

**School Improvement
External Team
Visitation Report
for
Nebraska Framework Schools**

Wausa Public School

Wausa, NE

March 12, 2014



NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Wausa Public School

External Visitation Team

Team Leader: **Margaret Sandoz, Niobrara Public School, msandoz@esu1.org**

	Member Name, Address, Phone and Email
	Mr. Jeff Hoelsing, Randolph
	Mrs. Rhonda Jindra, ESU #1
	Mrs. Angie Guenther, Niobrara
	Mrs. Doris Troyer, LCC

Wausa Public School

Onsite Review Agenda

Wausa Public Schools External Team Visit Agenda
March 12th, 2014

8:00-8:30	Orientation (Mrs. Margaret Sandoz, External Team Leader)
8:30-9:00	Welcome, school demographics presentation (Robert Marks, Superintendent)
9:00-9:30	Schoolwide Data Presentation (Brad Hoelsing)
9:30-11:00	RtI Presentation- K-6 Core Programs, Parallel Cores & Interventions, Summer School program, Gifted Program.
11:00-12:00	RtI 7-12 (Mentorship Programs, Career Period, Technology, Writing
12:00-12:45	Lunch with FBLA leadership team
1:00-2:00	Continuance of RtI High School
2:00-3:00	Tour of the School, Interviews Questions, External Team Meeting
3:00-????	Workshop and Presentation



Introductory Comments

Team Leader: Margaret Sandoz, Niobrara Public School, msandoz@npsd.net

A. Purpose of the External Visitation

Rule 10, Section 009.01A: The school system develops and implements a continuous school improvement process to promote quality learning for all students. This process includes procedures and strategies to address quality learning, equity, and accountability.

The basic purpose of the continuous improvement process is to conduct an on-going process for reviewing the educational performance and growth of students and, in those areas where performance is lower than expected or preferred, to institute a process of examining the reasons, setting improvement goals, identifying strategies aimed at improving the learning goal area, and verifying the performance gains.

The purpose of the external team visit and report is to document that continuous improvement is occurring.

B. Description of the Process for Gathering Information for the External Team Report

Serving on the SIP team for Wausa are Connie Vanness, Dawn Friedrich, Toni Arehart, Christy Koehler, Patricia Marks, Brad Hoelsing and Robert Marks.

Steps taken by the team:

First the school formed a Committee of General Education Teachers, Administrator, Special Education Teacher, and AimsWeb Data Coordinator. Next the team evaluated the Reading curriculum for K-6 grades. The group then completed the CORE survey over the Reading curriculum which was completed by the staff. Treasures Reading series was implemented in 2009 with the implementation of Lesson Maps in 2011. Based on their findings they utilized data to confirm their decisions and proceeded with the goals listed in this report.

Wausa utilizes four forms of data to evaluate students, instruction, and curriculum. Aimsweb, NeWA MAPS, ACT, and Core Phonics surveys/STAR Reading & Math

Ongoing team meetings and discussions continued throughout the process. Fidelity checks and audits were performed internally as well as externally by trained staff. Ongoing decision making is a product of the data reviews and analysis that the team makes periodically. Wausa has a dedicated and driven staff that expects their students to be high performers. This is seen in their classrooms, student products and overall school climate.



C. Background Information Specific to the District

Wausa Public School is located in the southeast corner of Knox County, approximately 35 miles northwest of Norfolk and 35 miles southwest of Yankton, SD. The district encompasses 120.6 square miles and has 210 students enrolled. Students receive, in addition to the core subjects, instruction in music, speech, business & technology, family & consumer sciences, agriculture, distance learning and on-line courses, industrial technology, computer sciences, and foreign languages.

D. Additional Remarks, etc.

Wausa Public Schools has developed a school improvement process that is effectively working for them to make educational decisions and support student learning.



Overview of Improvement Process

Reviewer's Name: Mrs. Margaret Sandoz

I. Description of the Continuous Improvement Process: (Team membership, timelines, summary of activities, and for public schools, a description of how multicultural education is incorporated into the process.

The district administrative team and an appointed steering committee (sometimes called the leadership team, school improvement team, or continuous improvement team) have primary responsibility for leading, coordinating, and monitoring the continuous improvement process. This includes the following duties:

- Reviewing previous continuous improvement activities
- Providing orientation/training/staff development for all staff
- Establishing and communicating timelines to all staff
- Coordinating school or district initiatives for continuous improvement
- Appointing and assisting committees
- Monitoring progress
- Establishing, through attitude and deed, a positive climate

II. Commendations: (Successful Activities, Procedures and Accomplishments in the Overall Progress of the School Improvement Process)

- Extra-curricular activities and a strong focus on social interactions have engaged most students and provided opportunities for success.
- The process is teacher driven
- The RtI program encompassed all goals, used to drive activities district wide and has clear process and procedures for implementation
- Wausa Schools is using data to make decisions
- Time is allocated for staff to work with students and plan programs
- Research is completed prior to decision making
- Staff recognized that time was a constraint and determined that some programs didn't work for their school (elimination of Accelerated Reader (AR))
- Intentionally creating a school environment that is work ethic focused
- Extended school opportunities (summer school, zero hour) are provided

III. Recommendations for Next Steps in the Overall School Improvement Process

- Continue to provide opportunities that meet the student interest through a variety of class offerings utilizing local and regional resources. Consider and explore career academies and expanding online offerings via dual credit classes or college credit offerings from area colleges
- Engage students in goal setting as individuals, classes and school to achieve common goals.
- Consider what new teachers are expected to understand about the RtI program and what mentor opportunities could Wausa utilize for successful transition for staff members.

School Improvement Goals

#	Description
Goal # 1	Student Performance Goal: All students will improve academic performance in the four core academic areas. Goal focus will be on improving academic achievement for regular and high achieving students while closing the gap between the highly successful and low and/or underachieving students.
Goal # 2	Learning Opportunity Goal: The district will expand and improve learning opportunities in the core academic areas for all students through curriculum and assessment alignment, continuing the writing process set in the previous CIP cycle, expanded curriculum opportunities, college credit access, expansion of career education, social education, RtI implementation K-12, and technology integration/ online and distance education.
Goal #	

Goal Report

Reviewer's Name: Mrs. Rhonda Jindra and Mrs. Angie Guenther

I. Goal # 1

Student Performance Goal: All students will improve academic performance in the four core academic areas. Goal focus will be on improving academic achievement for regular and high achieving students while closing the gap between the highly successful and low and/or underachieving students.

II. Comments about the Student Performance Goal (including goals, assessments, interventions/strategies, and/or staff development)

- The Student Performance goal is impressive! It is not only aggressive in its goal of improving academic performance in all four core academic areas but strives to support ALL students in their learning. In addition, the goal leads to a district-wide, systematic approach. Teachers use student achievement data to identify struggling, on-grade level and high achieving learners. Once identified, intervention strategies are identified and are implemented by staff. It's an impressive process.
- After reviewing the NeSA-Reading data after its first round of implementation, the Wausa staff recognized their student achievement results were not at the level they wanted. This served as a catalyst for change as the staff met the NeSA test scores head on—viewing it as a challenge for improvement! Working as a full staff, each administrator, teacher, and paraprofessional came together with one goal in mind: increase student achievement for all students. Working diligently to learn about and implement Response to Intervention (RtI) strategies, the staff created a district-wide process for supporting ALL Wausa students. The detailed plan and process are making significant improvements for increased student achievement.



III. Successful activities or strategies

- Wausa has an impressive Response to Intervention (RtI) process in place. The staff diligently researched effective intervention strategies for both elementary and secondary. Initially, the RtI process was implemented across the elementary. All elementary staff were trained in research-based intervention strategies, additional staff were hired to support the implementation of RtI, and time was provided for the analysis of data and the development and implementation of an effective intervention schedule. Accountability measures are in place to ensure fidelity of the program. In addition, after extensive and continued research, the secondary administration and staff developed and implemented an effective RtI process for secondary students. This process continues to be evaluated and improved upon to best support all 7-12 learners.
- The staff effectively analyzes AIMSWeb, Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Performance (MAP), and NeSA data to determine strengths and challenges for all learners. After periodically and consistently analyzing the data, staff identify interventions that will support struggling, on-grade level and high achieving learners. With fidelity checks in place, interventions provide the necessary support to meet all students' academic achievement.
- The Student Assistance Team (SAT) is a teacher-led process with exceptional strategies in place. Not only are the staff well-equipped to lead the SAT meeting, they are completing preliminary tasks prior to the meeting to ensure the face-to-face session is effective and efficient. Wausa administration has provided training that equips all staff with the SAT skills needed to effectively and expertly lead the process. In addition, the SAT process supports the implementation of RtI.
- Administration recognize time is required for staff to analyze data, develop a schedule that supports the RtI process, and continued professional development to equip all staff with the necessary knowledge and skills that support the implementation of K-12 RtI.

IV. Recommendations for next steps

- To further assist all learners, create an achievement system that equips each student with the ability to analyze their own data and set challenging goals. Whether setting individual student, class, building, or district-wide goals, provide the necessary time and skill for every student to fully understand their own achievement data and how to develop challenging goals to increase their academic performance. Provide needed staff development to support both administration and teachers in student goal-setting, as well as class, building and district-wide goal setting. Celebrate big and small victories as students assume ownership of their academic results. With deliberate time and attention for student goal-setting, Wausa Public Schools will continue to move forward as a leader in supporting all students academically.



Goal Report

Reviewer's Name: Mr. Jeff Hoelsing and Mrs. Doris Troyer

I. Goal # 2

Learning Opportunity Goal: The district will expand and improve learning opportunities in the core academic areas for all students through curriculum and assessment alignment, continuing the writing process set in the previous CIP cycle, expanded curriculum opportunities, college credit access, expansion of career education, social education, Rtl implementation K-12, and technology integration/ online and distance education.

II. Comments about the Student Performance Goal (including goals, assessments, interventions/strategies, and/or staff development)

- Conversations about the school goal of expanding and improving learning are the norm and part of the culture at Wausa Public Schools.
- Professional development opportunities such as AIMS WEB, Rtl, Career education are available for all staff.
- Utilization of para professionals and the expectations for everyone on staff to be a teacher demonstrates and ensures that all students from low level learners to high ability learners have the opportunity to grow and develop to the best of their abilities.
- Strong activity success parallels academic success.
- Instilling a strong work ethic is evident in the connection to community and service learning including volunteering, taking part in academic and fine arts classes and programs, and involvement in extracurricular activities- all of which require much time and dedication.



III. Successful activities or strategies

- The expansion and improvement of learning opportunities are demonstrated by the willingness of the staff to accept change and try new ideas and programs.
- The Elementary School's RtI Program K-6 provides reading interventions for individual students in addition to the allocated 90-minute core reading block.
- The collaboration and dedication of elementary teachers and para professionals to schedule and implement the necessary interventions based on documented test data demonstrates a group of hard working staff who have students' success as their motivation.
- The Middle School and High School's RtI program 7-12 consists of a Mentor Program, which recognizes that all students need support and someone who believes in them, and a Career Cluster Period because of the importance of engagement and students' futures.
- New programs such as "Student News", "Street Law"- civics class, English journalism, additional distance learning courses, and dual credit college courses are being put into place to expand learning opportunities for students to enhance and further their education.

IV. Recommendations for next steps

- Incorporation and documentation of Multicultural educational opportunities into all grades and courses.
- Continuing the K-12 RtI program moving to include the social awareness along with the current academic focus in K-6, and 7-12 including more of an academic focus along with the current social focus.
- Continuing to proceed with the Career Cluster period while exploring the idea of seniors working on scholarships and college/career preparation.

