

Evidence Cluster #6: School Improvement Assessment Project

by

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A paper submitted for

Add-On School Administration licensure portfolio requirements

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April 24, 2013

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Abstract

Although Leeds Middle School has recently experienced periods of tremendous student achievement growth, our school improvement plan is problematic. While we are to be commended for using measurable goals that data clearly shows a need for improvement, the goals and subsequent action steps are inconsistently progress monitored and lack specificity in their approach. Additionally, the plan is both developed and monitored by an active school improvement team comprised of teachers who represent all levels of staff, yet there is a noticeable absence of parent and community involvement in the school improvement process. Likewise, our mission and vision is infrequently revised and lacks the same specificity that plagues the school improvement plan.

School Improvement Assessment Project

Leeds Middle School (LMS) is one of four middle schools in Lincoln County, a rural area located between the relatively larger cities of Hickory and Gastonia. LMS serves the City of Leeds, the county seat.

LMS is as diverse as the community it serves with approximately 674 students and six No Child Left Behind (NCLB) sub-groups. We use a traditional middle school teaming structure with two or four teacher team configurations for the core subjects of math, social studies, English, and science, as well as elective class choices in

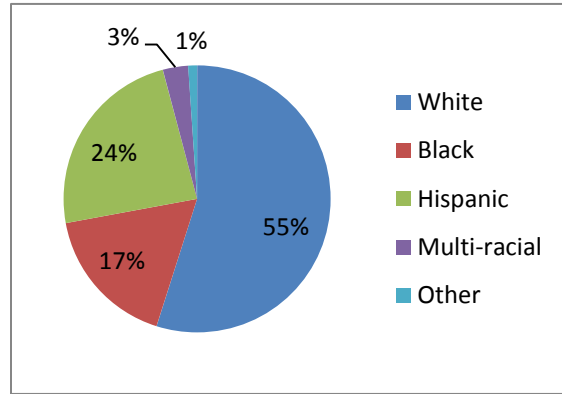


Figure 1. 2012-2013 LMS Student Demographics from the 2012 School Improvement Plan data profile.

the arts, health, and technology domains. Although we no longer accept Title I funds due to a 2010 district decision to decline funding and avoid future potential NCLB sanctions, 75% of the student population still qualifies for and receives free and reduced lunch according to the 2012 School Improvement Plan data. School improvement plan student achievement data also shows consistent growth in all areas with the overall performance composite improving from 61.2% in 2008 to a high of 83.4% in 2011. Yet in 2012, LMS had a decline in student achievement in all subjects and subgroups.

School Improvement Plan: Process Overview

The LMS School Improvement Plan (SIP) is written and implemented in a shared leadership model. It is developed collaboratively by administration and the school improvement team (SIT), emailed to the faculty for input, and then voted upon by secret ballot in accordance with NC G.S. 115C-105.27. Once adopted by the faculty, it is presented to the senior leadership

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at the central office and the local school board for final approval. The final plan aligns with district goals and objectives and meets additional state requirements. Twice a year, SIT formally reviews the plan and makes changes as necessary. At the mid-year review, selected members of SIT and administration meet with the district office to review the plan's effectiveness, explain any changes, and reflect on future needs. In addition to data-driven targets and strategies that address improving student performance, the SIP includes addendums to address legislative mandates such as school safety, healthy-active child, duty-free lunch for teachers, and at least five hours per week of duty-free instructional planning (see Appendix B).

School Improvement Team

In accordance with NC G.S. 115-105.27, the SIT team broadly represents the faculty and staff, and members are elected by secret ballot. In addition to three administrators and myself, the instructional coach, there are two representatives from each of the three grade levels, encore classes and instructional support. Half of the team rotates off every year so that there is some consistency on the team each two-year term. However, an area of inconsistent compliance with state statutes is the lack of parent members who reflect the racial and socio-economic demographics of the school. The lone parent member is usually someone from the Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA) board and is typically only present at the summer plan revision meeting which limits parent input.

Developing the Mission & Vision

The LMS mission and vision statement have undergone very few revisions with only minor changes in words or phrases in the last 20 years. However, it was finally completely rewritten in the fall of 2011 as part of the re-accreditation process. Due to the tremendous amount of faculty turnover and recent gains in student achievement, SIT reworked both the

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mission and vision to reflect a very different LMS. First, we collaboratively developed a vision statement, passed it to the PTSA board for parent input, and finally, the staff voted its approval. As written in the school planner and hung in the front office, the new vision of LMS is “Leeds Middle School strives to have each and every student achieve his or her individual potential in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment.” At that time, we felt this was an appropriate vision because it reflected our current emphasis on student achievement while acknowledging the individual differences in our diverse student population.

After the vision was approved and communicated to stakeholders, we wrote a new school mission statement using a collaborative, faculty-wide process in early fall 2011. The staff was divided into small groups to rewrite the mission statement using a list of phrases and terms that SIT had determined must appear within the school mission statement. Phrases like “high expectations” and “global society” were deemed essential to a new mission statement because they reflected current values that the staff already embraced or new challenges with onset of the Common Core and College Ready curriculums. We read through each mission proposal and either used them in their entirety or combined group efforts to provide the staff with a selection of five possible new mission statements (see Appendix C). The staff voted and chose:

“Leeds Middle School creates a nurturing environment through cooperation between students, staff, parents, and the community. We support achievement through high expectations and continuous improvement while focusing on individual needs. We strive to guide our students to become confident life-long learners and contributing members of a global society.” (LMS, 2012)

Before being officially adopted, it was also shared with the PTSA parent board for their input.

The newly adopted mission and vision statements are clearly posted throughout the entire building, in every classroom, and on the school website. However, despite being declared a work in progress when first adopted in 2011, neither the mission nor vision have been revisited to date.

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LMS School Improvement Plan Goals Overview

Pursuant to district policy, the LMS SIP aligns with the district improvement plan. Each LMS goal links directly to one of the district's five strategic priorities which in turn mirror the NC State Board of Education's goals.

2012-2013 LMS School Improvement Goals	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>District Strategic Priority 1:</u> Lincoln County Schools will produce globally competitive students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 2013-2014, LMS will exceed the state proficiency average by 3% in all annual statewide assessments in grades 6-8.• By 2013-2014, LMS will meet 100% of subgroup target areas as defined by the state. The 2012-2013 subgroups are: white, black, Hispanic, LEP, multi-racial, exceptional children, economically disadvantaged, academically intellectually gifted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>District Strategic Priority 2:</u> Lincoln County Schools will be led by 21st Century professionals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 2014, all educational professionals at LMS will have the skills to teach and assess 21st Century content.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>District Strategic Priority 3:</u> Students in Lincoln County Schools will be healthy and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 2014, LMS will increase positive student behaviors so that 75% of the student population qualifies for positive student behavior awards and activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>District Strategic Priority 4:</u> Leadership will guide innovation in Lincoln County Schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 2012-2013, LMS will secure a business or community Partner in Education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>District Strategic Priority 5:</u> Lincoln County Schools will be governed and supported by 21st Century systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By 2014, 100% of LMS classrooms will have interactive whiteboards to increase student engagement and facilitate incorporation of other media and technology resources.

The SIP goals were developed collaboratively by SIT after analyzing current achievement data and the most recent North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NC TWCS). The current plan is in the first year of its two-year cycle which ends in 2014.

Literature Review on the School Improvement Process

Effective leaders cultivate a shared mission and vision that serves as the basis for all school decision-making and school improvement efforts. They cannot be mandated and must be

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clearly communicated and involve all stakeholders (Allen, 2001; Lezotte & McKee, 2002; Lindhal & Beach, 2007; Schmoker, 1999; Wilson, 2011). Since principals are not experts in every area of the building, they must rely on and cultivate teacher leaders and a collaborative environment where teachers work in professional learning communities with the mission and vision as a guide. Likewise, parents and the community must be welcomed and respected in order to encourage their support of the vision. Allen (2001) specifically notes that a school must move beyond platitudes printed on plaques so that the mission and vision become active guideposts for all school decisions. When stakeholders are unified in support of the mission, vision, and the school improvement process, their collective effort is more powerful.

Once a mission and vision has been embraced by stakeholders, it becomes the foundation for the school improvement plan. While there is typically no set format for the school improvement process, researchers agree that effective plans generally set goals that are appropriate for the environment, develop action steps for achieving those goals, and then continually monitor their progress (Beach & Lindahl, 2007; Fernandez, 2011; Marzano, 2003). Given the current age of accountability, it is imperative that the goals be specific, measurable, and supported by research-based strategies or action steps. Schmoker (1999) says that goals motivate an organization towards change and should be supported by the shared mission and vision. Furthermore, when goals are measurable, they can be progress monitored and celebrated when met.

However, school improvement isn't as simple as changing the principal, teachers, or textbooks which typically happens within existing policies and procedures. Likewise, in an emergency situation like a maintenance issue, administrators must act and cannot afford to go through an exhaustive school improvement process that engages all stakeholders. Instead, school improvement efforts should center on large-scale efforts that require intensive planning or an in-

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depth analysis of school culture (Beach & Lindahl, 2007; Lindahl, 2011). According to Beach and Lindahl (2007), effective school improvement plans focus their attention in four areas: research-based best practices for instruction, social expectations and demands like technology or 21st century skills, environmental changes like scheduling and facilities, and external policy mandates at the district, state, and federal level. On the other hand, Marzano (2003) isolates five school-level factors: curriculum, progress monitoring and high expectations for students, parent and community involvement, safe and orderly environment, and collegiality. While the two approaches differ in their areas of focus, they both agree that schools must be given some measure of site-based control to increase effectiveness and stakeholder buy-in.

Yet, the challenge for schools undertaking large-scale change is making sure stakeholders are both ready for and desire change. Even the most comprehensive and well-intentioned plans can be derailed if the stakeholders responsible for implementation are not ready. Lindahl (2011) writes that consistent failure of the school improvement process probably has more to do with the school culture than the efforts of the planners and implementers. To be successful, leadership must build commitment and ownership among those implementing the plan. Likewise, Beach and Lindahl (2007) reference Fullan's work with change readiness by stressing that stakeholders must see a need for change, perceive the change as reasonable, and have the knowledge and time to engage in change. They also argue that if school leadership does not prioritize the change by either spreading school improvement efforts over too broad of a spectrum or not supporting the change with adequate resources, then school improvement efforts will most likely fail.

Another challenge to the school improvement process is a lack of flexibility in the both the planning and implementation stages. Thus, it is important to note that the process is not linear. Instead, it requires participants engage in continuous reflection in order to make

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modifications along the way in constant pursuit of the goal (Lindahl, 2011; Schmoker, 1999). Likewise, the school improvement plan itself is only as valuable to the extent that it is implemented. Beach and Lindahl (2007) warn of plans that sit on shelves, unused, because the goals and strategies are too exhaustive or unrealistic. This simply underscores the need for flexibility because as circumstances change or unforeseen challenges emerge, stakeholders need to be able to change not only their strategies but possibly even their goals in order to reflect a new reality. The school improvement plan must be a living document that changes as the needs of the school change. Lezotte and McKee (2002) argue that schools must constantly adapt to new challenges by reflecting upon current conditions or practices that are keeping them from reaching their goal or whether the goal is even relevant anymore. In doing so, schools that engage in a flexible school improvement process are more likely to positively impact student achievement but must be wary of getting stuck in the planning cycle without ever actually implementing anything (Fernandez, 2011). Those schools will never reach their goals.

Indeed, the current economic climate makes effective school improvement even more essential. Keeping a data driven and results-orientated focus helps school improve “the quality of the educational setting by increasing the efficiency of service delivery through various management techniques” (Fernandez, 2011, p. 342). Careful planning helps schools prioritize their time and resources and be more effective with those decisions that directly affect student achievement (Fernandez, 2011; Marzano, 2003; Schmoker, 1999). As Schmoker (1999) contends, “School improvement is not a mystery. Incremental and even dramatic improvement is not only possible but probable under the right conditions” (pg. 1). Yet, it is important to note that school improvement is not just for low-performing schools as no one is immune from needing improvement (Lezotte & McKee, 2002).

LMS School Improvement Plan Evaluation Overview

This evaluation is a formative evaluation conducted by internal school personnel to evaluate the reasonableness of the plan's goals and monitor the effectiveness of the defined strategies toward meeting those goals. Both qualitative and quantitative data sources were collected and analyzed as a basis for all recommendations. Various data sources included but were not limited to district benchmark and state achievement data, discipline data, classroom walk-throughs, the NC TWCS, as well as observational data from SIT members.

Evaluation Methodology & Questions

Using a practical participation approach, I collaborated with SIT minus any parent or community representatives as the principal chose not to invite them. We met over several two-hour afternoon sessions in early January. The primary audience for the evaluation is the LMS faculty and staff but evaluation results will also be shared with the district office at the mid-year school improvement plan review in late February.

The goal of this evaluation is to monitor the school's progress towards its stated goals by assessing the implementation of the plan's defined school improvement strategies for each goal. The specific questions to be addressed in the evaluation are as follows:

- How reasonable are the school improvement goals selected by SIT?
- To what extent have each of the listed strategies been implemented?
- What progress has LMS made toward the school improvement plan goals?

Reasonableness was judged by comparing the stated goal to prior levels of performance in the indicated areas. Implementation was determined by the extent to which each action step had met the school improvement plan timeline. Effectiveness was judged by analyzing appropriate data sources for progress toward the end goal.

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LMS School Improvement Plan Goal and Strategy Analysis

When evaluating the SIP (see Appendix A), we first evaluated the appropriateness of the goal, and then looked at how well the strategies supported the goal as evidenced by their level of implementation and the results from various data sources.

LMS Goal 1: Assessment proficiency

After five years of consistent high growth, LMS achievement scores in reading and math dropped in 2012. According to the 2012 NC School Report Card, our current overall reading proficiency of 69.4% is now below both state and district averages while the 86.0% math proficiency is only slightly above the state average. In contrast, we scored five percentage points above the state average in reading and seven points above the state in math in 2011 according to that year's NC School Report Card. The current 2011-2012 student achievement scores represent a drop to almost 2 points below the state average in reading while maintaining only a 3 point lead over the state average in mathematics. Still, the SIP goal is conservative at only three points above the state average in math and reading, due in part to the enigma of new assessments to be administered this year.

However, the broad goal encompassing both math and reading ignores our history of being significantly stronger in mathematics than in reading, and the SIP action steps do not isolate specific weaknesses in either reading or math instruction. In fact, the first two action steps, small-group tutoring during the day and after-school remediation, have been done the last several years with no data analysis of their actual effectiveness. Likewise, the SIP does not provide for intermediate benchmark checks for either program, instead only listing the end of the year as a completion date. While assessment data is routinely used in departmental PLCs to monitor student progress and identify strengths and weaknesses in instruction, other action steps are not been given similar significance and periodic monitoring. For example, the science

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department did create prefix, suffix, and root vocabulary lists in October as called for in the SIP, but there has been no monitoring to make sure those lists are actually being used to benefit instruction. Thus, while the action steps to improve student achievement are specific, their inconsistent implementation and progress monitoring sabotages their success.

LMS Goal 2: Subgroup performance

Generally, each of our sub-groups have experienced the same consistent growth as the whole school. In 2011-2012, we had six sub-groups as measured under NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets with the same sub-groups identified this year. Prior to 2009, we had never met our AYP targets, but we have met our targets three out of the last five years (Principal, personal communications, February 23, 2013). Thus, it is reasonable that we could meet all of its AYP targets this year, despite an across the board drop in sub-group scores last year.

However, like our overall achievement goal, the LMS subgroup proficiency goal and identified action steps largely ignore any differences between reading and math achievement levels or individual sub-group data (see Figure 2). With the exception of supporting Limited English Proficient students with content area vocabulary through the use of an English as a Second Language teacher, there are no other action steps to specifically address reading or math skills or any particular sub-group. Similar to the action steps in goal one, the benchmark dates for completion are set for the end of the school year and do not include an intermediate progress monitoring goals. In addition, the other two identified action steps using EVAAS and Thumbs Meetings are continuations from the previous school improvement cycle and do not represent any new analysis of factors that may have contributed to the 2012 decline in scores. Although the goal itself is measurable, neither the goal nor the action steps specifically address individual sub-groups or their specific strengths and weaknesses.

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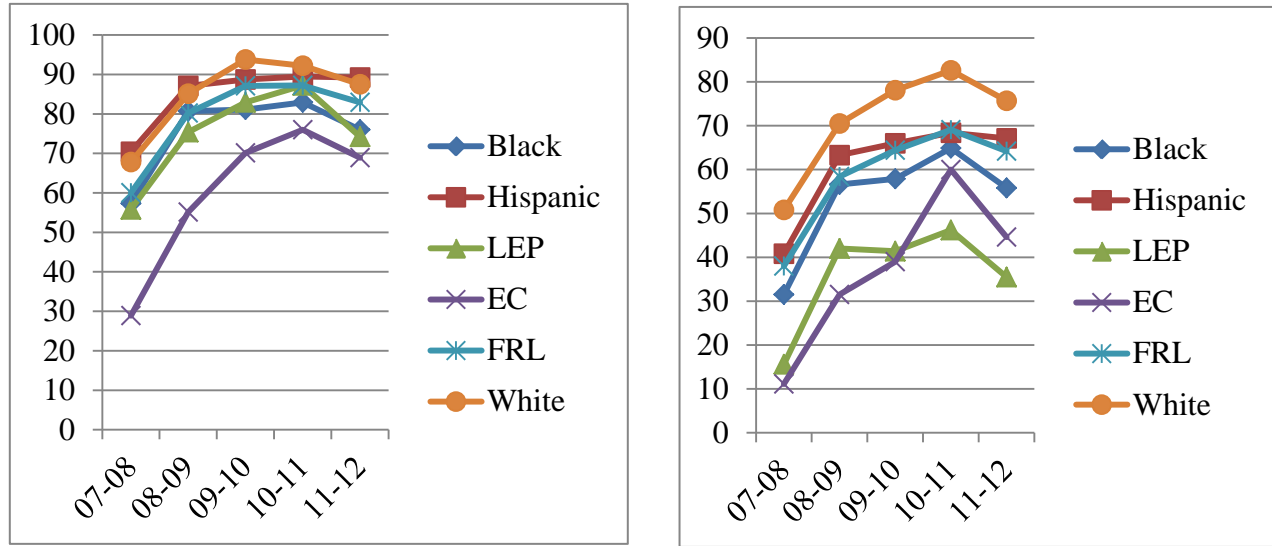


Figure 2. Sub-group proficiency scores in reading and math, respectively. The data comes from the 2012 LMS School Improvement Plan data profile.

LMS Goal 3: 21st century professionals.

This particular goal directly aligns with the district and state board's increased emphasis on developing 21st century skills in both teachers and students. According to the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), a nationally recognized advocate for 21st century skills education, the scope is much larger than simply using technology. On their website they propose a 4Cs curriculum: collaboration, creativity, communication, and critical thinking. Thus, today's teachers must be not only capable of utilizing 21st century skills themselves; they must also understand the intricacies of teaching these skills to their students.

Action steps for this goal focus largely on professional development for teachers and all action steps have shown considerable progress in implementation. Unlike the other goals, each action step is defined by more frequent benchmark dates that have all been met. As instructional coach, I have delivered monthly professional development on formative assessment, and SIT members shared examples of how their departmental PLCs are incorporating these strategies. One the other hand, both the math and ELA departments have begun their book studies, but no

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SIT member could explain what the departments were doing with what they were learning. Therefore, we decided that each department needed to submit action plans that reflected what they had learned from their respective studies. The only action step that had not been implemented was the grade level 21st Century skills professional development to be delivered by the assistant principal of instruction. Because this is a district initiative, she must wait until she gets more information, and therefore, the benchmark deadlines need to be revised.

LMS Goal 4: Positive student behaviors.

Multiple data sources support a need for a student behavior goal at LMS. The 2012 NC TWCS reflects teacher dissatisfaction with only 51.8% of the teachers reporting that students routinely follow rules of conduct and only 69.6% feeling supported by administration. Despite concerns about consistency and overall levels of student respect, it is important note that the 2012 NC TWCS shows that almost 90% of teachers feel safe at LMS. Still, the school had over 1500 discipline referrals last year with 47% of students having at least one referral, and almost 25% of the student body having three or more referrals according to 2011-2012 Educator's Handbook data, an online program that tracks LMS discipline data. Similarly, by October 2012, the school had already seen 352 referrals and was on track to break last year's high. According to the assistant principal of administration who handles most discipline referrals, most referrals are for bus safety issues, disruptive behavior, and refusal to follow directions (personal communications, March 12, 2013). Thus, when the SIP was developed over the summer, we overwhelmingly agreed to formally increase efforts to reward positive behavior. Last year's program rewarded students with no referrals with ice cream passes and good behavior socials at the end of each nine weeks, but only an average of 52% students qualified (K. Senter, personal communications, March 12, 2013). Thus, while some SIT members felt that goal should be 100%, the goal of 75% is a significant increase from the prior year.

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The action steps for this goal center focus on the implementation of PBIS or Positive Behavior Interventions and Support. While specific in the steps the school will take for this initiative, the actions steps are again defined by year end due dates that do not reflect periodic review and timely implementation. Yet, those action steps that have already begun have already begun to positively impact student discipline. School-wide procedures were developed early Fall and implemented across the school with visual reminders all over the building as well as frequent reminders to faculty about the importance of consistent enforcement. A volunteer PBIS team has done a needs analysis of the school, and they have registered with the PBIS program. We have also increased the frequency of student rewards to every month instead of every nine weeks. The PBIS team regularly solicits input from students about the rewards they would like to see, and eligibility has increased from 47% first nine weeks to almost seventy percent in February of 2013 (K. Senter, personal communications, March 12, 2013).

LMS Goal 5: Partner in education.

Although the 2012 NC TWCS shows that 82% of the staff felt the community was supportive of the school in general, LMS is only one of a handful of schools in Lincoln County without a consistent business partner. Thus, it is highly appropriate that we would seek one. In the past 20 years, LMS has had two business partners, a manufacturing company who partnered with LMS for five years but went out of business and a local grocery chain that declined to continue the partnership in 2010 after two years. Those business partners primarily supported the school financially by donating to specific school needs, sponsoring students on field trips, or providing snacks for faculty meetings or student awards ceremonies. Thus, SIT felt an initial action step was to develop criteria for a business partnership. Given the current economic climate, we wanted to make sure that our business partners understood that they could develop a successful relationship with the school by providing more than financial support. Besides money,

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other opportunities discussed were community mentors for the CIS program, site visits to focus on workforce preparation, and guest speakers to support curriculum objectives. Unfortunately, despite having a November 2012 due date so that inquiry letters could be sent out in January 2013, neither step had even been initiated by the January mid-year evaluation. While there is still time for LMS to accomplish both action steps, it is highly unlikely that any resulting business partnership will have enough time for a positive impact on the current school year.

LMS Goal 6: Interactive whiteboards.

In September 2012, there were only nine classrooms with interactive whiteboards. These boards had been awarded on a grant basis through the PTSA over the last five years. In addition to highlighting resource inequities, it also complicated staffing changes because the boards are immovable. When moving a teacher's grade level or room, the principal has to consider whether that teacher will be losing the board they had written a grant to receive. Thus, the goal of providing interactive whiteboards in all classrooms is appropriate and brings LMS to equal standing with the other three district middle schools that already have them. In addition, the 2012 NC TWCS indicated that only 75% of the staff was satisfied with teacher access to instructional technology, which is four points below the state average.

While the district office did provide funds to give every reading, math, social studies, and science teacher an interactive whiteboard in December 2012, their initiative did not include the elective teachers or cover any increased future allotments. Thus, it did not eliminate the action step strategy of holding a technology fundraiser, yet, as of this evaluation the school had only designated one school dance in February for technology. According the PTSA president (personal communications, January 9, 2013), the average yield from a school dance is approximately \$2,000.00 which will barely even cover the cost of one board. LMS needs at least

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eight boards to cover the remaining elective teachers and four additional boards to cover empty rooms and allow for future growth. Therefore, with one dance a year, it is unlikely that the school will meet their whiteboard goal by 2014.

My Major Recommendations

While prior school improvement efforts have resulted in increased levels of student achievement, there are several key areas where we need to refine the school improvement process to continue advancements in student achievement.

Narrowing our focus. Allen (2001) Lezotte and McKee (2002) maintain that a clear and focused mission and vision ensures everyone works for the same goal, yet if they are routinely ignored, they guide nothing. Although we did rework our mission and vision after more than 20 years of stagnation, we are setting ourselves up for another 20 years. While attempting to create a clear definition of success, the mission and vision became too wordy and complicated. The focus is too broad and lacks any specific references to teaching and learning. For example, what instructional practices will support “high expectations” and reflect a focus on “individual needs”? Thus, we should examine the mission and vision sentence by sentence to clarify key phrases and narrow our focus without overwhelming it with every possible good idea we have for the school (Allen, 2001). Likewise, the superficiality of the mission and vision are reflected in broad student achievement goals and strategies for overall and sub-group proficiency that do not isolate strengths and weakness and generally address all students without using data to narrow down their specific needs.

Progress monitoring. Although we did a thorough review of the SIP at mid-year, most of the action step strategies have due dates that span the entire school year. Our plan lacks consistent intermittent progress monitoring which damages its overall effectiveness. Since

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progress monitoring has a strong relationship with positive student achievement results (Fernandez, 2011; Marzano, 2003), strategies like providing targeted small-group remediation and PBIS implementation can benefit from weekly, monthly, or quarterly monitoring rather than just a year end due date. In some places, earlier due dates were ignored which signals a general disuse of the school improvement plan as a guiding document. When using an end of the year due date for most strategies, it is too late to make any necessary changes in the current year. More frequent progress monitoring will also allow us to increase stakeholder motivation and commitment to the SIP by recognizing and celebrating successes.

Parent participation. LMS needs to increase both the level and consistency of parent involvement in the school improvement process. In addition to the summer plan revision meetings, LMS needs to include parents at the monthly SIT meetings throughout the year. Increased parent involvement at the meetings should not be limited to the PTSA president but should include a cross-section of parents who represent the overall demographics of the community per NC General Statute 115C-105.27. We must embrace parents because they bring valuable insight into improving the school and can be a community advocate for resources (Wilson, 2011). This will make the SIP more effective by providing a shared mission and vision to meaningfully guide our efforts rather than simply recording what we have always been done.

Conclusion

Overall, we have made inconsistent progress toward our goals and have emphasized academic goals and strategies over goals for technology and community partnerships. This shows a lack of understanding of how all goals work together to improve student achievement. As Beach and Lindahl (2007) stress, school improvement plan goals should be integrated as a focused plan rather than isolated goals that are so comprehensive there is not enough time and resources to effectively manage them all. By revisiting our mission and vision in a frequent but

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meaningful manner, we can narrow our focus to those goals and strategies where data shows a pressing need. When those needs have been met, then we can move on to the next one instead of superficially addressing everything in one far-reaching document. With increased progress monitoring and stakeholder involvement around a shared mission, vision, and goals, we may see a return to higher levels of student achievement.

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Appendix A

Leeds Middle School – School Improvement Plan 2012-2014

Strategic Priorities Adopted by the Lincoln County Board of Education

- Strategic Priority 1: Lincoln County Schools will produce globally competitive students.
- Strategic Priority 2: Lincoln County Schools will be led by 21st Century professionals.
- Strategic Priority 3: Students in Lincoln County Schools will be healthy and responsible.
- Strategic Priority 4: Leadership will guide innovation in Lincoln County Schools.
- Strategic Priority 5: Lincoln County Schools will be governed and supported by 21st Century systems.

School Improvement Goal: By 2013-2014, Leeds Middle School will exceed the state proficiency average by 3% in all annual statewide assessments in grades 6-8.

Connection(s) to LCS Strategic Plan: Goal 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.7

Rationale: In 2010-2011, Leeds Middle School scored 5 percentage points above the state average in reading and 7 points above the state average in math and made high growth . In 2011-2012, Leeds Middle School overall proficiency dropped from 83.4% in 2010-2011 to 78.8%, and we only made expected growth.

Action Step (Include Population Served)	Person Responsible	Professional Development	Resources Required/Budget	Documentation/ Evaluation	Due Date	Completed
Provide targeted small-group remediation for reading and math during Pride Time one time a week during 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd 9 weeks and increase to two times a week during 4 th 9 weeks.	ELA teachers Math teachers	NA	Remediation materials	Small group rosters Student work samples EOG Scores	October 2012 to May 2013	
Provide after-school remediation in reading and math during 4 th 9 weeks to targeted students.	Assistant Principal of Instruction	NA	Remediation Budget	Attendance logs EOG Scores	April 2012 May 2013	
Utilize ClassScape Common Formative Assessments data to monitor student progress and	Assistant Principal of Instruction	ClassScape Teacher Training	Funds to purchase ClassScape	ClassScape Assessment Data	November 2012	

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adjust instruction accordingly		Math, Reading, and 8 th grade Science teachers will meet quarterly for in-depth analysis of score reports		Grade Level meeting minutes	February 2013 April 2013	
Utilize EVAAS data to identify students in need of additional interventions and support	Assistant Principal of Instruction	EVAAS training for administration	NA	EVAAS reports Intervention attendance rosters	October 2012	
Incorporate science prefixes, suffixes, and root vocabulary to support content instruction	Assistant Principal of Instruction	County Essential Standards training Vocabulary support in science departmental & content area meetings with Instructional Coach	NA	STEM Word Walls Student work samples EOG & MSL scores	October 2012 – Align STEMS lists	

EVIDENCE CLUSTER 6

Strategic Priorities Adopted by the Lincoln County Board of Education

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- Strategic Priority 3: Students in Lincoln County Schools will be healthy and responsible.
- Strategic Priority 4: Leadership will guide innovation in Lincoln County Schools.
- Strategic Priority 5: Lincoln County Schools will be governed and supported by 21st Century systems.

School Improvement Goal: By 2013-2014, Leeds Middle School will meet 100% of subgroup target areas as defined by the state. The 2012-2013 subgroups are: white, black, Hispanic, LEP, multi-racial, exceptional children, economically disadvantaged, academically intellectually gifted.

Connection(s) to LCS Strategic Plan: Goal 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.7

Rationale: In 2011-2012, Leeds Middle School had proficiency decreases in all subgroup categories and did not make Adequate Yearly Progress.

Action Step (Include Population Served)	Person Responsible	Professional Development	Resources Required/Budget	Documentation/ Evaluation	Due Date	Completed
Incorporate content area vocabulary into ESL classes to provide additional support to Limited English Proficient students	ESL Teacher	Building Academic Vocabulary support from Instructional Coach	NA	Lesson Plans Student Vocabulary Notebooks	September 2012- May 2013	
Use Thumbs Meetings to monitor subgroups and at-risk students	Principal	NA	NA	Thumbs Meeting Logs	September 2012	
Use EVAAS help teachers place targeted sub-group students into appropriate services	Assistant Principal of Instruction	EVAAS training for administration	NA	EVAAS reports Service placement logs	October 2012	
Use guidance counselors to monitor student placement into appropriate teams and classes	Guidance Counselors	NA	NA	Student Rosters Guidance Service logs	September 2012 – May 2013	

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School Improvement Goal: By 2014, all educational professionals at LMS will have the skills to teach and assess 21st Century content.

Connection(s) to LCS Strategic Plan: Goal 2.1 and 2.2

Rationale: 21st Century skills are a significant focus of the NC Teacher Evaluation system.

Action Step (Include Population Served)	Person Responsible	Professional Development	Resources Required/Budget	Documentation/ Evaluation	Due Date	Completed
Provide professional development on formative assessment strategies that monitor student progress toward learning targets	Instructional Coach	Monthly grade level sessions and faculty meetings	Training materials	LCORE Attendance Logs	Sept. 19, 2012 Oct. 19, 2012 Nov. 15, 2012 Dec. 20, 2012 Jan. 17, 2013 Feb. 21, 2013 March 22, 2013	
Collaborate in math PLC's to improve math questioning skills using <i>Good Questions for Math Teaching: Why Ask Them and What to Ask, Grades 5-8</i>	Kim Rumfelt— 6 th grade Math Department Chair	NA	12 copies of <i>Good Questions for Math Teaching</i>	Department Meeting Minutes Lesson Plans Observations & Walk-throughs	Oct. 10, 2012 Nov. 14, 2012 Jan. 9, 2013 March 13, 2013	
Collaborate in ELA PLC's to improve student comprehension of complex texts using <i>Deeper Reading Strategies</i>	Stacy Pruitt –6 th grade ELA Department Chair	NA	12 copies of <i>Deeper Reading</i>	Department Meeting Minutes Lesson Plans Observations & Walk-throughs	Oct. 10, 2012 Nov. 14, 2012 Jan. 9, 2013 March 13, 2013	
Provide ongoing professional development in 21 st Century	Assistant Principal of	County Office training on 21 st	Training Materials	LCORE Attendance Logs	Oct. 4, 2012 Nov. 1, 2012	

EVIDENCE CLUSTER 6

<p>Skills as defined by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Subjects and 21st Century Themes • Learning and Innovation Skills • Information, Media, and Technology skills • Life and Career Skills 	<p>Instruction</p>	<p>Century Skills for administration</p> <p>First Grade Level meeting of each month for teachers</p>		<p>Observations & Classroom Walk-throughs</p>	<p>Dec. 6, 2012 Feb. 7, 2013 March 7, 2013 April 11, 2012</p>	
<p>Modify the CWT instrument to monitor effective implementation of 21st Century Skills and content</p>	<p>Principal</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>Classroom Walkthrough Document</p>	<p>March 2013</p>	

EVIDENCE CLUSTER 6

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School Improvement Goal: Leeds Middle School will increase positive student behaviors so that 75% of the student population qualifies for positive student behavior awards and activities.

Connection(s) to LCS Strategic Plan: Goal 3.2 and 3.3

Rationale: In 2011-2012, approximately 30% of the student body qualified for the culminating STARS good behavior incentive, and only 60% of the staff responded that students followed school rules and procedures on the 2012 Teacher Working Conditions Survey.

Action Step (Include Population Served)	Person Responsible	Professional Development	Resources Required/Budget	Documentation/Evaluation	Due Date	Completed
Continue implementation of STARS (define) program for positive behavior incentives	Assistant Principal of Operations	NA	Prize/Incentives Budget	LCU Referral Data STARS participation data	June 2013	
Utilize Behavior Improvement Agreements (BIA) to decrease multiple referrals of individual students	Assistant Principal of Operations	NA	NA	BIA Documents Discipline Data	June 2013	
Institute PBIS to improve consistency of school wide expectations	Assistant Principal of Operations	PBIS Staff training	Prize/Incentives Budget	PBIS Committee Minutes Discipline Data	October 2013	
Provide guidance counseling services and make scheduling considerations to meet social and emotional needs of students.	Guidance Counselors	NA	NA	Student Rosters Guidance Service logs	June 2013	
Define school-wide procedures for School Improvement Team identified problem areas within the building	Principal	NA	NA	Posted policies and procedures	July 2012 SIT Meeting	July 25, 2012

EVIDENCE CLUSTER 6

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School Improvement Goal: By 2012-2013, Leeds Middle School will secure a business or community Partner in Education.

Connection(s) to LCS Strategic Plan: Goal 4.1, 4.2

Rationale: As of 2012, Leeds Middle School currently does not have a Partner in Education.

Action Step (Include Population Served)	Person Responsible	Professional Development	Resources Required/Budget	Documentation/Evaluation	Due Date	Completed
Develop criteria and/or possible involvement opportunities to share with local businesses	Principal	NA	NA	Documented criteria	November 30, 2012	
Send letters of interest to LEDA and other local business organizations	Principal	NA	NA	List of businesses contacted	January 30, 2013	

EVIDENCE CLUSTER 6

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School Improvement Goal: 100% of LMS classrooms will have interactive whiteboards to increase student engagement and facilitate incorporation of other media and technology resources.

Connection(s) to LCS Strategic Plan: Goal 5.2

Rationale: Currently, there are _____ interactive white boards in the building and only one document camera per team on average.

Action Step (Include Population Served)	Person Responsible	Professional Development	Resources Required/Budget	Documentation/ Evaluation	Due Date	Completed
Designate at least one fundraiser dedicated to technology funds	Principal	NA	NA	Boards in rooms Fundraiser financial report	May 2013	

Appendix B:

**Addendum for Legal and Policy Requirements
Required Components Related to the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and Duty Free Time**

Requirement	Level	Reference	School Plan
Include a plan to provide a duty-free lunch period for every teacher on a daily basis or as otherwise approved by the school improvement team.	ALL	GS 115C-105.27	Teachers create a duty-free lunch rotation schedule within their teams in order to provide each teacher duty-free lunch at least once a week or more.
Include a plan to provide duty-free instructional planning time for every teacher under G.S. 115C-301.1, with the goal of providing an average of at least five hours of planning time per week.	ALL	GS 115C-105.27	Every teacher is provided at least 90 minutes of instructional time every day. Occasional duties do not interfere with providing at least five hours a week.
Ensure that all students have recess and/or physical activity during the school day and that it is not taken away for punishment.	Elem/ MS	HSP-S-000	Students are provided physical activity time through extended walking routes to and from lunch as well as a daily emphasis on incorporating energizer activities into classroom instruction. It has been communicated that physical activity time not be taken away for punishment.
Provide physical education taught by a physical education teacher for every student.	Elem/ MS	HSP-S-000	All students are scheduled into physical education classes.
Provide thirty (30) minutes of physical activity and/or recess for every student.	Elem/ MS	HSP-S-000	Students are provided physical activity time through extended walking routes to and from lunch as well as a daily emphasis on incorporating energizer activities into classroom instruction. It has been communicated that physical activity time not be taken away for punishment.

Appendix C:

Screenshot of LMS Mission/Vision Revision Vote
(powered by SurveyMonkey)

