

Fairfax County Public Schools

**School Improvement Plan
2009 – 2010**

Great Falls Elementary

Cluster 1

Ernest Leighty, Principal

FCPS School Improvement Planning Process “Continuous Improvement”



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Name	Position	Name	Position
Ernest Leighty	Principal		
Barbara DeHart	Assistant Principal		
Joanne Schilling	Reading Teacher		
Jenny Anderson	Counselor		
Lisa Prillaman	School Based Technology Specialist		
Lorraine Ryan	Special Education Teacher		
Susan Klotz	1 st Grade Teacher Math Lead Teacher		
Donna Kuster	1 st Grade Teacher Math Lead Teacher		
Phyllis Casey	4th Grade Teacher Science Lead Teacher		
Phyllis Moer	5 th Grade Teacher Math Lead Teacher		
Julie Roe	6 th Grade Teacher Social Studies Lead Teacher		

VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS AND CORE VALUES/BELIEFS

FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS—VISION STATEMENT

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE—FCPS prepares all students for the world of the future, by giving them a broad spectrum of opportunities to prepare for education and employment beyond high school. All graduates are productive and responsible members of society, capable of competing in the global economy, and motivated to pursue learning throughout their lifetimes.

COMMITMENT TO OPPORTUNITY—FCPS values its diversity, and acknowledges that all people contribute to the well-being of the community. FCPS provides opportunities for all its students and employees to grow educationally, personally, and professionally.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT—Fairfax County embraces its schools. Businesses and community members generously volunteer their time and resources to help students. Schools are integrated into the fabric of the community, and residents take pride in their schools. The success of FCPS draws businesses to Fairfax County. Citizens support the financial and capital needs of the school system.

ACHIEVEMENT—Fairfax County students achieve at high levels across a broad spectrum of pursuits. FCPS values a well-rounded education that goes beyond basics, and encompasses the arts, literacy, technology, and preparation for the world of work. FCPS provide a breadth and depth of opportunities to allow all students to stretch their capabilities.

ACCOUNTABILITY—FCPS is accountable for the academic achievement of all students. FCPS measures academic progress to ensure that all students, regardless of race, poverty, language, or disability, will graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary for college and/or employment. FCPS spends money wisely. FCPS directs funds to the classroom, and finds ways to improve performance across the spectrum of academic programs and business processes.

FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS—MISSION STATEMENT

Fairfax County Public Schools, a world-class school system, inspires, enables, and empowers students to meet high academic standards, lead ethical lives, and demonstrate responsible citizenship.

SCHOOL—VISION STATEMENT

Great Falls Elementary School will empower its students to contribute and communicate effectively in the world in which we live. Together as a school community of life-long learners we will help students to become creative, collaborative problem solvers.

SCHOOL—MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission as a school community is to educate each student to become a responsible, caring individual who learns to learn and loves to learn. We do this by creating opportunities for students to explore, think critically, collaborate, and problem solve in an environment of awareness of respect for self and others. We do this so that our students are empowered to become lifelong learners and strong ethical citizens who positively impact their school and community.

SCHOOL—CORE VALUES/BELIEFS

We believe all of our Great Falls students can learn. We also believe all Great Falls students can demonstrate good citizenship in school and in the community.

- Our Great Falls students will be provided with a positive, welcoming school atmosphere.
- Our Great Falls students will become aware of and demonstrate integrity, respect and responsibility to self and the community by participating in school-wide activities and programs.
- Our Great Falls students will have assignments and instruction appropriate to their levels of learning and learning styles in order to maximize their potential.
- Our Great Falls students will use critical thinking/problem solving skills as applicable to all subject areas to promote ownership and connections to learning.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

- After-school instructional programs including chess club, extended physical education, Mad Science, art, and foreign languages **(A)**
- Classroom Buddies **(A, E)**
- Character Education **(E)**
- Art Enrichment Program **(A)**
- Community Service Groups/ PTA sponsored Kids Care Club **(E, C)**
- Peer Mediation **(A, C)**
- Certified National Habitat **(A, C)**
- WGFS Morning Announcement News Program **(A, E, C)**
- Continental Math **(A)**
- Geography Bee / Spelling Bee**(A)**
- Virginia Young Readers **(A)**
- Library Fan Club **(A)**
- Math 24 Challenge (Grades 5-6) **(A)**
- Poetry Writing- Great Falls Women's Club Contest (Grades 4-6) **(A, C)**
- Differentiation Strategies / William and Mary Enrichment Literature Units (Grades3 -6) /Jacob's Ladder/ Navigators **(A)**
- Japanese Immersion Program **(A)**
- GT Programs-Level 1-4 (Level 4 grades 3, 4, 5 & 6 only) **(A)**
- WordMasters **(A)**
- Odyssey of the Mind **(A)**
- "Go Green" Club **(C)**

Connection to School Goals Key:

A- Academic

E- Essential Life Skills

C-Community

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOAL—ACADEMICS

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOAL: All students will obtain, understand, analyze, communicate, and apply knowledge and skills to achieve success in school and life.

Check all that apply to this school improvement plan objective.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.1. Achieve their full academic potential in the core disciplines of: | <input type="checkbox"/> 1.3 Explore, understand, and value the fine and practical arts. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1.1.1 English language arts | <input type="checkbox"/> 1.4 Understand the interrelationship and interdependence of the countries and cultures of the world. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1.1.2 Mathematics | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.5 Effectively use technology to access, communicate, and apply knowledge and to foster creativity. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1.1.3 Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1.1.4 Social studies | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1.2 Communicate in at least two languages | |

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE: *(action-oriented: What we will do to improve programmatic and/or instructional effectiveness)*

The staff will implement lessons that teach students strategic, critical, and skillful independent reading skills in all core subject areas. The staff will implement specific strategy instruction and provide modified, differentiated support to students in the sub-groups, students with disabilities and limited English proficiency.

RATIONALE FOR OBJECTIVE: *(student performance data; knowledge of programmatic/instructional strengths and weaknesses; best-practice research)*

Data Sources:

SOL—Standards of Learning data was analyzed. Although data showed a passing rate of over 95% in English, Math, Social Studies, and Science in 2007-2008, it did not indicate an ability to go beyond minimum competency. Information about students' abilities to use reading comprehension strategies and communicate a deeper understanding of content was not evident in the data.

Anecdotal Data—teacher input/ information gathering staff meeting—Teachers feel strongly that students should be able to effectively recall, reflect and respond to a variety of texts in all subject areas. Teachers also feel that students should use technology along with current methods to support these skills.

Evaluation of Prior School Plan Goals—At the end of the school year, teachers noted that they did not want to go on to a new focus book in reading comprehension. They felt the book we used **Teaching Reading in Social Studies, Science and Math** was useful, but

they needed a continued focus in this area. It was noted that teachers and students needed additional practice in this area in order for it to be a daily part of their teaching and learning.

Knowledge of Programmatic/Instructional Strengths and Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

Teachers are working on and building a uniform or consistent approach for teaching and using reading strategies across the grade levels. Teachers may be using strategies differently; therefore, students may be getting inconsistent information. We want to ensure that all students have a *uniform* understanding of strategies as they move from one grade level to the next.

We need to continue to prioritize the skills that should be included in each classroom.

We need to continue to ensure that there is a balance of literacy instruction across the grade levels—certain things should be ongoing, students should have a variety of experiences.

We need to follow-up on the staff development sessions—there needs to be continued accountability for the key pieces that need to be included in reading comprehension.

We need to continue to provide specific times where staff can reflect and develop lessons that support school goals.

We need to provide professional development on the use of modified and differentiated instruction to address the needs of the identified sub-groups.

We need to provide consistent opportunities to collaborate in vertical teams to discuss ideas, suggestions, and concerns in all curriculum areas.

Strengths

Our school has many resources available to teachers and students—supplementary materials, print, books, technology, human resources (volunteers/specialists), manipulatives, Strategies Lab.

We have a strong parent support system for volunteering in the classroom.

Teachers have been exposed to a variety of techniques and staff development (training, Teacher as Readers, Teacher Research, and coursework)

Teachers are actively participating in Professional Learning Communities where they discuss and share information about teaching—especially related to reading comprehension and strategy instruction in all subject areas.

Teachers feel they can talk openly about their success and struggles in the classroom.

Teachers actively seek out guidance and resources from all specialists in the building.

Best Practice Research:

Best Practice for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools by Steven Zemelman, Harvey Daniels, Arthur Hyde- Schools need to have a solid plan for teaching reading—it should be taught as a process where teachers provide students with strategies that activate prior knowledge, opportunities to make and test predictions, structured help during reading, and after reading applications.

What Really Matters for Struggling Readers by Richard Allington

Kids Need to Develop Thoughtful Literacy--“The research on comprehension strategy teaching provides powerful evidence that most struggling readers (and many not so struggling readers) benefit enormously when we can construct lessons that help make the comprehension processes visible.” (p.98)

Researchers have identified nine instructional strategies that are most likely to improve student achievement across all content areas and across all grade levels. These strategies are explained in the book [*Classroom Instruction That Works*](#) by Robert Marzano, Debra Pickering, and Jane Pollock.

1. Identifying similarities and differences
2. Summarizing and note taking
3. Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
4. Homework and practice
5. Nonlinguistic representations
6. Cooperative learning
7. Setting objectives and providing feedback
8. Generating and testing hypotheses
9. Cues, questions, and advance organizers

Technology research—

"Today, the definition of literacy has expanded from traditional notions of reading and writing to include the ability to learn, comprehend, and interact with technology in a meaningful way" (Selfe cited in [Pianfetti, 2001](#), p. 256). Electronic texts introduce new supports as well as new challenges that can have a great impact on an individual's ability to comprehend what he or she reads. The Internet, in particular, provides new text formats, new purposes for reading, and new ways to interact with information that can confuse and overwhelm people taught to extract meaning from only conventional print. Proficiency in the new literacies of the Internet will become essential to our students' literacy future ([International Reading Association, 2001](#)).

(from http://www.readingonline.org/electronic/elec_index.asp?HREF=/electronic/rt/2-03_Column/index.html)

Educational Benefits of Blogs

“Teachers have picked up on the creative use of this Internet technology and put the blog to work in the classroom. The education blog can be a powerful and effective technology tool for students and teachers alike.

In addition to providing teachers with an excellent tool for communicating with students, there are numerous educational benefits of blogs. Blogs are:

- Highly motivating to students, especially those who otherwise might not become participants in classrooms.
- Excellent opportunities for students to read and write.
- Effective forums for collaboration and discussion.

- Powerful tools to enable scaffold learning or mentoring to occur”
(From <http://www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/educationupclose.phtml/print/47>)

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOAL—ACADEMICS

Goal Number	Performance Indicators <i>(Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic and Time-Bound)</i>
1.1	100% of all students will have a reading log at the end of the year that reflects they have participated in daily independent reading. The reading log should reflect that students have read a wide range of material (short stories, magazines, websites/online material, textbook, newspapers, novels, poetry, etc.).
1.1	100% of all students will have evidence to show that they respond to their reading in various formats (post-it notes, visualization, letters to author/character, summaries, questions, participation in a discussion board/ Blog, mind maps, vocabulary activities, etc..) in a readers notebook, binder, or portfolio.
1.1	100% of all teachers will have evidence of student participation in SHARING their responses and a reaction to the student's reading.
1.1	The aggregate percentage of students with disabilities passing the English SOL will increase from 94% to 95%. The pass rate for 5 th grade SWD sub-group will increase from 94% to 95%.
	In order to decrease the achievement gap between the minority population (as identified by the Fairfax County School Board) and the white student population, 100% of all students in the minority population will pass the SOLs tests in all subject areas.
1.1	100% of all teachers will be able to implement and share at a monthly staff meeting examples of best practices (lessons/resources in gateways, staff development, in-services, professional journals, conferences, online readings) used in the classroom.
1.5	All students in grades 2-6 will participate in a discussion board or Blog in FCPS 24-7 for the purpose of responding to reading at least twice during the school year.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOAL—ACADEMICS WORK PLAN

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE: The staff will implement lessons that teach students strategic, critical, and skillful independent reading skills in all core subject areas.							
Strategies	Person(s) Responsible	Materials Needed and Costs	Time Line				In-Process Measures
What we will do to achieve the objective. <i>(Include professional development and parent involvement)</i>	Person(s) who will monitor the strategy.	What materials will be use to implement the strategy? What are the costs?	Check the projected quarter for implementing the strategy this school year.				How we will monitor progress.
			1 st Qtr.	2 nd Qtr.	3 rd Qtr.	4 th Qtr.	
1. All teachers will continue to implement strategy instruction through daily student independent reading of appropriate level books. Independent reading should be combined with guided reading experience to best enhance instruction. Provide posters to new staff members.	Lorraine Ryan (Teacher) Joanne Schilling (Reading Teacher)	Our Reading Strategies Posters 5 @ \$ 12 each =\$60	X	X	X	X	Staff will share strategies implemented at team and staff meetings through round table discussions. Administrators will continue to observe evidence through informal instructional walkthroughs and conversations with students.
2. All teachers will continue to implement strategy instruction through daily read aloud to students. ❖ Read Aloud ❖ Think Aloud ❖ Big Books Read Aloud -Teacher reads aloud everyday to students. The books might be theme-related, author study or other topic of interest (i.e.) poetry, news articles Think Aloud - Teacher verbalized the specific mental steps used to comprehend text. Modeling helps students to gain understanding of the process. “Make thinking public” Ideal for strategy instruction.	Ernie Leighty Barbara DeHart (Administrators)		X	X	X	X	Staff will share strategies implemented at team and staff meetings through round table discussions. Administrators will observe evidence through informal instructional walkthroughs and conversations with students.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE: The staff will implement lessons that teach students strategic, critical, and skillful independent reading skills in all core subject areas.

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What we will do to achieve the objective. <i>(Include professional development and parent involvement)</i>	Person(s) who will monitor the strategy.	What materials will be use to implement the strategy? What are the costs?	Check the projected quarter for implementing the strategy this school year.				How we will monitor progress.
			1 st Qtr.	2 nd Qtr.	3 rd Qtr.	4 th Qtr.	
3. All teachers will continue to implement strategy instruction through daily student response to reading. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Response /Reader’s Notebook • Retelling (Oral/Written) • Reader’s Theater • Drama • Personal Response • Letter Response • Recommendation • Discussing/ Questioning • Reading log—this is required for all students by FCPS 	Ernie Leighty Barbara DeHart (Administrators)		X	X	X	X	Staff will share strategies implemented at team and staff meetings through round table discussions. Administrators will observe evidence through informal instructional walkthroughs and conversations with students.
4. Best Practices Sharing at staff meetings: Teams will rotate to share best practices that they have used/learned.	Ernie Leighty Barbara DeHart (Administrators)		X	X	X	X	Staff Meeting agendas will reflect schedule for team sharing
5. Teachers will include higher level questions during class discussions and assessments. Teachers will access and use resources in eCART as appropriate. SBTS and eCART implementation team will provide training on the search feature and new resources available in eCART. (training will take place at the end of the first quarter)	Teachers (k-6) Lisa Prillaman SBTS eCART Implementation Team		X	X	X	X	Checklist for team meetings will include follow-up on critical thinking/questioning Calendar will reflect training for teachers in all grade levels

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE: The staff will implement lessons that teach students strategic, critical, and skillful independent reading skills in all core subject areas.

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What we will do to achieve the objective. <i>(Include professional development and parent involvement)</i>	Person(s) who will monitor the strategy.	What materials will be use to implement the strategy? What are the costs?	Check the projected quarter for implementing the strategy this school year.				How we will monitor progress.
			1 st Qtr.	2 nd Qtr.	3 rd Qtr.	4 th Qtr.	
6. Identified discussion points for team meetings will be provided to all teachers. This will include: review of best practices, review of reading log use and sharing component, as well as other areas defined during vertical team meetings. Susan Klotz will create the check sheet to distribute to all teams. Check sheets will be used as a general reminder of the focus areas for the year. Sheets will be kept in a folder in the office.	Susan Klotz (teacher) Team Leaders		X	X	X	X	Reflections and comments will be in the checklist for team meetings stored in the office.
7. Teachers will continue to participate in staff development training on using Discussion Boards/Blogs in FCPS 24-7 and other communication tools. Teachers will also review computer applications available to enhance student comprehension and understanding. Teachers will have the opportunity to participate in an informal blog to become more comfortable with this tool.	Lisa Prillaman (SBTS)		X	X	X	X	SBTS will check in with teachers periodically throughout the year and model lessons as necessary. Administrators will monitor use of FCPS 24-7 as an instructional tool. Evaluations and informal walk throughs will be used to monitor use of technology to support comprehension instruction.
8. Staff / Students will participate in a kick-off read aloud reading week. Administration, Teachers, Specialists, and community members will read aloud to students as part of this kick off celebration.	Patsy Soln (Librarian)		X	X			Feedback from kick-off week will be shared by teams during staff meetings. A calendar will show evidence of guest readers during the kick-off week.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE: The staff will implement lessons that teach students strategic, critical, and skillful independent reading skills in all core subject areas.

Strategies	Person(s) Responsible	Materials Needed and Costs	Time Line				In-Process Measures
What we will do to achieve the objective. <i>(Include professional development and parent involvement)</i>	Person(s) who will monitor the strategy.	What materials will be use to implement the strategy? What are the costs?	Check the projected quarter for implementing the strategy this school year.				How we will monitor progress.
			1 st Qtr.	2 nd Qtr.	3 rd Qtr.	4 th Qtr.	
9. Counselors and Administrators will identify students in the minority ethnic group. Teachers will differentiate instruction to meet the academic needs of these students.	Ernie Leighty Barbara DeHart (administrator) Jenny Anderson Susan Duvall (Counselors)		X	X	X	X	List of students will be provided to staff Evidence of differentiation in lessons eCART scores, formative assessments, etc... Observation of student success
10. 5 th grade teachers along with support staff and specialists will continue to participate in the 5 th Grade Global Awareness Project. Students will be exposed to various technologies throughout the year and will use them to support their comprehension and communication of the Social Studies curriculum. The librarian will lead the project setting up meetings and expectations. The SBTS will provide necessary technology training for student and teachers. The GT resource teacher will provide lessons and support on making the connection to the global awareness piece. A kickoff meeting will be planned during the month of October with all parties present.	Patsy Soln (Librarian) Lisa Prillaman (SBTS) Phyllis Moer (5 th Grade Teacher) Pat VanRoten (GT Resource Teacher)		X	X	X	X	*Teachers will share information about this project during staff meetings. *The team will also keep a notebook of projects, ideas, and reflections on the process. *Project meeting in January to check on progress among schools in the county. *Regular meetings of 5 th grade teachers, librarian, SBTS, and other specialists

1.2 Communicate in at least two languages

JIP Objective: Improve speaking skills in the target language

The JIP staff will implement strategies in lessons that teach students enrolled in the Japanese Immersion Program ways to improve writing skills in the target language.

Rational for Objective:

Data Sources:

- Jr. PALS (Jr Performance Assessment for Language Students) was analyzed. Although the data showed some improvement in the writing assessment, more improvement is needed to have the majority of students reach the level of “Meet Expectation.”

Weaknesses:

- JIP teachers have been working on improving students’ writing skills. However, the recent Jr. PALS scores of many students are not reflecting their potential. JIP staff needs to participate in available professional development on the use of more effective and efficient instruction to improve the Jr. PALS scores.

Strengths:

- Many resources are available to JIP teachers through staff development and materials funded from the Foreign Language office. Part of the funding allows teachers to visit other Japanese Immersion Program schools.

Best Practice Research:

According to the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), Language-attentive Content Teaching will improve writing skills of the children in the target language. For examples:

- Developmentally-appropriate use of corrective feedback techniques and developmentally-sensitive language modeling
- Explicit attention to writing-oriented instruction

School Improvement Plan Objective:				
Strategies	Person(s) Responsible	Materials Needed and Costs	Time Line	In-Process Measures
What we will do to achieve the objective. <i>(Include professional development and parent involvement.)</i>	Person(s) who will monitor the strategy.	What materials will be used to implement the strategy? What are the costs?	Check the projected quarter for implementing the strategy this school year.	How we will monitor progress.
1. In 1 st and 3 rd grades, a class library will be available on a weekly basis allowing students to borrow books to encourage independent reading of appropriate level books. 1 st graders will read aloud and repeat Hiragana letters after the teacher. 3 rd graders will read aloud their own selection of books to other classmates. Both 1 st and 3 rd graders will read aloud math, science, health worksheets in Japanese after the teacher.	Mamiya Worland, JIP Teacher	The subject related worksheets in Japanese and Japanese books are used to implement the strategy.	1 st quarter – 4 th quarter	Hiragana/Katakana assessment will be given by-weekly to monitor the progress. Each student's individual reading will be assessed and recorded.

<p>2. In 2nd and 4th grades, teacher will read aloud math, science, and Japanese language lesson materials every day. Students will follow the text with their fingers pointing to each sound to become more familiar with the sounds and text of the target language. The Think-Write-Pair-Share strategy will be used to increase opportunities for students to read, hear, and write words, phrases, and sentences in the target language.</p>	<p>Lili Kennington, JIP Teacher</p>	<p>The following materials which have been translated into the target language: calendar, weather chart, 4-season chart, alphabet charts with proper stroke orders, posters, dictionaries, etc.</p>	<p>1st quarter- 4th quarter</p>	<p>Weekly character assessments will be given to check students' progress.</p> <p>Small group reading sessions will be used to assess their skills.</p>
<p>3. In 5th and 6th grades, teachers and students will think aloud together to model sentences related to science lessons and read aloud those sentences together to reinforce the curriculum knowledge and the target language.</p>	<p>Akiko Bentz, JIP Teacher</p>	<p>No materials needed.</p>	<p>1st quarter – 4th quarter</p>	<p>Weekly reading assessments will be given to check students' progress.</p>

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOAL—ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOAL: All students will demonstrate the aptitude, attitude, and skills to lead responsible, fulfilling, and respectful lives.

Check all that apply to this school improvement plan objective.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.1 Demonstrate sound moral character and ethical judgment. | <input type="checkbox"/> 2.5 Be inspired to learn throughout life. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2.2 Be able to contribute effectively with a group dynamic. | <input type="checkbox"/> 2.6 Courageously identify and pursue their personal goals. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2.3 Develop the resilience and self-confidence required to deal effectively with life's challenges. | <input type="checkbox"/> 2.7 Develop practical life skills. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.4 Possess the skills to manage and resolve conflict. | <input type="checkbox"/> 2.8 Make healthy and safe life choices. |

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE: *(action-oriented: What we will do to improve programmatic and/or instructional effectiveness)*

Great Falls staff will implement instructional strategies that will assist students in cultivating skills that will enable them to contribute effectively within a group and show good character. These skills will enable students to successfully manage and resolve conflict and cope effectively with life's challenges.

RATIONALE FOR OBJECTIVE: *(student performance data; knowledge of programmatic/instructional strengths and weaknesses; best-practice research)*

Data Sources:

In reviewing classroom grades in work habits, along with teacher feedback regarding essential life skills, a need was identified to increase students' ability to work collaboratively.

Knowledge of Programmatic/Instructional Strengths and Weaknesses:

Informal observations and teacher feedback indicated that collaborative learning activities need to be utilized on a more consistent basis in the classrooms throughout the school. Presently we have classroom guidance lessons, group projects, peer mediators, team building field trips and reading buddies. While some teachers use these programs, there is not a clear model with an anticipated positive outcome for students. Establishing uniform practices will help us meet our goals.

Best Practice Research:

In his article *A Definition of Collaborative vs Cooperative Learning* (1996), Ted Panitz states that “collaborative learning suggests a way of dealing with people which respects and highlights individual group members’ abilities and contributions.” As children work within a cooperative model, they share responsibility for their own actions, as well as those of the group. Jean MacGregor, in *Collaborative Learning: Reframing the Classroom*, speaks of the need to create activities in which “positive interdependence between students, an outcome to which everyone contributes, and a sense of commitment and responsibility of the group’s preparation, process and product” are essential elements. When children are invested in the outcome of a project, they learn to build consensus, to appreciate one another’s differences and to negotiate conflicts so they can work together more effectively. The skills learned through this collaborative process will carry over into their lives beyond school.

In *Best Practice* (Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde, 2005), the authors state that “the American workplace requires extensive collaboration and group problem solving, not just competitiveness and isolation.” Working in a community of collaborative learners will strengthen the children’s trust in each other, develop their sense of responsibility and build their confidence to be engaged participants of their group. This will enhance their lives as students now, as well as lay the foundation for the adults they will become.

Character Education—Best Practice Research (added September 09)

“Character education is a proactive and purposeful approach designed to create a healthy learning environment to help each student incorporate values necessary for achievement.” (Linkona, 1991)

“Schools throughout the United States are experiencing the by-product of poor moral development that too often manifests in irresponsible behaviors that impede student achievement. Seemingly, professional school counselors can proactively combat unhealthy behavioral choices and their negative consequences by evaluation and adopting a character education framework. (Britzman, 2005)

“According to Ryan and Bohlin (1999), there is a reawakening for the need to promote good character. The frightening statistics about crime, poor academic achievement, promiscuity, substance abuse, violence, and pervasive unhappiness among our youth are grabbing this country’s attention. Preventative initiatives as character education can help professional school counselors unite all educators to work together to promote the growth and development of every student.... These behaviors are necessary to promote strong character, increase student achievement, and achieve a healthy school climate.” (Britzman, 2005)

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOAL—ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

Goal Number	Performance Indicators <i>(Specific <u>M</u>asurable <u>A</u>ttainable <u>R</u>ealistic and <u>T</u>ime-Bound)</i>
2.1	All teachers will complete “exit tickets” that will reflect their experiences with the character education lessons provided through staff news, morning announcements, the GFES Current, and counselors.
2.1	75% of parents responding to an end of the year survey will indicate that they have a general working knowledge of the character education program at Great Falls ES.
2.4	Through projects and activities, 100% of students will be able to identify strategies for managing conflict. (Examples: posters, bookmarks, skits, movies, digital stories, etc.)

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOAL—ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS WORK PLAN

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE: Great Falls staff will implement instructional strategies that will assist students in cultivating skills that will enable them to contribute effectively within a group and show good character. These skills will enable students to successfully manage and resolve conflict and cope effectively with life’s challenges.							
Strategies	Person(s) Responsible	Materials Needed and Costs	Time Line				In-Process Measures
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			1 st Qtr.	2 nd Qtr.	3 rd Qtr.	4 th Qtr.	
1. Continue to provide all staff with current research and analyses related to conflict resolution Character Education posters to be distributed and displayed school-wide.	Jenny Anderson Susan Duvall (Counselors)		X	X	X	X	Faculty meeting agenda, copies of research resources, FCPS 24-7, staff news, school website
2. Character Education Moment on morning announcements—weekly themes used to enhance the character education program. Activities and lessons posted in staff news to use as follow-up in the classroom.	Jenny Anderson Susan Duvall (Counselors)		X	X	X	X	Calendar of weekly themes presented on announcements. Staff news will reflect tips posted by counselor.
3. Provide parents with programs and information about character education and conflict resolution. (character education information included in newsletters based on themes discussed at school)	Jenny Anderson Susan Duvall	No cost		X	X		Newsletters and website communications; PTA programs; dialogue at parent coffees; Parent folder on FCPS 24-7 Great Falls Specials Site

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE: Great Falls staff will implement instructional strategies that will assist students in cultivating skills that will enable them to contribute effectively within a group and show good character. These skills will enable students to successfully manage and resolve conflict and cope effectively with life’s challenges.

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What we will do to achieve the objective. <i>(Include professional development and parent involvement)</i>	Person(s) who will monitor the strategy.	What materials will be use to implement the strategy? What are the costs?	Check the projected quarter for implementing the strategy this school year.				How we will monitor progress.
			1 st Qtr.	2 nd Qtr.	3 rd Qtr.	4 th Qtr.	
4. Continue to provide students with programs that model effective collaborative learning and conflict resolutions situations Examples-- school assemblies; morning announcements; instructional lessons; instructional videos; children’s literature, Just Wondering	Jenny Anderson Susan Duvall (Counselors)		X	X	X	X	Teacher feedback Student reflections after assemblies to be given in classroom at teacher’s discretion within the same school day.
5. Counselors will provide classrooms with lessons and resources on conflict resolution. Students will complete projects throughout the year to show understanding of key strategies for conflict resolution.	Jenny Anderson Susan Duvall (Counselors)	No material needed	X	X	X	X	Projects will be shared on the morning announcements and/ or displayed in the school.
6. Conflict Resolution bridge will be shared at a staff meeting so that all staff will have the common language used with students during conflict resolution.	Jenny Anderson Susan Duvall (Counselors)		X	X	X	X	Staff meeting agenda will reflect conflict resolution session.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOAL—RESPONSIBILITY TO THE COMMUNITY

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOAL: All students will understand and model the important attributes that people must have to contribute to an effective and productive community and the common good of all.

Check all that apply to this school improvement plan objective.

- 3.1 Know and practice the duties, responsibilities, and rights of citizenship in a democratic society.
- 3.2 Be respectful and contributing participants in their school, community, country, and world.
- 3.3 Understand the purpose, role, and means of interaction with the different levels of government.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE: *(action-oriented: What we will do to improve programmatic and/or instructional effectiveness)*

Teachers and staff will continue to promote and facilitate service learning opportunities with a focus on helping students understand why they participate in these programs and the impact they have on the community and world.

RATIONALE FOR OBJECTIVE:

Data Sources:

Staff surveys and PTA letters to administrators note a desire for student service learning. Observation of school activities and projects reveal only a small number of students involved with helping others and impacting the school and community. Given the increase in awareness of environmental issues, teachers and students have expressed a desire to establish a recycling program in the school.

Knowledge of Programmatic/Instructional Strengths and Weaknesses:

School service projects have been done in the past; however there needs to be an increased focus on the service learning component.

Best Practice Research:

Research indicates that as students participate in student learning activities they are better able to internalize a sense of social responsibility.

“Researchers and teachers note that service-learning often increases student self-esteem, promotes personal development, and enhances a sense of social responsibility and personal competence (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1995).”

“As an instructional method, service-learning involves a blending of service activities with the academic curriculum in order to address real community needs while students learn through active engagement. A growing body of research indicates that carefully

planned and implemented service-learning projects can contribute to both K-12 students' and pre-service teachers' learning and growth (Conrad & Hedin, 1991; Root, 1997).”

from-- <http://www.siu.edu/offices/iii/P-16/teacher.html> **Service Learning and Teacher Education, Anderson, Jeffrey**

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOAL—RESPONSIBILITY TO THE COMMUNITY

Goal Number	Performance Indicators <i>(Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic and Time-Bound Goals)</i>
3.2	100% of students will participate in projects that promote an understanding of the recycling program at GFES. A “Go Green” initiative will continue to be implemented to increase student understanding of why recycling is important to the environment and community.
3.2	During can food drives, coat collections, or other projects to support the community, 100% of students will have at least one written or non-linguistic representation of their reflection on “WHY” they are doing these projects and the impact they have on the community.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOAL—RESPONSIBIITY TO THE COMMUNITY WORK PLAN

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE: Teachers and staff will promote and facilitate service learning opportunities with a focus on helping students understand why they participate in these programs and the impact they have on the community and world.							
Strategies	Person(s) Responsible	Materials Needed and Costs	Time Line				In-Process Measures
What we will do to achieve the objective. <i>(Include professional development and parent involvement)</i>	Person(s) who will monitor the strategy.	What materials will be use to implement the strategy? What are the costs?	Check the projected quarter for implementing the strategy this school year.				How we will monitor progress.
			1 st Qtr.	2 nd Qtr.	3 rd Qtr.	4 th Qtr.	
1. During PLC meetings, the Service Learning/Character Ed group will discuss needs and make plans for increasing the focus on the WHY of service learning projects. Example: Designate days for reflection following projects Develop plan for using space in the library to highlight projects	Service Learning/Character Ed Tower Lead TBD		X	X	X	X	School calendar will reflect dates for PLC meetings and reflection days.
2. Students will create fliers, posters, videos, etc. to promote ‘Go Green’ initiatives. For example, students can create commercials promoting recycling in the building. Commercials and videos will be shown on the morning announcements. Posters and fliers will be displayed throughout the building.	Service Learning/Character Ed Tower Lead TBD		X	X	X	X	Observation of school environment. Team Leaders Meetings—share SCA meetings—minutes

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE: Teachers and staff will promote and facilitate service learning opportunities with a focus on helping students understand why they participate in these programs and the impact they have on the community and world.

Strategies	Person(s) Responsible	Materials Needed and Costs	Time Line				In-Process Measures
What we will do to achieve the objective. <i>(Include professional development and parent involvement)</i>	Person(s) who will monitor the strategy.	What materials will be use to implement the strategy? What are the costs?	Check the projected quarter for implementing the strategy this school year.				How we will monitor progress.
			1 st Qtr.	2 nd Qtr.	3 rd Qtr.	4 th Qtr.	
3. Provide opportunities for students to be actively involved in promoting recycling through a “Go Green” initiative. Teachers will meet to continue research on how to structure this program in the school.	Service Learning/Character Ed Tower SCA PTA (Parent rep)			X	X	X	Observation of school environment. Record/ Evidence of “Go Green” projects “Go Green” highlighted in the library
4. Continue to communicate to parents about the learning component in community service projects will be included through the school/PTA newsletter and on the GFES/ PTA website. **Example—student quotes—taken from an exit ticket/journal/oral response	Lisa Prillaman (SBTS) Julie Roe (SCA) SCA Reporters			X	X	X	Newsletters
5. SBTS will do training on using the digital camera and flip camera to capture learning related to service learning and “Go Green” initiatives.	Lisa Prillaman (SBTS)		X	X	X	X	Training session agenda Observation of use of digital camera and flip camera by teachers and students

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVE: Teachers and staff will promote and facilitate service learning opportunities with a focus on helping students understand why they participate in these programs and the impact they have on the community and world.

Strategies	Person(s) Responsible	Materials Needed and Costs	Time Line				In-Process Measures
What we will do to achieve the objective. <i>(Include professional development and parent involvement)</i>	Person(s) who will monitor the strategy.	What materials will be use to implement the strategy? What are the costs?	Check the projected quarter for implementing the strategy this school year.				How we will monitor progress.
			1 st Qtr.	2 nd Qtr.	3 rd Qtr.	4 th Qtr.	
6. At least once during the school year, teachers will plan a time for students to reflect on service learning projects (recycling, can food drive, coat drive, relief drives, etc.) and why they are participating. Students will reflect in a written or non-linguistic manner (journal, picture, podcast, etc.) on how these projects impact their community.	Team Leaders			X	X	X	Feedback from team leaders and observation of the school environment.

**RESULTS AND REFLECTION (on 08-09 school plan)
A Focus on Continuous Improvement**

SIP Objectives	Results related to performance indicators	Reflection on critical factors that supported and inhibited success	Implications for ongoing improvement efforts
<p>Academics Objective: The staff will implement lessons that teach students strategic, critical, and skillful independent reading skills in all core subject areas. The staff will implement specific strategy instruction and provide modified, differentiated support to students in the subgroups, students with disabilities and limited English proficiency.</p>	<p>The aggregate percentage of students with disabilities passing the English SOL increased from 88% to 94% meeting our original performance indicator. Also, the pass rate for our 4th grade SWD sub-group increased to 94%, surpassing our goal of 80%. We will continue to focus on these groups specifically to make sure they continue with the same success. We once again met our goal of 100% of students having a reading log and evidence of responses to literature. However, we want to continue to improve in this area, having common practices across and within grade levels and putting more emphasis on students sharing what they are reading. Also, 100% of teachers shared examples of strategies they used in the classroom at our staff meetings. All grade levels were assigned dates where they presented their strategies to the rest of the staff. Upon reflecting on this goal, we think we need to focus less on the identification of Marzano’s strategies and more on the implementation of these strategies throughout the year. Our goal is not so much that teachers just know Marzano’s strategies but that they use them to support best practices. We also want to include a focus on other strategies we have learned in the past and any that may come up as new throughout the year. Our goal is to support teachers so that all strategies related to best practices become more “automatic” and internalized. We hoped all students in grades 2-6 would have participated in a discussion board or blog in FCPS 24-7. We feel this is still an area we need to focus on, helping</p>	<p>Supported: Staff development at all staff meetings on strategy instruction. Time for vertical teaming and sharing of ideas. Tuesday Tips in staff news helped to keep this goal an area of focus. Reading teacher worked one on one with teachers to promote school-wide strategy instruction. SBTS worked one on one with classroom teachers to set up and use FCPS 24-7 as a response tool. Teachers pulled together resources for using reading logs in the classroom and worked in their teams to figure out how to use them in their classroom. Teachers shared the strategies they use in the classroom to inform each other on tools for best practices. Inhibited: Teachers did not have enough time for vertical teaming. Limited time for resource staff to meet the individual needs of all staff members. Teachers have varying comfort levels with using blogs and discussion boards and some have expressed a desire to become more comfortable with them individually before using them with their students. Not enough follow-up with the objectives laid out in the school plan.</p>	<p>A second language goal was added last year upon the recommendation of the FCPS Foreign Language Department—we will continue with this goal. We are going to continue working on this goal as stated from the previous year. We have updated the indicators as necessary—include focus on share component in our reading responses, provide teachers with the opportunity to become more comfortable with blogs, wikis, and discussion boards, work on the structure for using reading logs in the classroom (organization, when it is introduced, a list of ideas provided, parent involvement). Continue to work on finding time for teachers and resource staff to meet regularly and plan. Develop a plan for follow-up with the goals laid out in our school plan. Develop a list of topics to be covered at a team meeting and then reported back to administration and resource staff.</p>

	<p>teachers not only know the tools they need to use but understand the reason why these technologies are an important part of their instruction.</p>		
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SIP Objectives	Results related to performance indicators	Reflection on critical factors that supported and inhibited success	Implications for ongoing improvement efforts
<p>Essential Life Skills Objective: Great Falls staff will continue to research and develop instructional strategies that will assist students in cultivating skills that will enable them to contribute effectively within a group. These skills will enable students to successfully manage and resolve conflict and cope effectively with life’s challenges.</p>	<p>Once again teachers completed exit tickets and provided feedback after staff development sessions. Teachers and staff are still working on using instructional strategies in their classroom that support effective collaboration among students. Through projects and activities, 100% of students were able to identify a strategy for managing conflict. Counselors completed lessons in the classroom to support this objective and reported that students showed an understanding of the different strategies and began implementing them in their interactions with other students. We feel like we were able to meet the objectives we set for this goal.</p> <p>It was noted that it would be helpful to set guidelines for defining good character as it can be very subjective.</p>	<p>Supported: The counselors implemented lessons for students and provided resources to teachers on conflict management. The morning announcements proved to be a successful outlet for promoting good character and conflict management—daily character ed thought and every Friday students were recognized for their good character based on teacher and staff recommendation. School-wide and classroom specific recognition for positive behavior helped to promote good character. Character Education posters were posted throughout the school. There was an assembly for students on showing good character. Skits were done on character education and presented on the announcements. Peer mediation by students. KEY SUCCESS: Persons made responsible for their part in monitoring the individual work plans did a great job. <i>Parent involvement</i> supported staff. Inhibited: We did not have time to address a parent component to the program.</p>	<p>Last year we focused most on helping students manage conflict while working with others. We want to continue to focus on having a common language for conflict resolution among school staff and students. We also want to add a parent education component to this goal. To support the common language and reinforce our conflict resolution skills being taught, all students will continue to complete activities and projects that support learning in this area. Students will continue to be encouraged to implement these strategies. We will keep all programs introduced last year in place. We had great success with this goal and want to continue with it, refining work plans and adding components where necessary. (parent education through a blog and presentations, bringing new people to our building along, increasing participation among classroom teachers and other staff) <i>Perhaps we need to figure out how to involve parents more in the other goals we have in our plan.</i></p> <p>Character Ed Moments on</p>

			morning announcements will provide specific traits/skills to look for during the week.
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SIP Objectives	Results related to performance indicators	Reflection on critical factors that supported and inhibited success	Implications for ongoing improvement efforts
<p>Responsibility to the Community Objective: Teachers and staff will continue to promote and facilitate service learning opportunities with a focus on helping students understand why they participate in these programs and the impact they have on the community and world.</p>	<p>We were successful in implementing a recycling program in the building: All classrooms, the cafeteria, and other areas in the building were given recycling containers. Students were reminded about recycling by teachers, staff, and other students. We also saw that teachers were reminded by students about recycling and paper saving. Some students reflected on why service learning is important...why we are recycling as a school—some teachers made this a part of their discussion and class activities. Parents were informed and brought on board with our recycling program. A 6th grade classroom chose to do projects related to saving the environment and the impact of recycling, reusing, etc... Our “Go Green” club did not get off the ground. Resources were gathered and a FCPS 24-7 site was created to support the group, but members involved had limited time to meet and found it hard to find a time to pull students. Interest was high by the people involved, but it became apparent that more is needed that interest to get the program off the ground.</p>	<p>Supported: Staff, students, and community had a great desire to participate in the program. Active participation from some staff to promote increased awareness of the need to reduce, reuse and recycle. Recycling bins provided a constant reminder of a need to recycle. Teachers made an effort to reduce and reuse paper in the classroom. Go Green site with resources and ideas created. Inhibited: The people interested in starting and leading this group did not have time to meet. There was limited time for students to meet. We probably should have spent more time planning up front about how this group would be formed and the role they would take.</p>	<p>We continue to need to work out how to help students truly understand service learning. Because reflects a change in attitude and awareness, we feel it needs continued focus to establish habits associated with service learning. We want to focus on the WHY part of service learning and get all teachers to make it a regular part of their classroom discussions. In order to do this we will provide more structure for reflecting on the service learning projects we do through the year. (designated times to reflect, activities that highlight the why) Involve the SCA more in this goal...perhaps blending the goals of the “Go Green” club in with the SCA. We would need more teacher involvement in leading this club. Ask for parent support in planning and implementing. Work closely with our Kids Care club. Include a space in the new library to highlight our service learning projects. Assign student projects to reinforce the why— commercials, posters, books, etc...</p>