

Organizational and Instructional Effectiveness Analysis

Component 4



Introduction

A team of teachers representing each grade level worked to analyze the organizational and instructional effectiveness of our school. The specific areas looked at were the current organizational and instructional program, an analysis of the curriculum, student access to multiple support mechanisms, leadership opportunities at the school, the use of technology, and collaborative/working relationships. A survey was given to faculty members to assess our areas of strength and areas of need. The survey revealed that overall our instructional and organizational effectiveness is fully developed (a sample survey and a chart of results are included in the latter part of this section).

Current Organizational and Instructional Practices

Scenic Hills Elementary is comprised of 30 self-contained PreK-5 classrooms. Our school has one librarian, one music teacher, one physical education teacher, one Spanish teacher, one part-time resource teacher (exceptional children), one guidance counselor, one instructional facilitator, one REA literacy leader, one pre-school teacher, one part-time speech pathologist, one part-time school psychologist, and one part-time social worker.

Scenic Hills Elementary School's instructional day begins with a two hour reading and language arts block. During this time students are participating in our school-wide Reading Renaissance strategy and completing the activities that are a part of the Scott Foresman reading and language arts curriculum. This two-hour block is followed by a one hour mathematics block in which students are actively engaged in the Everyday Mathematics curriculum. The mathematics block is followed by a science and social studies block where the students are participating in activities centered on the topics included in the curriculum guides. Students also attend support classes throughout the day that integrate skills in the content area. The support classes available for students include Spanish, music, physical education, library, and science lab. While students are engaged in support classes, teachers have the opportunity to participate in grade-level planning. During these planning sessions, teachers work together to plan instructional activities that are student-centered and support our curriculum. Teachers use a variety of strategies, including authentic instruction and assessment, to teach skills and evaluate students' performance levels.

Students are also given opportunities throughout the instructional day to participate in activities that are centered on their diverse interests and academic needs. Some of the most authentic experiences offered to students are field trips. Some of our most recent trips have been to the St Louis Zoo, the space museum in Huntsville, Alabama, the Hermitage and Tennessee State Museum in

Nashville, TN., Hot Springs, Arkansas, and the Memphis Zoo. Students are also given the opportunity to participate in activities such as the science fair, spelling bee, math-a-thon, geography bee, family math, science, and reading nights, CLUE, chorus, and various holiday programs. There are also after-school enrichment programs available for students in science and social studies. Additionally, there is tutoring available in mathematics and reading before and after school.

Scenic Hills Elementary School receives funding from several sources to support the programs that we have implemented. We presently receive funds from Title I, Memphis City Schools for site based monies, Reading Excellence Award (REA) grant, a Title VI grant, and a Memphis City Schools' Extended Contract grant.

Funding Sources for the 2002-2003 School Year

Site-based funds	\$ 61,891
Title I	82,386
Title VI	5,814
REA	216,645
Extended Contract	8,000

Student Access to Multiple Support Mechanisms

The faculty and staff at Scenic Hills Elementary School combine efforts to ensure that students have access to multiple support mechanisms to empower the learner for academic growth and achievement. At the core of our support system is the school guidance counselor. The counselor works with students to help meet their physical, emotional, and academic needs. The counselor also works closely with our school adopters to help meet the needs of our school community. The school counselor also acts as the coordinator for the S-team. The S-team (school support team) consists of the school guidance counselor, the school psychologist, the principal, teachers, parents, and any other support personnel. The S-team meets regularly to provide support and viable options for students experiencing behavioral and academic challenges.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team provides services to learners who have been identified as eligible for exceptional children services. The special education teacher serves as a lead staff member, working with the classroom teacher to develop modifications to meet the students' needs in the regular classroom setting. Each student has an IEP, or individualized education plan. This plan outlines, focuses, and monitors necessary and appropriate educational goals for each student. Revisions and modifications in the IEP are included in the instructional resource classroom and the regular classroom as part of instruction. Various teaching styles

and strategies include partners in learning, pacing instruction, breaking class assignments and materials into smaller segments, oral testing, additional time for testing, highlighting material, computer integration, and repeating directions. Most of our students in special education are on level III of the Least Restrictive Model, which is the placement of the special education students in the regular classroom for a portion of the day, and in instructional resource for a specified number of hours. Students may receive other services from the speech therapist, physical therapist, occupational therapists, or school counselor. All students participate in music class, physical education and wellness class, Spanish class and science lab. Our gifted population receives services in Creative Learning in a Unique Environment (CLUE) classes twice a week.

Curriculum Analysis

The curriculum at Scenic Hills Elementary is centered on the Memphis City Schools Curriculum Guides and state standards and benchmarks. These guides are provided for English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, music, physical education, and visual arts.

The English/language arts curriculum uses a balanced approach to literacy. Scott Foresman publishes the basal reading text used to support the curriculum. This text incorporates guided reading, writing, vocabulary skills, phonemic awareness, and critical thinking skills to increase students' reading comprehension. One of the more distinctive features of this text is the incorporation of leveled readers. These readers are very supportive in reteaching essential skills and concepts. As part of this curriculum, the kindergarten students focus on skills such as speaking in complete sentences, recognizing and reading sight words, identifying capital and lowercase letters, spelling their own names and other frequently used words, and developing writing skills. The first grade curriculum is expanded to include skills such as being able to read first grade material fluently, composing sentences with subject-verb agreement and correct capitalization and punctuation, decoding unfamiliar words, and writing short, original stories. The second grade curriculum incorporates the fore mentioned skills with the addition of requiring students to describe major and minor story details, state the main idea/theme from non-fiction passages, editing and revising compositions, writing simple paragraphs, summarizing information from bar and circle graphs and using the computer to prepare and present information. The third grade curriculum becomes more challenging in that students are also expected to read independently and fluently on grade level (both silently and orally), compare and contrast different types of reading material, write legibly in manuscript and cursive, explain a speaker's message and purpose, independently use reference sources, and use knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, and word parts to decode unfamiliar words. The fourth grade curriculum expands to require students to use simple and compound sentences correctly when speaking and writing, write well-developed paragraphs that state main ideas clearly and support them with related subordinate points, compose stories that include clearly developed settings, identifiable characters, and plots that consist of a problem, turning point, and sensible ending. They are also required to speak to express an opinion, persuade, or entertain. The fifth grade curriculum incorporates many

of the skills required of fourth grade students. Some additional skills required of fifth grade students are writing multiple paragraph essays and compiling information on a designated topic from a variety of sources and cite references for sources used.

The mathematics curriculum is centered on the skills incorporated in the Everyday Mathematics program, which is the text adopted and supported by our district. The Everyday Mathematics Program addresses the topics of numeration and order, algebraic reasoning, measurement, and geometry and spatial sense. Some of the more specific skill that kindergarten students work on are counting to 110+, reading numbers from 0-50, identifying coins and their values, comparing and ordering objects according to size, and using information from bar graphs and picture graphs to answer questions. First grade students count by ones and tens forward and backward, mentally add and subtract tens to and from 2-digit numbers, count coins and record their total value, create addition and subtraction number stories and write related number sentences, examine and extend patterns and numerical sequences, identify fractions, measure lengths of objects in centimeters and inches, and read, record and compare temperatures on a thermometer. Second grade students count positive and negative numbers, develop strategies for adding and subtracting 2 and 3 digit numbers, give the cent values for coins and dollars, use fractions to designate parts of regions, determine equivalent fractions, find the areas and perimeters of rectangles and squares, identify and compare 3-dimensional shapes, plot data on bar graphs and compare quantities from bar graphs, and use logical reasoning and technology to solve real-world problems. The third grade curriculum is expanded to require students to read, write, compare, and use whole numbers, fractions, and decimals, make money transactions that involve computing correct change, develop strategies for solving multiplication and division number stories, determine place values for numbers with up to six digits and decimals with up to two digits, make and use equivalent changes for metric and customary units of measure, identify characteristics of polygons and construct and measure angles using a protractor, find the mean and the median of numerical data sets, and use logical reasoning and technology to solve real-world problems and communicate and justify the results. The fourth grade incorporates using exponential notation for powers of ten, solving multi-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems, calculate unit prices and determine “better buys”, find areas of irregular shapes by subdividing them and combining their parts, determining the minimum, maximum, range, mean, median, and mode of given sets of data, and determining the latitude and longitude for given locations. The fifth grade curriculum expands on these skills by requiring students to learn how to find the common denominator of fractions, compare, add, and subtract fractions and mixed numbers, compare, order, add and subtract positive and negative numbers, use formulas to find areas and volumes, use scales, legends, key symbols, and markings to find locations on a map, use a compass, protractor and straightedge to construct and measure geographic figures, substitute values for variables and evaluate expressions, determine the probability of an event and express it as a fraction and use line plots, tally charts and stem-and-leaf plots to organize data and determine landmarks.

The social studies curriculum is centered on the following topics; history, geography, culture, government, economics, and individuals, groups, and interactions. Each grade level plans activities each six week to address these topics. A few of the skills that kindergarten students work on are examining how families change in size and where they live, identifying the differences among

people, identifying basic human needs, illustrating the history of the family, explaining the rules of the school and classroom, creating a timeline that depicts change over time, illustrating customs and traditions, and demonstrating an understanding and appreciation of character traits taught in the Memphis City Schools. Some of the skills taught in first grade are creating outline maps of local scenes, creating projects that depict life in Tennessee and the other parts of the United States, illustrating and respecting the rights of others, analyzing the relationship between family and other groups of people, locating where individuals live on a map of the neighborhood, state, country and world, and analyzing the purpose of government and political leaders. Second grade students design models to show the similarities and differences among various groups of people, interpret globes and maps and describe the geography of a neighborhood, present and perform portrayals of the responsibilities of living in a neighborhood, compare modern and ancient civilizations, use technology and other source materials to research the government and financial make-up of a community, demonstrate an understanding of the rights and property of others in a community, and identify and discuss ways to participate in the community to make a difference. The third grade curriculum requires students to analyze various types of maps with legends, recognize the contributions of people of various ethnic, racial, religious, and socio-economic groups to the development of America, list and describe basic components of earth's physical systems, explain how to use historical information acquired from a variety of sources, analyze and discuss the effect technology will have on jobs and careers in America, discuss the functions of the branches of government in America, and analyze the role of various explorers in the development of settlements in North America. The fourth grade curriculum is expanded to require students to use globes, maps, and technological resources to identify hemisphere, longitude, and latitude of specified areas, create displays and models to show features of natural regions, create projects depicting special events and historical aspects of the local community, create reports and presentations to demonstrate knowledge about the history of the state of Tennessee, and describe the economic and political connections America has with distant lands. The fifth grade students describe the economic development and growth of the United States, compare geographical information about specific locations in the United States, conduct research and create displays and reports on key discoveries and inventions in United States history, and analyze how environmental changes and crises affect the economy across the nation, analyze economic, social and cultural developments in the contemporary United States.

The science curriculum is centered on the topics of physical science, life science, and earth and space science. Each grade level plans activities that support these broad topics. Some of the specific skill that kindergartens work on are classifying materials according to properties (size, shape, and color), using rulers and balances to measure and compare objects, identifying the characteristics of magnets, describing the role the sun plays in weather conditions, investigating seasonal weather changes by recording daily weather conditions, describing plants as living things, locating the basic parts of a plant, sorting pictures of animals by structural features, observing and recording the growth of a plant from seed to flower, and distinguishing between living and non-living things. The first grade curriculum incorporates skill such as measuring and comparing the length and volume of objects/liquids using metric units, using a thermometer to measure the temperature of air and water in degrees, comparing types and strengths of magnets, describing how the sun benefits life on earth, observing and illustrating the moon's position in the sky at different dates, observing and sorting a

variety of earth materials that make up soil, comparing the stages of the life cycles of selected organisms, sharing observations of the similarities and differences between parents and offspring, and demonstrating how animals respond to changes in their environment. The second grade curriculum expands to require students to identify three states of matter, investigate different types of forces, examine how selected simple machines are used, explore the interactions between the poles of a bar magnet, identify various sources of light, identify and describe various sources of heat, use appropriate equipment to collect and record weather data, make observations and describe various kinds of rocks, identify the earth's major geological features, describe the function of each part of a plant, observe and chart the various phases of the moon over a month's time, and compare how organisms survive during stages of the life cycle. Third grade students observe and compare the behaviors of the stages of matter, select the appropriate unit to measure a variety of items, manipulate objects to demonstrate how sound is produced, demonstrate the rotation of the earth and explain how it causes day and night, describe how satellites and space shuttles are used, describe the processes and components of the water cycle, investigate factors that cause environmental changes on earth, describe how rocks change, observe and compare characteristics of selected plants, construct a model habitat for a given organism, and describe various means of seed dispersal. Some of the skills taught in fourth grade are investigating mixtures to determine if they are solutions or suspensions, identifying simple machines in everyday items, describing the effects of gravity on or near the earth, describing the movement of heat, classifying rock and soil samples to describe their appearance and composition, identifying the layers of the lithosphere, constructing a model of the water cycle and its dynamics, comparing and contrasting the structures of monocots and dicots, comparing and contrasting vertebrates and invertebrates, comparing and contrasting structural and behavioral differences of animals and plants in various environments, investigating the energy flow within a food web, and researching ways that humans have endangered the environment. The fifth grade students describe matter as being made of atoms, use the periodic table to identify elements, interpret graphs to describe force and motion, show ways that heat can produce light and light can produce heat, compare earth to other planets in the solar system, explain the cause for the change in the earth's seasons, identify and describe technological tools used to explore space, investigate how landforms are created by constructive and destructive forces, draw and label the parts of a cell, investigate and graph the growth of organisms, use fossil evidence to conclude that plants and animals undergo change, and examine and differentiate the populations and communities that make up an ecosystem and their functions within the ecosystem.

Leadership Opportunities at the School

There are many leadership opportunities for faculty and parents at Scenic Hills Elementary. One of the opportunities available for teachers is the position of grade chairperson. The members of each grade level select an individual to fill this position each year. This person is responsible for conducting grade level meetings, communicating with administrators, and supporting the work of the grade level team. Another leadership opportunity for teachers is to be chairperson of one of the committees at our school. Each committee is responsible for certain duties and activities that enhance the instructional day for students. For instance, the Bobcat Pride Committee is responsible for addressing safety concerns on the campus. The Literacy Committee does many activities throughout the

year to motivate our students to read and reward them for their performance. The Math, Science and Social Studies Committee coordinates activities such as the science fair and math-a-thon. The Courtesy Committee works to support staff members in times of celebration and in times of need. The chairperson of each of these committees facilitates meetings, communicates with administrators, and coordinates the work of the committee.

The School Leadership Council provides leadership opportunities for both parents and teachers. The council works together to discuss school issues and make important decisions. The council addresses issues that vary from curriculum concerns to budget needs. The council strives to have equal parent/teacher representation at all times. A parent is currently serving as chairperson of the council.

Another leadership opportunity available for parents and teachers are the positions on the PTO (Parent/Teacher Organization) board. This group of parents and teachers work diligently to enhance our instructional program. They coordinate fundraisers, implement incentive programs, work with our adopters, and do many other tasks that support our school community.

Use of Technology

At Scenic Hills Elementary the use of technology is incorporated in each classroom on a daily basis. Each classroom has 1-5 computers available for the students to use. These computers allow students to access the Internet. Teachers are encouraged to plan lessons and projects that require students to do research on the Internet. They may also present projects using a software program such as PowerPoint. The students utilize the computers on a daily basis as part of our Reading Renaissance Strategy. Students read books on their appropriate developmental level, conference with their teacher, participate in mini lessons and guided reading sessions, and take a test on their book using the Accelerated Reader Program. Several classrooms in our school also utilize the Accelerated Math Program. This program allows students to have additional practice on skills they have not mastered and review skills that they have mastered. There is also software available for teachers to use to help support the science and social studies curriculum.

As part of the REA Grant that was awarded to our school this year, students in grades K-3 work with several kinds of Leap Frog products to enhance their skills in phonemic awareness, letter recognition, word recognition, and reading. These products are technology based and help make learning and reviewing these skills an enjoyable experience for our students.

Some other pieces of technology used throughout the instructional day are televisions, VCRs, tape players, compact disc players, listening centers, and overhead projectors.

Collaborative/Working Relationships

There are many opportunities for the faculty at our school to collaborate with each other, parents, and community members. Much of the collaboration among teachers is done in grade level meetings and committee meetings. At grade level meetings teachers work together to develop lesson plans, plan activities and projects to support the curriculum, coordinate field trips, and many other tasks. Grade level teams have the opportunity to collaborate almost on a daily basis while their students are attending support classes. The committees at the school meet when necessary to coordinate activities such as the school carnival, science fair, math-a-thon, special recognition days, and Family Math, Science and Reading nights. They also meet to discuss items related to the curriculum and school improvement. There is teacher representation from every grade level on each committee. Another way that teachers collaborate with each other is through the mentoring program at our school. There are four faculty members that serve as mentors or guides for those teachers who are new to the teaching profession or new to Scenic Hills Elementary. They assist those teachers in many ways throughout the school year, from acquainting them with our building to helping them plan powerful lessons for our students. The staff volunteers to be cadre facilitators and these facilitators comprise the School Improvement Planning Team.

Teachers, parents, and administrators have the opportunity to collaborate during PTO meetings, School Leadership Council meetings, Family Math, Science and Reading Nights, Title I meetings, and days set aside for parent/teacher conferences.

One way our school community collaborates with our community as a whole is through the relationship we have with our adopters. We currently have three adopters for our school. These are Golden Gate Baptist Church, Wal-Mart Raleigh, and most recently The Coca Cola Company. These adopters work with staff members to help meet the needs of our students.

Conclusion

In September of 2002 our staff completed the NSSE Survey of Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness. The survey is arranged to elicit responses regarding curriculum, instructional design, assessment, cultures of continuous improvement and learning, educational agenda, and leadership for school improvement. After averaging the scores for each item, the committee found that most items received a score of 3 or higher. A score of 3 indicated that the objective is fully functioning or operational in our school (A chart showing the score for each objective is included in a later page). The following information shows some areas of strength and some areas of need in regards to the instructional and organizational effectiveness of our school. The areas of need identified are approaching the level of fully functional.

Areas of Strength

Assessments of student learning are aligned with clearly specified and appropriate achievement expectations.

The instructional and assessment functions of the teaching process are integrated data-driven instructional decision making.

Students are provided with a variety of opportunities to receive additional assistance to improve their learning, beyond initial classroom instruction.

The school provides skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

The school develops a shared vision, beliefs, and mission that define a compelling purpose and direction for the school.

The school monitors progress in improving student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection.

Areas of Need

The student learning assessment system does not provide for the collection of a comprehensive and representative sample of student performance that is sufficient in scope to permit confident conclusions about school achievement and yield generalizable results.

The school does not facilitate a collaborative process in developing the school vision, beliefs, mission and goals that engages the school community in an in-depth study and assessment of important information sources.

There is not a systematic process in place for monitoring, evaluating and renewing the curriculum that reflects a commitment to continuous improvement.

Evidence

Lesson plans, rubrics,
Grade level minutes

Lesson plans, Grade level minutes, to support
Faculty meeting agendas and notes

Tutoring and Enrichment class
schedules

Evidence

NSSE surveys

State achievement test data is
not available for kindergarten

NSSE Survey of Instructional Organizational Effectiveness Results

CURRICULUM	1	Develops a Quality Curriculum	3.06
	2	Ensures Effective Implementation and Articulation of the Curriculum	3.00
	3	Evaluates and Renews Curriculum	2.94
INSTRUCTION DESIGN	4	Aligns instruction with the Goals and Expectations for Student Learning	3.18
	5	Employs Data-Driven Instructional Decision Making	3.35
	6	Actively Engages Students in their Learning	3.11
	7	Expands Instructional Support for Student Learning	3.35
ASSESSMENT	8	Clearly Defines the Expectations for Student Learning	3.36
	9	Establishes the Purpose of the Assessment	3.18
	10	Selects the Appropriate Method of the Assessment	3.06
CULTURES OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND LEARNING	11	Collects a Comprehensive and Representative Sample of Student Achievement	2.88
	12	Develops Fair Assessments and Avoid Bias and Distortion	3.00
EDUCATION AGENDA	1	Facilitates a Collaborative Process	2.88
	2	Shared Vision Beliefs, and Mission	3.35
	3	Measurable Goals	3.17
LEADERSHIP FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	4	Promotes Quality Instruction	3.11
	5	Develops Schoolwide Plans for Improvement	3.05
	6	Employs Effective Decision Making	3.41
	7	Monitors Progress	3.35
	8	Provides Skillful Stewardship	3.41
COMMUNITY BUILDING	9	Fosters Community-Building	3.23
	10	Extends the School Community	3.17
CULTURES OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND LEARNING	11	Commitment to Professional Development	3.11
	12	Supports Productive Change and Improvement	3.00

