

**SCHOOL-WIDE PLAN
FOR
TWIN CITIES INTERNATIONAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
June 6th, 2009**

1. Identification

- a. Legal Name
Twin Cities International Elementary Charter School
- b. District name and number
Twin Cities International Elementary Charter School (4077)
- c. School address
277 12th Avenue North, Minneapolis, MN 55401-1026
- d. Year eligible for school-wide
2004-2005
- e. Year of planning
2003-2004
- f. Year of implementation
2004-2005
- g. Identify the names and positions of the School-wide planning team
Randal Eckart, Director
Ali Muse – Assistant Director
Kelli Wilson, Assistant Director
Jessica Wroblewski – Reading Coordinator & Board Member
Sandi Smith – Data Coordinator
Kristen Kjolsing, First Grade Teacher & Board Member
Jana Oistad – Second Grade Teacher
Mandee Rickard – Third Grade Teacher & Board Member
Annie Ittner – English as a Second Language teacher
Abdihakim Isse – Parent & Educational Assistant
Stella Forsberg – Educational Assistant
Degha Shabbeleh – Parent & Special Education Assistant

2. Process used to develop the plan

During the 2003-2004 school year, the school attempted to apply for a Reading First Grant from the Minnesota Department of Education. Unfortunately, we did not receive the grant. The application process for the Reading First grant entailed lengthy discussions about the school's reading program that resulted in many good recommendations for improving the reading program. We would like our school-wide program to implement the suggestions generated from our detailed and exhaustive study of our school's reading program. As an outside facilitator, we consulted with Scott Flemming, formerly of the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools, and currently co-director at Ubah Medical Academy. During the 2004-2005 school year, the administrative team met to discuss the school not making AYP based on the 2003-2004 school year. Conversations with the faculty occurred throughout

the year to address this issue. Staff were also surveyed at the end of the year regarding the ideas for school-wide improvement.

3. Describe the 2009-20010 School-wide Plan. The Plan must be based on the “Ten Elements” as described under Title I, Part A, Section 114, School-wide programs.

Element 1: Comprehensive needs assessment

Leaders in the East African community founded the school in order to provide a higher level of academic standards for their children than was found in the large public school systems. Our student enrollment is comprised of 97% ELL and 97% free and reduced, East African students. About 7% of our student enrollment has been identified as having special education needs.

Our goal is to make sure that all students read at a proficient level according to state and federal standards and guidelines. Our school-wide plan focuses on that goal. The school has collected and reviewed extensive student achievement data throughout the 2008-2009 school year. In addition to state mandated tests such as the MCA Series, TEAE, and MN SOLOM, the school also has data from the NWEA Map Testing, and the LAS Links Language Proficiency Assessment, Dibels Reading Fluency, and common assessments. Based on this data and input from the staff, it was determined to continue with a reading coach, reading teacher, and reading paraprofessional for the upcoming school year.

A second need of our school, described in the Title I application, is to serve the ELL students in our building. Our emphasis this year will be to continue to strengthen our after school and summer school programs. We have also decided, based on staff input, to create PLCs for staff development and to purchase books for the classrooms to implement those strategies. Reading instruction is always a top priority for staff training and is continuous throughout the year.

Element 2: School-wide Reform Strategies

The school uses the Success for All Reading program, a nationally know, scientifically-based reading approach. The staff of the elementary school did an analysis of the reading program during last school year as a part of our continuous improvement approach. The staff suggested the following school-wide adaptations in our reading program.

- Continue to use SFA as the basic reading program for K- GR. 2 with modifications blending the SFA program and Guided Reading through the content materials for Science & Social Studies in Gr. 3 & 4.
- Continuation of a Reading Coach position, to facilitate the SFA program and provide specific reading intervention strategies and coaching for all Teachers and

Educational Assistants working with the program. The reading program will be overseen by our Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

- Continue the designated time allocated for reading instruction between 90 -120 minutes per day.
- Continuation of a Reading Teacher position to assist in lowering the reading class group size to maximize the success of our reading program.
- Continuation of a Reading Paraprofessional to facilitate our three reading tutoring programs to serve our neediest students in reading.
- Use the Reading Coach and Assistant Director of Curriculum, and Data Coordinator to assess student test data, discuss test data with the faculty, and create appropriate individual interventions based on student needs.
- The Reading Coach and Assistant Director will provide ongoing professional development in reading instruction, as well as mentoring for individual teachers, throughout the school year.
- Support After School programs at locations around the Metro area to encourage parent involvement in student academics.
- Support Summer School programs to provide opportunities for students to work on skills that they are behind with.

In addition, our schoolwide team decided to use the ARRA Title 1, Part A Stimulus dollars to continue to offer full-day Kindergarten, at no-cost to our families. Those dollars are to support three Kindergarten teachers and one Kindergarten Educational Assistant. In addition, ARRA stimulus money is used to pay for additional hours for the Data Coordinator and Reading Coach to plan and prepare for teacher workshop week and to work with the Assistant Director on data analysis and staff development needs for the year.

Element 3: Instruction by Highly Qualified Staff

The Board of Directors of the Twin Cities International Elementary School believes in hiring licensed teachers at the school. The following contribute to our highly qualified staff.

- All classroom teachers are licensed appropriately.
- Teachers are expected to improve their job competencies through yearly professional development programs. Financial incentives are given to teachers who attain higher degrees in education through our Board approved salary schedule.
- Paraprofessionals are hired only if they meet NCLB standards.

Element 4: High Quality, Ongoing Staff Development

We have identified important staff development needs through the use of teacher & support staff surveys and are addressing those during weekly staff development sessions totaling 2 + hours a week.

- Our ongoing professional development is focused in four areas – reading instruction, ELL best-practice, Data collection/Goal Setting for students and RtI and Early Intervening Services for at-risk students.
- The impact of the reading professional development and reading program changes will be measured by student performance on the standardized reading and language tests given by the school.

Element 5: Strategies Attract Highly Qualified Staff

- The hiring process involves the following constituencies in the school community – administration, board members, community members, and teachers.
- The interview questions posed to new employees make sure that they are philosophically aligned with the mission of the school. New employees report for 2 extra days of workshop in the fall in order to be fully oriented to school procedures.
- Our staff has many East African employees who serve as administrators, parent liaisons, community liaisons and bilingual educational assistants. These staff members promote a positive image of the school in the community.
- Public relations are handled by parent liaisons and community liaisons that work within the community to promote the school.
- We attend the MN State Educational Career Fair to recruit and provide information about our school to prospective educators.

Element 6: Strategies to Increase Parent Involvement

Some of our parents are recent immigrants to the United States who fully believe in the value of a good education. However, most of our parents are working poor who often have two or three jobs and are attending school themselves. As a result, they are highly supportive of the school but have little time to volunteer at the school.

- Because a majority of the school board is comprised of East African and Middle Eastern immigrants, the parents feel that the school is a culturally sensitive and welcoming place.
- The high number of bilingual educational assistants insures that parents can communicate in their native language. Our paraprofessionals make many calls home each week to talk to parents about their children’s progress.
- Parents are welcome at the school at any time. Bilingual staff are employed in the office to assist parents as soon as they arrive in the building.
- One of our main tasks is the need to help our parents understand the American educational system. This is done through a variety of parent evenings including conferences and specific content area emphasis.

- Data on parent attendance at conferences has been kept. We have a 97% attendance rate at parent conferences. The other 3% of parents are contacted by phone.
- Parents are invited to school events by written notification and, more importantly, by phone contacts through the use of a dual language phone tree.
- During the 2004-2005 school year, our parent liaisons introduced parent focus groups in order to determine parent needs and concerns. These groups were highly successful. Large parent meetings that were exceptionally well attended followed the focus groups. We plan on continuing this strategy in the upcoming school year.
- In addition, the after school program has been moved off – site to various locations in the metro area where parents can be a part of their children’s academic success.

Element 7: Preschool Transition

Because we are a charter school, we do not have “local” preschools that feed into our school. We will serve 120 kindergarteners during the 2009-2010 school year.

- Parent liaisons contact each incoming kindergarten family in order to familiarize them with the school.
- The kindergarten team, including the ESL, SPED and Reading Coach will gather data on incoming students in order to assess their needs. Bilingual paraprofessionals are an indispensable part of this process.
- The school’s kindergarten program is based on the SFA’s Kinder Corner curriculum.
- We also offer full day Kindergarten programming to help students achieve success in the future years.
- Each May, a Kindergarten Registration night is held for interested potential students and families. Activities include a bus ride, visiting classrooms and learning about what a day in Kindergarten is like at our school.

Element 8: Teachers included in assessment decisions

Teachers have an opportunity to be involved in educational decision-making at the school.

- In our reading program, teachers receive “hot lists” of students who are about to make a leap to a new level or who need a little extra help.

- The Reading Coach will be a lead person overseeing the collection of data and assisting teachers with data interpretation.
- The school uses the NWEA tests to measure student reading achievement. This is administered three to four times each year. Data is analyzed by teachers who then use it to adjust teaching practice and provide for the individualized needs of students.
- Teachers meet weekly with the Data Coordinator to review formal and informal assessment data on individual students, creating Individual Learning Plans for each student and if necessary, create an RtI Plan for those students.
- Teachers, students, and families set individual student goals for reading, math and social/emotional goals on a quarterly basis and review these goals and progress periodically.
- Teachers have continuous access to our data warehouse program, Viewpoint, which is updated on a bi-weekly basis or at the completion of a testing cycle.

Element 9: Effective, timely assistance for low-achieving students

- At the beginning of the school year staff use all available assessment data to identify our neediest students. These students are monitored for progress at a much more frequent rate than students who are closer to meeting state standards. These students are also invited to an after-school program which targets reading and math.
- Individualized learning plans are created at the start of each school year for all students based on current data and specific student needs. These learning plans are reviewed & updated with parents and students throughout the year.
- Our bilingual paraprofessionals provide tutoring in a timely manner for specific skills in all content areas that students may be struggling in.
- Weekly child study meetings give teams an opportunity to discuss student progress, concerns and intervention. In addition, the school has a family support team that uses a team approach to deal with students with severe difficulties – academic or behavioral.

Element 10: Coordination and integration –federal, state, and local programs

- We have targeted our funding toward reading, After School & Summer School programs, Staff Development and ESL collaboration & instruction.
- Because we are a single school and district, all funding is coordinated and part of a unified budget.
- The administration, Reading Coach, ESL and Special Education teams all work together to obtain necessary resources to meet our students' needs.

4. What goals, objectives, and strategies have been chosen based on the “Ten Elements?” Include 3-5 goals with corresponding school-level performance targets and strategies.

GOAL #1: All students will read at a proficient level.

School-level performance target: The number of proficient students will increase by at least 5% as measured by the state assessments.

Strategy: Specific reading interventions will be developed for struggling readers. A reading coach will provide high-quality mentoring and professional development for our reading teachers.

GOAL #2: Teachers will use assessment data to make decisions regarding improving their students’ reading performance.

School-level performance target: The number of proficient students will increase by at least 5% as measured by the state assessments.

Strategy: The Reading Coach will assist teachers in gathering, evaluating and implementing reading strategies based on student assessment data.

GOAL #3: All staff will utilize components of the SIOP (ESL) model.

School-level performance target: All staff will use components of the SIOP model across all content areas for all eight of the the SIOP components.

Strategy: Staff will review the eight Components of the SIOP model at the start of the school year& throughout our staff development. Staff will receive coaching and assistance with implementation throughout the 09-10 School year.

5. Describe the work plan to implement the identified goals and performance targets. What tasks are to be completed? What staff is assigned? What are the timelines utilized to document that tasks are completed?

- The Reading Coach will attend extensive reading and coaching training over the summer as well as work a number of days in early August to develop staff trainings and create a “best practices” literature binder for staff to utilize throughout the year.
- Staff will meet on a weekly basis to review student data and realign instructional strategies and resources based on individual student needs. Staff will create, implement and modify Individual Learning Plans throughout the year to help reach the identified goals and targets.
- Support Staff will be trained on a monthly basis & Licensed Staff on a quarterly basis by the Assistant Director of Curriculum and the ESL Team on the SIOP model. The same lead staff will also coach and mentor other staff to assist in the implementation of the SIOP model.
- The Data Coordinator will work with the Assistant Director to analyze state and local assessment data as well as work with teachers to streamline common assessments used throughout the curriculums.
- All staff will participate in a data retreat at both the start and end of the school year to be facilitated by the Assistant Director and Data Coordinator.

6. Describe briefly how your school-wide plan differs from your past Targeted Assistance program?

- The main difference is that this is a holistic approach to reading and staff development at our school that aims to improve the reading levels of all of our students.

7. What are the projected next steps for year 2 and year 3? (Be brief but show plan outline.)

- We will be continuing our SIOP training to enhance skills including an increase with SIOP coaching and mentoring.
- With the addition of a Reading Coach, Reading Teacher, and Reading Paraprofessional we will be collecting and analyzing the reading data to continue our focus on the improvement of reading proficiency levels.
- Creation of Response to Intervention plans complete with goal setting and state, local and common assessment data which has been shared with students and families and analyzed by teachers with the Data Coordinator.
- Continued work with standard alignment and the identification of “power standards” used to create common assessments and map the standards across grade levels.

8. Describe how the plan will be introduced to the school community (regular classroom teachers, other professional staff, students etc.)

- Teachers are familiar with the major parts of the plan because of their involvement in the discussions about the reading program. The plan will be reviewed for all staff at our fall back-to-school workshop.
- Tentative Plan is introduced at the Annual Meeting in June of 2009 for the upcoming school year, when parents are asked to complete a survey regarding how federal funds should be spent.
- Parents will be informed of the plan through normal means – parent handbook, school website, parent night meeting, and focus groups. etc.

9. Describe how “continuous improvement” has been embedded into the process. Continuous improvement includes ongoing evaluation of instructional goals outlined in the plan (revising or adding effective goals based on quality data.)

- The overall program goals will be assessed on an annual basis by the administration and the staff. Goals will be adjusted or changed based on progress noted during the school year.
- Student reading scores are assessed every eight weeks during the school year. An analysis of progress toward the reading goals will be reviewed each time.

- The staff will be surveyed regarding the effectiveness of staff development measures.
- The school's overall academic progress will be reviewed as part of the annual report process for charter schools.