementary students.

While the Illinois Standards Assessment Test (ISAT) provides a still photo of student performance and a school's progress in serving its students, the School Improvement Plan is a motion picture, capturing in a limited lens the instructional program, school improvement efforts and assessment of student performance as it annually occurs. The process for identifying areas in need of school improvement includes an analysis of student performance data from the ISAT, Stanford Achievement Test, classroom observation and assessment, as well as parent and student feedback. In addition to the analysis of student scores, teachers and administrators ascertain what modifications should be made in curriculum, staff in-service, and classroom instruction to improve student achievement and meet expected learning standards.

Analysis of student performance drives change in curriculum, instruction, staff development and organizational structure in order to improve the achievement of students meeting learning outcomes and standards. The overall student performance on ISAT testing improved at East Side during the 2006-2007 school year. East Side had 75% of students meeting or exceeding in reading in grades 3-6. Eighty-six percent of East Side students met or exceeded in math and 85% met or exceeded in science. As a result, the following school improvement activities are planned to address our school's needs for the 2007-2008 school year.

- A. To improve curriculum instruction, staff will continue to review Illinois Learning Standards, goals, benchmarks and related assessments for curricular alignment. Continued efforts will be made to more closely align the curriculum and assessments with the standards.
- B. To increase computer technology awareness and classroom utilization by staff, staff development activities will be designed to provide opportunities in the area of computer applications and integration into the classroom and curriculum.
- C. Parent-school partnerships will be encouraged through the Partners in Education Program, parent conferences, weekly newsletters, Parent/Teacher Association (PTA), informal contacts, and parent participation in field trips. In addition, East Side will continue to utilize the help from Senior Citizens as Senior Readers
- D. To improve the performance of low achieving students, Title I services will continue to be implemented and services will specifically target helping students build solid skills in math and reading. In-house tutors will be available to assist students. Two staff members have completed training and have implemented a "Reading Recovery" program at the 1st grade level. Also, East Side has begun to utilize the Response Through Intervention approach to help all students demonstrate acceptable academic growth. Our goal is to ensure that all students have a firm foundation in reading fundamentals and are successful readers.

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- E. Writing assessments identify concerns with student writing. In order to address this concern throughout the building staff will stress the correct use of grammar and model correct speech and grammar. Teachers will encourage student responses in complete sentences – both verbal and written responses. Teachers across all grade levels K-6 will stress writing and students will write daily. Emphasis will be placed on the use of descriptive details and language. The expectation will include descriptive writing and correct use of conventions. Writing prompts provided in the Reading series will be utilized to provide topics for writing assignments. These programs will continue to be implemented at all grade levels with additional focus upon these areas in the writing curriculum.
- F. Continuing emphasis will be placed upon the Accelerated Reader Program. Ongoing efforts will be made to weigh the impact of this supplemental activity and to enhance voluntary student participation in the program. East Side has a large and well-stocked library, which will be utilized to encourage reading and optimize opportunities for success with the AR Program.
- G. Continuing emphasis will focus on development of skill and understanding in the areas of math and the sciences.
- H. To enhance Fine Arts activities, field trips and assemblies in the area of Fine Arts have been planned. Ongoing music, band, and choral classes are included in the curriculum. Students will be exposed to an increased number of live theater productions throughout the school year.
- I. To be successful in school it is critical that students feel safe and protected in the school environment. East Side will continue to actively pursue the goal of promoting crisis prevention through the development of School Safety/Violence Prevention Planning. The DARE Program will be offered in the 6th grade classes. Teachers will work to improve school climate and culture through communication, promoting a safe environment, discipline, positive attitudes, cooperation and professional accountability.
- J. East Side, along with Dahlgren Elementary will select a reading curriculum for adoption later this year. Teachers will review samples of reading series throughout the year as they prepare to adopt a new series. Serious consideration will be given to the data available on each series and its effectiveness in improving reading skills. Our goal is to select a series closely aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards and which provides opportunities to build student knowledge and achievement.
- K. East Side has several new and first year teachers. These teachers were hired to replace retiring faculty. We want these staff members to be positive additions to our staff and hope that providing support for them will help them reach their full potential as effective educators and will ensure that they are committed to ensuring that all students are learning at East Side.

The formative evaluation of the School Improvement will be on going throughout the 2007-2008 school year with revision and refinements being included as deemed necessary by the School Improvement Committee. At the close of the school year, the plan will be revisited and the extent to which goals have been met will be evaluated and a continuing planning process for improvements for the coming year will begin.