

School Improvement Implementation Grant Application
Bremen City Schools
Executive Summary

The following proposal represents the continuation of a comprehensive, system wide school improvement initiative that began with needs assessment and planning for restructure and reform in 1995. It has, from the start, been intended to address the learning needs of all students, P-12, and our efforts have been initiated in stages according to severity of both program specific and student needs and agreed upon priorities. Throughout this process, major support for our school improvement efforts has come from grant funding, donations, and both human and material resources of our community partners by their direct involvement and participation in planning, implementing, and evaluating our progress toward goals that they helped set. The ongoing initiative outlined in our system plan and application is in response to our present perception of where we are, where we want to go, what it will take to get there, and when we expect to arrive. Based on our four years of experience, we are confident that the process will continue to evolve and grow in response to changing conditions and the progress we make. In short, we are still engaged in a work in progress in Bremen.

We have elected to base our application on a recently up dated draft of our system improvement plan, which, in some instances, makes it look new rather than expanded and ongoing. It should be understood that our plan proceeds from 4 years of activity that has set the stage for moving to our planned next steps. We are encouraged and reinforced by the significant progress we have made and equally motivated to continue and finish what we have begun. In essence, we are continuing to adhere to need priorities established early in the game and later refined in the light of assessment findings and feedback from all of the players involved. Our plan accounts for its high level of complexity and resource demand by approaching it as an initiative for which we will pool and utilize all available resources. In order to accomplish the lofty goals and meet the high expectations and performance standards outlined in our plan and application, we will need to do just that with our time, material, human, and fiscal resources at hand. We are committed, and resolved to follow through.

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School Improvement Plan

The original system-wide comprehensive school improvement plan was developed through a process of strategic planning that involved a broad range of community and school system involvement. With the assistance of a School Improvement Planning Grant, the initial plan was developed with the understanding that it would be reviewed, assessed, and updated on an annual basis. Our present application is being based on the most recent update of our plan, accomplished over the last three weeks following the arrival of our 1998 / 1999 assessment results. The current update of the plan represents our system-level assessment of present improvement needs, system-wide long term goals and accompanying measurable objectives, baseline indicators based on the most recent performance results, and benchmarks of progress that are in direct response to the baseline test data. Due to our small system size, school-level plans are incorporated within our system-wide school improvement plan. This approach to plan development is in keeping with our commitment to ongoing improvement and with our goal of producing a seamless curriculum model that is aligned with assessment, both horizontally and vertically, and designed to take the full progression, from preschool to graduation, into account with respect to sequential skills development and prerequisite instructional arrangement. Some of the strategies that we will propose in this application are in direct response to our identified need and our corresponding goal to evaluate and restructure our curriculum in a logically stepped design.

Implementation Plan & Criteria Questions

1. System for Assessing Present Academic Status of Students:

Group average and individual score records are maintained at the school and central office on an annual basis to track the current status of our students' academic performance.

Nationally normed, standardized instruments are administered at all grade levels, 1st to 12th, [ITBS (1-8) and NAEP (9-12)]. In addition, individual and group data from other assessment sources (i.e. state writing tests, CRCT, SAT / ACT, GHSGT, G-KAP, AP Exams, etc.) are also examined as a part of determining present status. Other related information including

records of attendance, dropout rate, retention, percent eligible for HOPE Scholarships, number of students who require learning support or remediation on entering higher education institutions, discipline referrals, and grade point averages is also reviewed in our annual progress assessment process. Our system for assessing academic performance also includes an ongoing component, which provides for both periodic and continuous feedback on student achievement throughout each school year. This formative evaluation element draws on student grades at reporting periods and on progress reports, student cumulative folders and work samples, teacher developed and textbook based tests, and, in the case of our preschool and kindergarten students, developmental assessments, checklists, and readiness inventories.

Our attached 3-Year School Improvement Plan lays out the framework for our assessment and progress tracking system in some detail. Included in our goal statements (pages 9-11), information on currently available baseline achievement status is presented. Also please note goal #14 on page 11 that calls for the planned expansion of the assessment process to include nationally normed measures 1st through the 12th grade. Further information, that is illustrative of our present process and its proposed expansion, is presented in the three tables included on pages 13-15. Finally, a summary statement that describes our assessment process can be found on page 17, section H. In the outline on page 20, our plan to initiate the expanded evaluation procedures is documented by item (l.) under the 1999-2000 timeline presented there. In actuality, our plan is founded and built on a sound and comprehensive assessment procedure, conducted on an ongoing basis and open to appropriate modifications as may prove necessary.

2. Use of Baseline Assessments to Establish Student Achievement Needs:

Baseline assessment data is used to identify program, student grouping or school / grade level, and the individual achievement needs of our students. Program improvement and modification often become evident in reviewing the collective assessment reports that focus on populations served or content orientations. For example, at the high school level this year we were forced to take a hard look at our SAT / ACT scores, the numbers of our graduates who require learning support or remediation in college, and the number taking AP Exams in

the light of the high percentage of honor graduates, high grade point averages, and the number who qualified for the HOPE grant. We concluded that the two pictures drawn by our review of those school characteristics were mismatched and pointed to some school level and organizational level needs for change or improvement. That assessment data review caused us to examine our grading and the issue of grade inflation, to look critically at our instructional program and the scope of our course offerings, and to look for ways to increase our expectations of our students and, at the same time, to provide the group and individual learning support called for if our students were to be successful in reaching our raised standards. The review process used at the secondary level lead to strategic planning and in the process to application for the CSRD grant to support restructures and reform. It also led to our decision to move to a 4x4 block scheduling model and to adapt and adopt the High Schools That Work model. A similar process at the middle grades level lead to the decision to implement the full middle school incentive design. Program change and improvement needs can, as our experience has shown, grow directly out of an honest review of assessment results and the informed decision making and planning process that follows such a review.

The examples above also begin to demonstrate how we have used assessment information to make student group, content area, and school or grade level decisions and identify needs. As a direct result of our review of state writing assessment results, we initiated a reading writing lab approach at the middle school that led to significant achievement gains for our students as a group. The same planning and decision making process held true when we examined our primary level reading program and implemented a series of successful improvement strategies as a result. Student GHSGT results have also had a big impact on the decision to provide opportunities for students to apply their newly acquired skills and knowledge and to develop strategies for integration of subject matter across disciplines and for teaching problem solving. The process being used to identify group, grade level, or content area needs begins and proceeds from the use of the information we gain from assessment of student achievement.

In all honesty, we are still learning about how to best use test results and other assessment information to identify individual student needs and to plan and deliver instruction accordingly. Our past efforts have centered on our Student Support Team process and the identification of appropriate instructional modifications and adaptations, technological

support strategies, variations in teaching methodologies and other learning support needs. In addition, we are continuing to provide and expand our support for staff development and training related to identifying and addressing individual learning needs. Our current proposal and our updated plan explicitly calls for enhanced efforts in this regard. Our plan for utilizing and expand staffing resources is based in our recognition of our need to improve in this area. For instance, we will contract with or employ a person with training and experience with individual assessment and the use of test results to prescribe instruction. We also will provide the time for and involve our special program staff, with backgrounds in determining individual needs and modifying instruction, in consulting with other teachers with regard to teaching strategies and modifications. Our goal is to lay the groundwork for the provision of individually responsive instruction, teaching that takes learning styles and student strengths and weaknesses into account.

Our school improvement plan certainly calls for continued and expanded efforts related to the use of test score and other related assessment data. Baseline achievement information played a major role in identifying our needs for improvement outlined on pages 4, 5, and 6 of our plan, in making decisions about the priority rankings of those needs described on pages 6 through 9, in setting our goals presented on pages 9 to 11, and in formulating our benchmarks of progress listed in Table II on page 14 and in Table III on page 15. Both tables illustrate the fact that our anticipated and desired outcomes (benchmarks) begin with and build on or emerge from assessment of current baseline performance data. Even our general program related goals that address staff development, assessment procedure, and program operational improvement needs grow either directly or indirectly out of these baseline indicators or our recognition of the lack of enough information regarding current status (i.e. NAEP/ 9-12, preschool readiness inventories, etc.).

3. Specific Achievement Goals and Performance Targets:

The goals outlined in our plan that are directly related to the academic performance of our students (goals 1 – 12, pages 10 and 11) speak specifically to the instructional and learning needs of the children we serve in Bremen. It should be noted that that some of our goals are in response to comparative levels of performance in relation to state and national standards, and others are aimed at insuring that our students are prepared to meet our local

expectations and raised academic demands. Our goals, as presented, represent 3-year targets, and the increments of progress (benchmarks, page 14) reflect our best estimate of the outcomes of our school improvement efforts. Each of the goals noted above is in response to an identified improvement need that has been given priority for continuing, expanded, and/or newly initiated improvement strategies aimed at bringing about the corresponding desired change in performance. Where increments of progress are concerned some variation can be expected; but our benchmarks are realistic and reachable, and they allow us to examine our progress toward each goal and provide direction in the ongoing process of planning and decision making for improvement.

In actuality, goals 1 – 12 are group oriented and based on the theory that “a rising tide raises all ships.” It is difficult, if not impossible, to be specific with goals that directly reflect individual needs and our associated expectations. Nevertheless, our ultimate objective is to improve in our skills and abilities to provide more individually responsive and prescriptive instruction. That is where our more generic goals (14 – 16, page 11) come into play. They involve staff development, technological support of both teaching and learning, using the expanded array of assessment results to plan and provide individually appropriate instruction, and the provision of other program and organizational supports. With those elements in place, it is our view that all students will rise with the tide accordingly.

4. Specific Benchmarks (Increments of Progress) Toward Reaching Established Achievement Goals:

Tables II and III included in our plan (pages 14 and 15) provide specific increments of progress for a 4-year period at grade levels 3, 5, 8, and 11 (ITBS and GHSGT) and for other performance elements as well (i.e. SAT/ACT, writing assessment, GKAP, number of students retained, etc.). Also included in our “Areas of Demonstrated Need for Improvement” (pages 3 – 6), and “School Improvement Goals” (pages 9 – 11) are baseline indicators and targeted performance levels for each area and corresponding goal presented. Identifying benchmarks of progress, then, involves the application of a formula that takes the difference between the baseline and targeted levels and divides it over the same 4 years specified for the ITBS and GHSGT noted above. By this scheme, for instance, at the 6th grade level where the

current baseline for reading is NPR/65 and the performance target is NPR/75, the benchmark indicators can be identified across those years as 2000 – NPR/67, 2001 – NPR/69, 2002 – NPR/72, and 2003 – NPR/75. It is important to note that the increments of progress are larger in the last two years allowing for greater gains as the improvement initiative progresses and as we provide more staff development and support. Again, we must point out that these are estimated increments of progress that may vary from our projections in actual practice. They lay the framework, however, for ongoing planning and development.

5. How Goals and Performance Targets Relate to QCC Academic Areas:

There is an evident link between the academic areas addressed in our stated goals (pages 9 – 11) and the Quality Core Curriculum basic skills and content areas. The primary or core academic disciplines of Reading/Writing/ English/ and Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies are all directly targeted in our goals and benchmark indicators. These areas are at the core of the QCC and our locally adopted curricular enhancements and enrichments, and particularly at the primary and elementary levels, they constitute the bulk of our instructional programs. We have a continuing commitment to improving our academic foundation building strategies and the outcomes of their implementation. Our current levels of progress in these core academic areas are well documented in our school improvement plan, and the raised expectations and standards established for our school system clearly illustrate their importance and high priority status at the local level.

Where the curriculum is concerned, the more global objectives reflect our recognition of a need to align and articulate the design and structures involved. That issue is addressed in a general sense by goal 16 (page 11) which calls for a comprehensive initiative to evaluate, map, and, in direct response to that curriculum review and study process, to redesign and restructure accordingly. It is also supported by goals 13 – 15 (also page 11) that reflect the need to provide staff development informing data and administrative / communicative systems in support of this key effort. Our primary aim is to create a seamless curricular flow that begins at preschool and kindergarten with a focus on readiness and preparation, proceeds on to the foundation for learning core academic skills and knowledge at the 1st – 3rd grade levels, moves beyond to a point in the 4th and 5th grades where academic disciplines

begin to be addressed both separately and in an integrated fashion, and then in steps through the middle and secondary levels where the integration and departmentalization continues to be refined, expanded , and further applied. This entire restructuring process implies the need for prerequisite sequencing, for carefully managed and maintained communication and collaboration systems across each step and up and down the curricular structure, both horizontally and vertically. The need for this initiative cannot be overstated. It is critical to insuring that our students will be able to meet the raised expectations and standards that we have adopted in this revision of our plan.

When strategies are outlined and discussed, other essential elements will begin to take shape. The integration of instructional content is one such approach. As a safety net for students who may have special needs for learning reinforcement, generalization, and practice, we have also identified the infusion of basic academic skill instruction in all exploratory and elective courses of study and in those related to vocation and careers. Like content integration this approach helps students recognize the link between the academic areas and the real world. Opportunities to apply skills and knowledge and explore the ways they are being practiced in the community further support the strengthening of our core academic instructional programs. A final example, reflected in our decision to implement foreign language instruction, K – 8, illustrates our research supported theory that building a broad and varied fabric of language translates into elevated performance in the areas associated with learning and using our own (i.e. Reading, Writing, Speaking, English / Language Arts, Social Studies, International / Global Studies, Science, Geography, etc.) and in achieving proficiency in foreign language study later on.

In the ways noted above and in others that will evolve as we proceed, our school improvement plan directly addresses the learning / teaching needs of all students in each of the academic areas of the QCC. It is also evident that our plan goes beyond that basic curriculum structure to address its interrelated elements, its relevancy, and its relationship the development of abilities that go beyond content to application and problem solving. Our plan is predicated by our belief that there is no “quick fix” or simple solution. Where curriculum restructure is concerned, building on the foundation that the QCC provides, the task is monumental but equally essential to getting where we want to go We see it as

unavoidable if we are to put all of the parts of the reformed educational process in their right order and place. We see it as a challenge and an opportunity, and our plan reflects our willingness to take it on.

6. Programs and Strategies to be Implemented to Meet Performance Goals:

Our plan lays a framework for the selection of strategies and program approaches in several distinct ways. First, it sets a standard for choosing strategies that requires that they be proven in practice, demonstrated to be successful in producing academic achievement gains, and based in sound effective schools research (see page 1, Introduction). It also identifies our primary emphasis on academic performance and instructional accountability by incorporating secondary target outcomes (i.e. self- concept, socialization, motivation, etc.) in with sound approaches to teaching academics. The selection of programs and strategies is further defined and guided by our current performance status, our identified priorities, and our specific goals related to performance and instructional improvements. For example, we determined in planning and decision making that a remediation oriented reading instruction model was not appropriate to the needs of our primary level students who have made great gains over the past 3 years. That does not mean that some degree of learning support and programming aimed at filling skills gaps will not be required, but it does mean that some blend of accelerated and reading enrichment strategies is more suited to our local needs. Due to our past efforts, the population of students who struggle with learning to read has been significantly diminished. This example clarifies how current performance status and assessment data drives the program/ instructional strategy selection process in a profound way.

In section I., Research Supported Improvement Strategies, in our plan (pages 17 – 20), specific strategies either in process or planned are presented in some detail. They include continued, expanded or enhanced, and others to be initiated according to our established

timelines and involve specific instructional approaches and/or support element strategies that we have researched and included in our comprehensive system wide approach to school improvement. The plan narrative also points out that others are likely to emerge as we proceed over the next three years. In many instances they do not involve abandoning old ways of teaching our students and facilitating their learning and achievement. Rather, they call for augmenting and enhancing familiar, tried and true methods and putting related support mechanisms into place. In either case, they adhere to the research based standards noted earlier, and throughout the 3-year implementation stages, they will be held up to the screen of assessment results and outcomes. In this approach the process of modifying and adjusting becomes an ongoing one.

7. Rationale for Programs and Strategies Selected for Targeted Student Populations:

Our school improvement plan provides specific rationale statements for our identified and ranked priorities that have direct bearing on our reasoning for choosing programs and approaches or, in some instances for not selecting them. That information can be found on pages 6 – 9 of the plan. In keeping with those identified priorities, each actually being viewed as an essential element in the overall approach and, therefore, not ranked in terms of ones that we will or will not do, our corresponding goals were defined and listed on pages 9 – 12. As one might logically expect, our strategy selection process is intended to respond to each of our identified goals.

Due to the small and contained nature of our school system (P – 12 / 1,350), our plan actually targets the entire district population. Our reasoning there involves two primary factors. The first is related to our belief that each level is dependent on the one that comes before and also lays the groundwork for the next. With that in mind, we believe that doing a complete and thorough job of school improvement involves and requires our addressing improvement needs at all levels. For us, we are convinced, this is an accomplishable task. The second of our reasoning points is based in our commitment to improvement as a continuous product of ongoing efforts. Therefore, the fact that we have begun the initiative at one level and produced significant achievement gains does not signal a cause to stop or even to slow down. To the contrary, it begs our continued, renewed, and expanded efforts keep the momentum

going and to produce more progress. It would be foolhardy to assume that continued and sustained progress could be maintained without our ongoing efforts. Staff turnover, changing conditions, and demands alone require it, and our plan assures our diligent maintenance of what we have begun.

On the other hand, our plan also identifies 3 specific grade groupings as targets of new efforts, programs and strategies to be initiated. The rationale for the selection of each is provided in the body of the plan, and it will be further clarified as follows. The bulk of our efforts to date have been directed at the primary academic “building block” stages of learning, our focus on laying a proper foundation. Some efforts have addressed isolated critical needs at other levels (i.e. writing at the middle grades), but the big push was to reform our readiness and foundation skill development programs and processes. Given the dividends paid by those efforts, we believe that the time has come to and is right for a major shift in focus and attention. Three target populations have virtually been waiting in the wings.

The first, upper elementary (4 and 5), has needs that mirror those of their younger counterparts but are more complicated by virtue of their development to date. Some of our students in these grade levels, not having had the full advantage of our previous improvement initiatives at the preschool and primary levels, are experiencing learning and resultant performance deficits. This may be due to our past practices that did not always take into account that some students learn and respond differently to approaches aimed at the majority of our students, the quality of their early preparation and readiness skill development, or because of specific skill gaps and foundation flaws that they may have for a multitude of reasons. Regardless of the cause, we are essentially faced with reversing the trend and with backing up and doing the job better this time. The approach differs from that used at the lower levels due to age, interests, and, for some, a history of having learning problems. The selection of strategies becomes more complex in this instance because other factors like motivation, relevancy, and the cumulative effects of missing foundation blocks come more strongly into play. For this reason our focus will be on acceleration of learning and recovery and/or establishment of missing skills, on approaches that allow students to be more actively engaged in the learning process, and on the provision of opportunities to apply

skills and knowledge in relevant meaningful ways. We also believe it will be necessary to provide a rich blend of strategies and programs if we are to meet the unique needs of all of our upper elementary learners. Such strategies include adaptations of “Hands on Math”, Reading Recovery, Accelerated Reader, multiple intelligence/ learning styles based instruction, application through technology, service learning, expanded community involvement, after school reading challenge, and learning enrichment methodologies.

The second target population that we will focus our efforts with is the middle grades level (6 – 8). In our needs assessment and ongoing planning process over this school year, we determined that the full implementation of the state recommended Middle School Incentive model would be in the best interest of our students at this level. The adoption of that model allows us to significantly expand the scope of our exploratory curriculum, to provide for common team planning time, to integrate curriculum across academic discipline areas, to expand and strengthen staffing, and to enhance our core academic course offerings. The full implementation of this model supports the use adoption of many of the same programs and strategies noted above. In addition, due to our recent experience and success with the reading/writing lab at the middle school, we will pursue an expansion of our technologically based teaching and learning support strategy that allows us to provide individually responsive instruction and continuous feedback.

The third target population is the (9 – 12) secondary level. Our reasoning for a focus at this level was largely driven by the assessment results available at present and, to some degree, by missing assessment elements. In summary, we found that in our high school, where a large percentage of the students graduate with honors, qualify for the HOPE Grant, and do quite well on the GHSGT, scores on the SAT/ACT are well below state and national averages and a high percentage of our students entering Georgia colleges and universities needed instructional support and remediation. It is also important to note that 43% of the student population come from families who pay tuition for them to attend our school. We ended up forced to ask ourselves, “What’s wrong with this picture?” Opening our closet doors and doing an honest and hard needs assessment process revealed some key improvement issues. WE determined, for example, that due to school size and perhaps even old habits, our curriculum was quite limited and not nearly in keeping with effective SAT/ACT score gain

approaches that emphasize a more rigorous and demanding academic curriculum. As is always the case, that realization led to others.

We came to see that in a school our size, in order to expand and enhance the curriculum, we would have to change our scheduling procedure. We also examined and found our vocational programs and the integration of those courses with academics to be ripe for improvement. We also decided that expanding elective offerings was something that needed doing. In combination, this all led to the search for effective/ research based solutions and ultimately to the decision to move to 4x4 block scheduling and to adopt the High Schools That Work model as the foundation for our restructure and reform efforts. The selection of strategies involving the use of technology to support and enrich instruction, the infusion of academic content in all elective and vocational courses, the integration of academic disciplines, and others followed.

Across all these levels, we will also focus on our populations of special needs/at-risk learners, those with identified disabilities, and those with exceptional talents and gifts. We believe that our emphasis on the use of assessment results to plan and prescribe individually responsive instruction will better prepare us to address the varied needs of these students as well. Staff development will be a key strategy in this regard, and our training efforts will have a primary focus on instruction for all students. We will also attempt to minimize the use of “pull out” models of instructional delivery, opting for and supporting approaches that use modifications and adaptations of instruction instead. Again the strategies that involve active engagement in the learning process and application / exploration come strongly into play. How we teach what we teach also becomes a primary focus for us at this and other target levels.

Finally, our more generic and cross-dimensional elements and corresponding strategies are being viewed as keys to the success of this comprehensive and complex improvement approach. For all of our goals and our strategies to meet them, whether they be continuing or to be initiated, staff development and training, curriculum restructure, expansion of the assessment process to allow us to be able to examine point to point progress at all levels of learning, expanded and improved capacity for instructional leadership and support,

increased community involvement and extended access to technology for teachers, students and parents will be the keys to our success.

In the final analysis across all levels, we have determined that our needs to improve are not so much based in how well we have taught the things that we have but, rather, in the things we have not taught and in our skills and abilities to address the learning needs of all students. Our teachers deserve to be recognized for the progress that our students have made to this point and for their efforts to better prepare themselves to take the next steps reflected in our plan. In addition, we are motivated to implement the improvement steps outlined in the plan by our successes of the past. At the levels where we have concentrated our resources and improvement efforts previously, we have produced and sustained impressive student achievement gains. We are confident that expanded initiatives at other levels will meet with the same success.

8. Timeline for Implementation of Programs and Strategies and Accomplishment of Our Goals:

As reflected in the basic timeline presented in our plan (pages 20 and 21), we have designated a 3-year implementation period and a 4-year period for the accomplishment of our goals. Most of our programs and strategies are ongoing or to be implemented beginning next school year. Some are designated as being initiated in stages (i.e. High Schools That Work, expanded course offerings, elementary and middle grades foreign language instruction, etc.), while others are initiated and considered continuing beyond that point (i.e. Accelerated Reader, Middle School Incentive, 4x4 block scheduling, etc.). A few are being delayed for implementation after other elements have been put in place. Our reasoning for the 3-year / 4-year timeline structure is based in our realization that some elements (i.e. staff development and training, curriculum expansion and redesign, assessment program enhancements, etc.) will unfold over the full implementation period and will not yield full benefit until they are completed and established as what we do. Full accomplishment of our goals becomes more likely following the completion of the programs being implemented and established and the instructional and support strategies being put in place.

9. Design for Evaluating Academic Achievement Gains and Progress in Implementing Strategies:

A brief outline of our evaluation design and process appears in our system wide school improvement plan on page 17. First and foremost, the design concept is based in our feeling the need to have a nationally normed measure of point to point progress at every level of schooling where an appropriate one exists. For us this means ITBS at 1st through the 8th grade and NAEP at the 9th through the 12th. State writing assessments, CRCT instruments, SAT/ACT measures, GHSGT, G-KAP, Readiness tests, and other instruments can also contribute valuable information to add to the scope of our summative evaluation process as it directly relates to student achievement gains. Our plan for formative or ongoing assessment of progress and the provision of feedback to students, teachers, parents and community participants includes the use of teacher made tests, grading rubrics, cumulative work sample folders, teacher observations and records, developmental inventories and other similar sources of information. In addition we are planning to use pre- and post-test administration when appropriate to assess skill development and strategy effectiveness. The use of existing and supplemental records (i.e. attendance, discipline, participation, retention, grades, etc.) is also planned to extend the scope of our assessment process. Finally, limited use of qualitative measures (i.e. attitude and perception instruments, questionnaires, satisfaction inventories, checklists, and opinion polls and interviews to complete the picture in terms of overall program success.

Our aims in terms of increased teacher skills and abilities are more difficult to evaluate and depend to some extent upon the bottom line indicators of student academic achievement gains. Nevertheless, we do plan to develop and implement a teacher evaluation process that contributes to the meaningful and reliable assessment of teacher skill and ability improvements. We believe that when you raise expectations and demands for students, you unavoidably do the same for their teachers. We further believe that the target population that includes administrators, teachers and support staff needs and deserves to have leadership, support, direction, and feedback as much as our students do.

Finally, although it is not specifically addressed in our school improvement plan, we are gearing up to document our progress toward the implementation of programs and strategies, and ultimately, as noted above, to assess their respective effectiveness in our schools and for our students. Most of the implementation and adoption processes involve the production or development of products, models or guides. These will stand in evidence of our having done as we planned. Where that is not the case, we will keep logs and journals of our activities and processes and maintain records of involvements and implementation milestones. Where consultant directed implementation and adoption efforts are involved, we will ask those individuals to assess and report our progress from an expert and/or experienced perspective.