

## Sleeping Giant Middle Sch

### Five-Year Comprehensive Education Plan

#### Category/Correlate Quality Indicator Notes

#### 1 Curriculum

The school develops and implements a curriculum that is rigorous, intentional, and aligned to state standards.

##### 1.1 Curriculum

**1.1a There is evidence that the curriculum is aligned with the Montana Content and Performance Standards and includes Indian Education for All and local tribal standards if applicable. GUIDANCE: Consider how accurate IEFA curriculum is infused across all content areas and every grade level.**

Indian Education isn't currently being addressed with focus or intent. A scope and sequence is in the process of development. However, since the state has no clearly defined IEFA curriculum K-12 and only a series of suggested activities, implementation is scattered. Regarding the math curriculum, efforts have been made to establish benchmarks for essential learning at K-12. In doing so, it was evident some standards have not received priority. Other content areas such as language arts have so many standards that it is hard to track the depth and breadth with which all the skills have been mastered. This is certainly true with regards to the CRT as an assessment that only addresses reading although the Language Arts standards incorporate several areas.

**1.1b The district initiates and facilitates discussions among schools regarding curriculum standards to ensure they are clearly articulated across all levels (P-12), with particular attention to the inclusion of local cultural knowledge (as part of a living, constantly adopting system).**

Science has begun aligning vertically with the stream study program which addresses the curriculum including local community resources. The math vertical team is in its third year and has successfully communicated and is working at all levels to bridge skill gaps and to avoid unnecessary reteaching of concepts. Language arts strands have been more difficult to vertically align because of the extensive scope of the material and the necessary repetition for skill development. Social studies is currently in the process of revision.

**1.1c The district initiates and facilitates discussions between schools in the district in order to eliminate unnecessary overlaps and close gaps.**

Because we have curriculums in developmental stages, it has been difficult defining overlaps and gaps. The district needs to take a great leadership role in facilitating discussions and to date that has been somewhat lacking and occurs only sporadically.

**1.1d There is evidence of vertical communication with an intentional focus on key curriculum transition points within grade configurations (e.g., from primary to middle and middle to high).**

Using feedback from a questionnaire given to 8th and 9th grade students regarding transition to the high school, steps were taken to support student concerns and suggestions. These include collaborative classes, mentoring, homework program, academic advisory, and a full day for freshman orientation. The math vertical team has made extensive efforts to tighten up the math program from level to level.

Math assessments at 5th grade level have shown that the two K-5 schools differ in the

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- 1.1d There is evidence of vertical communication with an intentional focus on key curriculum transition points within grade configurations (e.g., from primary to middle and middle to high).**

exit skills of their students. Although this has been the case for at least the last three years, no curricular changes have been suggested or implemented to insure that the students of both elementary schools receive the same kind of math instruction and support. Ironically, the school with a higher percentage of low SES students and special education students continually outperform the other elementary school's students. This is evidence that K-5 math curriculum is not aligned horizontally, therefore achieving vertical alignment with middle school is difficult at this point.

Language arts instruction is in need of district wide guidance and review both horizontally and vertically.

- 1.1e The school curriculum provides specific links to continuing education, cultural awareness, life and career options. GUIDANCE: If applicable, consider what curriculum changes have been necessary in light of the state's Montana High School Initiative and/or the district's Carl Perkins Plan.**

Careers are addressed especially in the areas of science as guest speakers tell classes about how they make their living in the science related fields such as healthcare, outdoor recreation, FWP, and agriculture support.

SGMS has partnered with several community agencies to extend students' learning and expose them to the resources of the community. One example is that The Fly Fishing Federation offers fly tying classes after 7th grade students have learned about aquatic macroinvertebrates and encourages them to become involved in fly fishing and conservation efforts of area rivers and streams. Another example is that History students partner with the Carnegie Readers Group to collectively study books about Montana and the Livingston area and then have book club type discussions about facets of Montana History and current implications.

- 1.1f There is in place a systematic process for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the curriculum. GUIDANCE: Consider the development and revision cycle to insure that the district and school curriculum is continually updated.**

There is a systematic process for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the curriculum, however; we are unsure of the "rotation schedule" and whether it is on the correct schedule (ie: 5-year rotation?)

- 1.1g The curriculum provides access to a common academic core for all students. "Common academic core – that is culturally responsive and available to all students." GUIDANCE: If applicable, consider what specific steps are being taken to close the achievement gap and ensure that American Indian students have access to a rigorous, common academic core?**

Block classes, more time on task, and more frequent assessment (Pearson SuccessTracker) as well as online access to textbook.

## 2 Evaluation/Assessment

The school utilizes multiple evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work.

### 2.1 Evaluation/Assessment

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#### 2.1 Evaluation/Assessment

##### 2.1a Classroom assessments of student learning are frequent, rigorous and aligned with Montana's Content and Performance Standards. GUIDANCE: Consider how local assessments are designed and used to assess classroom implementation of IEFA.

Formative assessments are ongoing throughout numerous curricular areas. Pre-assessments are given at the beginning of each year in math and reading. In reading: AIMSWEB, Fluency, diagnostic assessment Spellography and daily SSR,, Holt reading comprehension, CORE vocab, In math: pretest using Pearson Success Tracker with individualized remediation practice online, Outstanding Math Games 15 min. 3x/week. Individual classrooms also design and implement their own assessments to test the mastery of their curricula.

##### 2.1b Teachers collaborate in the design of authentic assessment tasks aligned with the standards and relevant to the school culture.

Language Arts intervention team has developed assessments and use them to monitor progress of struggling students. The Effective Schools Correlate Team – Time on Task has designed math assessments that are being used school-wide with the Outstanding Math Games initiative to monitor progress for students as they master basic math skills in the areas of fractions, decimals and percents. Another Effective School Correlate Team – School/Home Relations – has designed and implemented school climate surveys to assess students' perceptions of the safety, friendliness and encouraging school environment. After the results of last year's survey, 8th grade teachers organized a leadership retreat for 8th grade students to address bullying prevention and strengthen relationships among students.

##### 2.1c Students can articulate the academic expectations in each class and know what is required to be proficient.

Objectives are stated at the beginning of most classes. BELL WORK acts as a review of prior expectations and also as an anticipatory set for the current day's activities. All classes are engaged in BELL WORK for the first 10 minutes of every class period. The Pearson Success.net online assessment system has been utilized in all math classes. Students continue to receive feedback and correctives until they attain mastery (proficiency) in a given skill area. In math and reading students have been taught expectations for constructed responses extensively.

##### 2.1d Test scores are used to identify curriculum gaps.

CRT reviews help identify curriculum gaps and instructional inconsistencies. End of the year building level assessments in math have alerted us to instructional inconsistencies and curriculum gaps that exist in students coming to middle school from the elementary 5th grade classrooms. Vertical team meetings are being held to address those gaps and achieve greater instructional consistency.

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- 2.1e Multiple assessments are specifically designed to provide meaningful feedback on student learning instructional purposes. GUIDANCE: Consider how the academic progress of American Indian students is monitored to ensure they receive appropriate instructional support.**

Teachers use a variety of assessments to provide students with meaningful feedback. Some classes, such as computers, technology education, art and music all use only authentic assessments to provide feedback. Other classes provide opportunities for projects, group investigations, journals, verbal reporting, written reports, multiple choice and short answer responses in all classes. Several teachers utilize individual conferencing to share feedback with students in more individual and personal ways. The great variety of assessments used by SGMS staff create an understanding of the levels of knowledge each student possesses as well as a demonstration of critical thinking and problem solving that lead to higher level skill development.

Sixteen SGMS teachers attended a Differentiated Instruction training that provided ideas and examples of multiple assessments that could be modified and differentiated for different levels of students. Student choice in final learning products or projects allow Native American students and others to use their cultural background and artistic talents to demonstrate their learning and understanding of specific concepts.

- 2.1f Performance standards are clearly communicated, evident in classrooms and observable in student work.**

Rubrics and written grading expectations are given to students prior to specific assignments so that they explicitly understand the expectations of what skill mastery looks like. Students have opportunities to correct work to clarify misunderstandings and verify understanding.

- 2.1g Implementation of the state-required Assessment Program is coordinated by school and district leadership.**

Yes.

- 2.1h Samples of student work are analyzed to inform instruction, revise curriculum and pedagogy and obtain information on student progress.**

Writing assessments are ongoing at each grade level to inform instruction and remediate skills toward mastery. Pearson Math assessments inform math instruction and provide for skill intervention.

### **3 Instruction**

The school's instructional program actively engages all students by using effective, varied, and research-based practices to improve student academic performance.

#### **3.1 Instruction**

- 3.1a There is evidence that effective and varied instructional strategies are used in all classrooms. GUIDANCE: If applicable consider what changes in instructional strategies have been necessary in light of the state's Montana High School Initiative, the state's RTI Initiative and or the district's Carl Perkins Plan.**

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- 3.1a There is evidence that effective and varied instructional strategies are used in all classrooms. GUIDANCE: If applicable consider what changes in instructional strategies have been necessary in light of the state's Montana High School Initiative, the state's RTI Initiative and or the district's Carl Perkins Plan.**

Each curricular area uses effective and varied instructional strategies to address the diverse needs of learners. Additionally, projects like the Stream Study incorporate several different curricular areas such as math, science and history into an on-going project based learning opportunity where students are active participants with community agencies in addressing real world issues such as stream pollution and water quality. Although we do not call it RTI, SGMS has instituted 2 hour blocks for math and reading classes as Tier 2 interventions for struggling students. These blocks enable students to pursue the regular rigorous curriculum while they continue to get extra time to remediate skills.

- 3.1b Instructional strategies and learning activities are aligned with the district and school learning goals, and assessment expectations for student learning and specific cultural needs.**

Appropriate lessons are tailored to the needs of middle school students in regards to brain research, mobility, inquiry, and tactile learning styles. In the last 5 years, SGMS teachers have been trained in brain research and teaching strategies, cross curricular writing strategies, differentiated instruction and assessment strategies. Every year SGMS teachers receive training in technology and computer based teaching and learning strategies to address needs and interests of all students.

When CRT math scores were low, SGMS teachers received training on using the Pearson Success.net computer based assessment and intervention program so that math students progress is monitored on the Pearson system every two weeks and appropriate and differentiated intervention and remediation strategies are employed to help each individual student achieve mastery.

- 3.1c Instructional strategies and activities are consistently monitored and aligned with the changing needs of a diverse student population to ensure various learning approaches and learning styles are addressed.**

Sixteen teachers have been trained in Differentiated Instruction and are using strategies gained there in classes to insure that skills and essential content mastery occur. Yearly computer and technology training has kept teachers abreast of new ideas for student engagement utilizing computers and technology – some of those programs include powerpoint, podcasts, video presentations, publisher and web pages.

- 3.1d Teachers demonstrate the content knowledge necessary to challenge and motivate students to high levels of learning. GUIDANCE: Consider whether teachers have sufficient background knowledge regarding IEFA.**

SGMS teachers seek to continually find and attend workshops, conferences and take college courses that extend their professional knowledge and instructional repertoire. Teachers also use technology training in powerpoint, WORD, publisher, web pages, video presentations, computer simulations and podcasts to challenge and motivate students with projects and problem based learning opportunities to higher levels of engagement and more in depth application of subject area content.

SGMS was one of the original recipients of the Department of Energy Wind for Schools grants and the only middle school in Montana to plan, construct and use a 40 ft. wind generator to develop and extend students' learning about wind, conservation and the

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- 3.1d Teachers demonstrate the content knowledge necessary to challenge and motivate students to high levels of learning. GUIDANCE: Consider whether teachers have sufficient background knowledge regarding IEFA.**  
economic benefits of pursuing wind energy.
- 3.1e There is evidence that teachers incorporate the use of technology in their classrooms.**  
Pearson online and AIMSweb assessments provide ongoing progress monitoring in the areas of math and reading. All math and reading teachers are involved in this type of on-going assessment and progress monitoring,  
Teachers use technology training in powerpoint, WORD, publisher, web pages, video presentations, computer simulations and podcasts to challenge and motivate students with projects and problem based learning opportunities to higher levels of engagement and more in depth application of subject area content.
- 3.1f Instructional resources (textbooks, supplemental reading, and technology) are sufficient to effectively deliver the curriculum. GUIDANCE: Consider whether instructional materials, including textbooks and supplemental materials, have been reviewed for bias.**  
Teachers have researched and procured primary source documents for use in social studies classes to extend the traditional text information and enrich student content knowledge. New materials that are purchased undergo bias review. Indian Ed materials are purchased after reviewing OPI recommendations for bias.
- 3.1g Teachers examine and discuss student work collaboratively and use this information to inform their practice.**  
Language Arts teachers meet and review student writings to determine success of instruction. From those conversations, materials, goals and objectives are evaluated and adapted to insure that students are achieving proficiency with reading comprehension and writing.  
Math teachers review math tests and assessments as a gauge to determine the success of instruction and share ideas with one another and administration about what kinds of interventions or adjustments to instruction are necessary to further students' achievement.  
Reading intervention specialists continually look at student work to adjust instruction, re-group students and change teaching strategies.
- 3.1h There is evidence that homework is frequent and monitored and tied to instructional practice.**  
Homework is present in all core area classes. Homework functions as practice for skills that have been or are being mastered. Teachers use homework as another assessment. Concepts are re-taught if students are not able to master concepts presented in homework assignments.
- 4 School Culture**  
The school/district functions as an effective learning community and supports a climate conducive to performance excellence.
- 4.1 School Culture**

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#### 4.1 School Culture

##### 4.1a **There is leadership support for a safe, orderly, culturally sensitive and equitable learning environment (e.g., culture reviews/school opinion surveys).**

School safety issues are discussed openly and throughout the year with administration and teachers. In an effort to understand the culture of poverty in Livingston, SGMS teachers have been through extensive training with Ruby Payne and associates, learning how to adjust our procedures to become a more culturally responsive and welcoming school.

SGMS has done School Climate Surveys to determine the extent of bullying and unwelcome behaviors in school. As a result of the data we got back from last year, SGMS organized a leadership retreat for 8th graders to work on relationship building and leadership. 8th graders are being trained to mentor and lead younger students in building positive school climate.

In health and Social Studies classes, tolerance and diversity are promoted. Students also learn about bias and discrimination.

##### 4.1b **Leadership creates experiences that foster the belief that all children can learn at high levels in order to motivate staff to produce continuous improvement in student learning.**

The SGMS staff has embraced the Effective Schools Correlates, believes all students can learn and has created a vision statement that says in part that: "Students enjoy a safe learning environment, rich in academic and social opportunities."

Professional development with the "Framework for Understanding Poverty" helped teachers to understand how students in poverty and their families function in their world so that we could be more effective in providing opportunities that reach all our students. Additionally, SGMS has had a nationally recognized specialist in Brain Based Learning complete training for teachers that addressed different learning modalities and fostered an understanding of how the brains of struggling readers function so that effective teacher training could better address those students' needs and improve reading instruction for them.

Many after school clubs and organizations exist to extend learning beyond the traditional classroom hours – Robotics, Yearbook and Newspaper, Team SGMS and Science Club all provide safe environments for students after school.

During the October 2009 MEA days, 16 SGMS teachers and principals (60 % of the staff) attended a Differentiated Instruction workshop to learn better how to address the academic, social and cultural differences inherent in all our classes. Teachers have been sharing their successes with some of the ideas presented during the conference and teaching others about providing choice in assignments and adding new delivery methods in their instruction.

##### 4.1c **Teachers hold high expectations for all students academically, culturally, emotionally, physically and behaviorally. This is evidenced in their practice.**

LPS teachers maintain high expectations for student achievement. While some express the doubt that every subgroup at every grade level could attain 100% proficiency in math and in reading on the CRT, teachers nonetheless uphold high expectations for all. The challenge to teachers and administrators continues to be to identify and to refine

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**4.1c Teachers hold high expectations for all students academically, culturally, emotionally, physically and behaviorally. This is evidenced in their practice.**  
relationships, resources, instruction and assessment that facilitate the maintenance and elevation of high expectations.

**4.1d Teachers and non-teaching staff are involved in both formal and informal decision-making processes regarding teaching and learning.**

- SGMS math teachers organized a Vertical team to meet with high school math teachers and share teaching practices and instructional strategies as well as to assure curricular compliance and consistency.
- Language Arts teachers developed new Literacy Block interventions and a process to schedule those interventions over the course of the week in classes.
- The Effective Schools Correlates team of Time on Task designed a math intervention for all teachers to use 15 minutes 3 times each week during lunch hours. We are seeing good benefits for students in mastering math skills due to the time being devoted to those skills each week.
- The Effective Schools Assessment team has taken over reporting all assessments and collecting data about intervention effectiveness. Decisions are then made by the assessment team with regard to further interventions or recommendations for instructional change.

**4.1e Teachers recognize and accept their professional role in student success and failure.**

The fact that the Effective Schools teams have been so focused and active is a testament to the fact that teachers accept their role and the accountability for success or failure. Each teacher in the building serves on one of the 7 correlate teams that is responsible for making recommendations to improve our school.

Teachers target college courses and trainings that will assist them in better addressing the needs of our students.

Teachers diagnose student learning problems and adapt teaching methods with in their classrooms. They also involve support staff, parents and students in determining interventions for struggling students.

Teachers celebrate and recognize student success in individual classrooms and as a part of school-wide programs such as Reward Day, Caught Doing Something Good, and end of the year academic and awards assemblies.

SGMS publicly acknowledges students' successes via newspaper articles for Honor Roll and academic competitions such as the Deaconess Science Fair, State Science Fair, MathCounts, Regional Math Contest, Technology Expo, MSU Science Olympiad, SAT Challenge. Students are also recognized in newsletters home and website newsposts.

**4.1f The school intentionally assigns staff to maximize opportunities for all students to have access to the staff's instructional strengths.**

There are numerous classes where regular education staff is assigned to collaborate with one another as well as collaborating with special education staff to reduce class size and assist struggling students.

Teachers with gifts in particular areas are scheduled to maximize their strengths and provide excellent and unique opportunities for students. The school counselor who is also a master carpenter is assigned to help a World of Work class and share his building expertise with students who need hands on kinds of learning experiences. The 7th grade science teacher has reorganized the 7th grade Technology Education class to take advantage of his rich knowledge in bio-technology and environmental issues.

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**4.1f The school intentionally assigns staff to maximize opportunities for all students to have access to the staff's instructional strengths.**

A new math teacher was hired with an extensive background in upper level mathematics to promote high level mathematics learning for students.

Two hour block classes have been implemented to give struggling students more time to master basic skills as well as the regular curriculum.

**4.1g Teachers communicate regularly with families about individual student's progress (e.g., engage through conversation).**

Every three weeks, progress reports are mailed home for all students. This, together with report cards, give parents academic feedback 12 times throughout the year.

The school website has a link to teachers' online gradebook.

Teachers post weekly lesson plans and homework to their individual web pages on the school website in an effort to improve transparency for families about class expectations.

As a goal of the Effective Schools Correlates team on Parent and Community

Involvement, each teacher will make 10 positive phone calls home every quarter.

A parent survey is planned for later this winter that looks at school climate, academic effectiveness, leadership and curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students.

**4.1h There is evidence that the teachers and staff care about students and inspire their best efforts.**

SGMS students have won multiple contests and awards at Regional and State science Fairs, Math contests. A large number of all 7th and 8th grade students (nearly 25%) attend the regional science Fair in Billings every year as a school. SGMS, by far, represents the greatest participation from any one school that attends the fair.

SGMS is open early every morning so that students have a place to go. The staff has designed several opportunities that engage students in supervised activities that help them with work completion as well as provide opportunities for fun, social outlets. These morning opportunities include AM Library, AM GYM, AM Computers, AM Arts and Crafts, AM Jazz Band, and Breakfast Club Choir. Additionally, several teachers begin their day early in order to be available for students who need extra help.

The Cougar Service Organization (CSO) works closely with local Tobacco and Alcohol Use Prevention agencies to design after school outreach activities that engage SGMS students in fun school projects and community service. CSO meets two days each month for the school year.

Many staff members donate money to our At-Risk student account in order to provide needy students with sports scholarships for participating in SGMS and community sports, Christmas presents, school supplies, clothes, shoes, coats and medical care (glasses) as well as food for their families.

**4.1i Multiple communication strategies and contexts are used for the dissemination of information to all stakeholders.**

Every three weeks when progress reports are sent home, a newsletter is also sent home – 12 newsletters during the academic year.

The SGMS website includes a webpage for every staff member with links to online gradebooks, lesson plans and weekly homework. Each staff member is adept at promoting what is happening in his/her classes through his/her individual web page.

Livingston Enterprise newspaper articles chronicle and highlight interesting curricular events, guest speakers, field trips, community service projects and collaborative projects with other grade levels, community agencies, and local businesses.

Parents will be surveyed electronically and with a traditional pen paper instrument about

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**4.1i Multiple communication strategies and contexts are used for the dissemination of information to all stakeholders.**

school climate and academic effectiveness.

As a goal for the Effective Schools Correlate team which involves parent involvement and communication, teachers are committed to making 10 positive phone calls home to parents every quarter.

Parent/Teacher conferences and Open House act as a vehicle for sharing information between home and school.

**4.1j There is evidence that student achievement is highly valued and publicly celebrated in a manner that is culturally appropriate (e.g., displays of student work, assemblies).**

Announcements over the school intercom routinely recognize student achievement – these announcements include sports news, academic excellence and acknowledgement of individual and group achievements.

Assemblies reward good attendance, academic success, most improved students and good citizens who make a difference in the lives of classmates and our school. Honor roll students are published each quarter in the local paper and on the school website.

Students have made numerous presentations to the school board and community about the SGMS Wind for Schools project, Safe Routes to School traffic project, science projects, Robotics Group, and One Book Montana – Hattie Big Sky.

Student work is prominently displayed in classrooms and hallways throughout the school. Local businesses have donated space to display student science fair and history projects in stores, banks, restaurants and non-profit organizations. Students write Holiday Traditions stories that are published each year in the local newspaper. An advertisement campaign allows local 7th grades to design ads for local businesses and have them published in the Livingston Enterprise.

Band and Choir concerts give students a chance to demonstrate their musical excellence throughout the year. Smaller groups and ensembles perform at several activities in the community – some of those include: the Livingston Christmas Stroll, the Tree of Life Lighting, and the Winter Farmers' Market. SGMS students also perform at assisted living centers and homes for the elderly.

**4.1k The school/district provides support for the physical, cultural, socio-economic, and intellectual needs of all students, which reflects a commitment to equity and an appreciation of diversity through policies, curriculum and instruction. GUIDANCE: Consider how the learning environment reflects the implementation of IEFA.**

Curricula which provide a balance with respect to meeting the physical, cultural, socio-economic and intellectual needs of students are in place and reviewed to insure that all students' needs are continually met. Classes are diverse and address students at all levels of intellectual ability as well as addressing students' talents and interests. Block classes provide struggling students with extra time and assistance to master basic skills and curricula. Advanced classes provide students who can easily master the regular curricular expectations with an extension of the subject matter and more in depth study.

Every year all students are exposed to various theatrical performances by the MT Shakespeare in the Schools, MT Repertory Theatre and the MSU Far Afield Musical Ensembles to expose students to cultural experiences they might not otherwise see because of geographic isolation or lack of funds to be able to attend. Performances which celebrate Native American heritage and instruct students about the Indian culture have also been planned.

Activities planned and executed through the guidance and counseling office teach

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- 4.1k The school/district provides support for the physical, cultural, socio-economic, and intellectual needs of all students, which reflects a commitment to equity and an appreciation of diversity through policies, curriculum and instruction. GUIDANCE: Consider how the learning environment reflects the implementation of IEFA.**  
students about diversity and encourage tolerance and acceptance across all cultures and socio-economic boundaries. These activities are a part of regular classroom presentations as well as school-wide co-curricular events such as Mix-It-Up day, American Heritage Day and Red Ribbon Week. Students are recognized by teachers for doing kindnesses to others through the “Caught Doing Something Good” program.

SGMS has partnered with church and civic organizations to provide coats, clothing and food for our students and their families. Teachers have donated time and money to help low income students participate in sports, music and school activities. They also donate money or school supplies for students. Students have also become partners in giving back to their community through the Holiday Food Drive and through various school projects that require students to engage in community service. One example of such a project is the Stream Study, which seeks create an awareness of pollution in local streams. Students learn all about our local streams and habitats during science classes and then develop and lead reclamation activities that restore and celebrate their importance in our community and area.

In the last 2 years, several resources have been purchased with Indian Education for All funds to increase the understanding of and appreciation for the Native culture in Montana. Teachers have been trained in numerous IEFA activities and have taken advantage of University courses that go into greater depth about specific Native American studies. However at this time, no clear curricular guidelines have been established that prevent overlap and reduce information gaps in what students are learning about Native Americans K-12.

#### **5 Student, Family, Community Support Programs/Services**

The school/district works with families and community groups to remove barriers to learning in an effort to meet the intellectual, social, career, and developmental needs of students.

##### **5.1 Student, Family, Community Support Programs/Services**

- 5.1a Families and the community are active partners in the educational process and work together with the school/district staff to promote programs and services for all students, based on high expectations and Montana Content and Performance Standards. GUIDANCE: If applicable, consider how your district/school has partnered with tribes and/or American Indian educators for successful implementation of IEFA.**

SGMS consistently has high parental attendance at parent conferences, open houses, concerts, science fairs and other events. A variety of guest speakers from our community regularly engage students in classes such as science and social studies to talk about careers and vocational experiences available to students.

We have partnered with the Department of Transportation, the City of Livingston, Montana State University, NorthWestern Energy Western Community Energy and the Department of Energy around grant opportunities such as the Safe Routes to School grant and the Wind for Schools grant. Each of these grants contains service learning

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- 5.1a Families and the community are active partners in the educational process and work together with the school/district staff to promote programs and services for all students, based on high expectations and Montana Content and Performance Standards. GUIDANCE: If applicable, consider how your district/school has partnered with tribes and/or American Indian educators for successful implementation of IEFA.**
- activities and curricular materials that reinforce higher levels of learning for students. In the Stream Study, local businesses and agencies such as Aquatic Design and Conservation, Federation of Fly Fishers and the City of Livingston work with students to gain an understanding and appreciation of local waterways and conservation activities that support the well being of our community.
- 5.1b Structures are in place to ensure that all students have access to all the curriculum (e.g., school guidance).**
- All students have access to all areas of the curriculum unless otherwise determined by their Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- 5.1c The school/district provides organizational structures and supports instructional practices to reduce barriers to learning. GUIDANCE: If applicable, consider what outreach efforts your district/school has employed to specifically increase collaboration and communication with families/communities of American Indian students to address their needs.**
- Even though student numbers have decreased over the last 5 years, SGMS has been able to maintain teaching FTE. The budgeting philosophy of SGMS is to maintain teachers in classrooms and make budget reductions in other non-instructional areas. Maintaining teaching FTE has enabled SGMS to reduce class size and design innovative interventions for struggling students. Teachers are scheduled to teach classes where their individual talents and skills can be maximized. If during the course of the year, we find the need to change class offerings or provide other interventions for students who are struggling, teachers and administration collaborate to discuss needs and design appropriate solutions, however unconventional those solutions may be. As an example, the 6th grade class has entered SGMS with only 50% proficient in math from 5th grade. As the year has progressed, another study skills class has been added to give those students more help in math homework completion. That study skills class is being supervised by the librarian because all other teachers have full schedules.
- 5.1d Students are provided with a variety of opportunities to receive additional assistance to support their learning, beyond the initial classroom instruction. GUIDANCE: If applicable, consider which supplemental services and programs have been put in place to specifically ensure American Indian students have increased academic success.**
- SGMS has held a summer school experience which targets struggling students in math, reading and writing. Unlike other schools, our summer school is not a punitive experience only for students with low grades; we base summer school attendance on which students need academic intervention.
- Zero hour class offerings (those that operate before the day officially begins) are in place to provide access to the library and studying, the computer lab for working on projects and extra math help. Additionally, Zero hour classes provide a means for extended study in Jazz Band, Breakfast Club Choir and also enjoying physical activity in the gymnasium. All Zero hour activities are supervised by certified instructional staff.

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**5.1e The school maintains an accurate student record system that provides timely information pertinent to the student's academic and educational development.**

All teachers at SGMS have maintained electronic gradebooks that are compatible with the district computer information system. Teachers routinely post grades to the Parental Access and Support System (PASS), provide weekly updates that are also posted and linked to their individual web pages, and provide progress reports for students every three weeks or 12 times during the course of the academic year.

**6 Professional Development**

The school/district provides research-based, results-driven professional development opportunities for staff and implements performance evaluation procedures in order to improve teaching and learning.

**6.1 Professional Development**

**6.1a There is evidence of support for the long-term professional growth needs of the individual staff members. This includes both instructional and leadership growth.**

On going professional development has been provided for all staff members across the core curricular areas. This includes the entire staff attending training in strategies in brain research. We have had several team members attend national brain research conferences and return to provide training to their colleagues. Language arts teachers have received training in LIPS, LETRS, Wilson, Step Up to Writing, and assessment and diagnostic tools. Math teachers have attended the national NCTM conference and meet as a vertical team on a regular basis throughout the year. Math instructors have attended instructional and curriculum seminars at the Montana Learning Center every summer to work with math teachers from throughout Montana. The entire staff has been trained in Step Up to Writing as a building wide initiative. Training with Ruby Payne's Framework to Understanding Poverty has caused the SGMS staff to adopt a more culturally sensitive approach to our student population. An Effective Schools Leadership team has been created and has received training in the correlates. This team in turn has become responsible for goal setting and decision making relative to curricular innovations and instructional innovations.

**6.1b The school has an intentional plan for building instructional capacity through ongoing professional development. GUIDANCE: Consider what professional development plans have been created to ensure individual teacher and school-wide IEFA implementation efforts are implemented and assessed. If applicable consider what professional development plans have been created to ensure individual teacher and school-wide implementation of the state's Montana High School Initiative, the state's RTI initiative and/or the district's Carl Perkins Plan.**

SGMS has been purposeful in examining data and developing school wide responses that address the needs of our student population. Although we don't know what professional development will be offered in five years, the fact that we continue to use and develop purposeful assessments will insure that we are responsive to the evolving needs of our student population.

The majority of our staff has been trained in Differentiated Instruction with the RTI model.

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- 6.1b The school has an intentional plan for building instructional capacity through ongoing professional development. GUIDANCE: Consider what professional development plans have been created to ensure individual teacher and school-wide IEFA implementation efforts are implemented and assessed. If applicable consider what professional development plans have been created to ensure individual teacher and school-wide implementation of the state's Montana High School Initiative, the state's RTI initiative and/or the district's Carl Perkins Plan.**
- We have designed classes that represent all three tiers of instruction. Ongoing frequent assessment in reading, writing, and math allows meaningful, specific yet flexible grouping to drive student achievement.
- 6.1c Staff development priorities are set in alignment with goals for student performance and the individual professional growth plans of staff.**
- CRT and survey data are reviewed and staff development is aligned to the areas of need.
- 6.1d Plans for school improvement directly connect goals for student learning and the priorities set for the school and district staff development activities.**
- The Effective Schools Correlates teams reviewed data and set their correlate team goals and activities to support student achievement and address areas of need in our school.
- 6.1e Professional development is on-going and job-embedded. Specific to the learning community.**
- Professional development opportunities exist at 3 levels: 1) District wide focus such as technology; 2) School-wide initiatives such as Effective Schools work; 3) Department of individual teacher opportunities that address specific teaching strategies or content needs
- 6.1f Professional development planning shows a direct connection to an analysis of student achievement data.**
- CRT data and other reading and math assessments provide direction for teacher training in instructional strategies and specific content knowledge.
- 6.2 Professional Growth and Evaluation**
- 6.2a The school/district provides a clearly defined evaluation process.**
- A comprehensive evaluation process is severely lacking at this time. There is no consistency between observation and evaluation approaches from building to building. Evaluations have little effect on instruction.
- 6.2b Leadership provides the fiscal resources for the appropriate professional growth and development of certified staff based on identified needs.**
- Title I funds as well as district funds have supported professional development in the past. Currently, the district budget has reflected a decrease in professional development in order to provide for basic staffing needs.

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**6.2c The school/district effectively uses the employee evaluation and the individual professional growth plan to improve staff proficiency.**

SGMS teachers are given recommendations each year that address instruction and improving teaching and learning. However, there is no district-wide evaluation model that improves efficiency.

**6.2d Leadership provides and implements a process of personnel evaluation which meets or exceeds standards.**

SGMS uses a combination of walk-through and formal observation to discuss teaching and learning with staff. Using data from those sources, instructional recommendations are developed.

**6.2e The school/district improvement plan identifies specific instructional leadership needs and the school board has strategies to address them.**

No district plan exists that identifies how to improve instructional leadership for building principals or any other leader in the district.

**6.2f Leadership uses the evaluation process to provide teachers with the follow-up and support to change behavior and instructional practice.**

SGMS' principal uses data from observations and the evaluation process to ascertain instructional goals for each teacher. Individual meetings and continued communications and observations serve to support changes in instruction or teaching approaches.

## **7 Leadership**

School/district instructional decisions focus on support for teaching and learning, organizational direction, high performance expectations, creating a learning culture and developing leadership capacity.

### **7.1 Leadership**

**7.1a Leadership has developed and sustained a shared vision.**

Last year a team of 6 teachers attended the Lezotte training for effective schools. This leadership team planned 3 additional trainings for the rest of the staff to share info about the correlates. Teachers chose 1 of 7 correlate teams to serve on for the next 3 years. This summer the Correlate Leadership team planned a flex day retreat for each of the correlate teams to review CRT and survey data and set goals for the year.

**7.1b Leadership decisions are focused on student academic performance and are data driven and collaborative. GUIDANCE: Consider how leadership monitors and prioritizes data-based organizational/academic needs that will increase American Indian student achievement. GUIDANCE: If applicable consider how leadership ensures classroom implementation of the state's Montana High School Initiative, the state's RTI Initiative and/or the district's Carl Perkin's Plan.**

Two years ago, SGMS started a math team that later emerged into a K-12 vertical math team. CRT scores were analyzed as well as school based assessments and AIMSweb math scores. The result if the analysis led the Math Vertical team to developing a series

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- 7.1b Leadership decisions are focused on student academic performance and are data driven and collaborative. GUIDANCE: Consider how leadership monitors and prioritizes data-based organizational/academic needs that will increase American Indian student achievement. GUIDANCE: If applicable consider how leadership ensures classroom implementation of the state's Montana High School Initiative, the state's RTI Initiative and/or the district's Carl Perkin's Plan.**

of “ins and outs” – expectations for students to master skills as entrance and exit requirements for grades 6-12. Curriculum was reviewed in terms of the “ins and outs” and several areas were compacted to allow more emphasis on weak areas and to encourage more mastery of important skills and areas where students had difficulty reaching proficiency.

- 7.1c There is evidence that the school/district school improvement team disaggregates data for use in meeting the needs of a diverse population, communicates the information to school staff and incorporates the data systematically into the school's plan.**

Several school teams meet to review and disaggregate data. Math teachers analyzed data during the 07-08 and 08-09 years to identify “ins and outs” so that teachers’ instruction could focus more on the necessary skills needed to attain math proficiency on the CRT and other assessments. Language arts and reading teachers review several assessments including Almsweb Fluency scores, MAZE, TOWRFS, and other measures of reading comprehension to determine student placement in classes and interventions in reading fluency, comprehension and writing. This year, that team has engineered a system whereby four teachers are collaborating during a 2 hour Literacy Block to serve 30-34 students with 6-8 interventions over the course of the week.

- 7.1d Leadership ensures all instructional staff have access to curriculum related materials and the training necessary to use curricular and data resources relating to Montana's academic content standards for public schools.**

All math teachers have attended national NCTM conferences as well as local trainings. All language arts and reading teachers have been trained in LIPS, LETRS, Differentiated Instruction and Step UP to Writing. Several staff members have attended Learning and The Brain Conference. Nationally recognized Brain consultants have provided in house training to all SGMS teachers. Additionally, all SGMS staff has been trained in Step Up to Writing as a part of a school-wide writing initiative. Six teachers representing all curricular areas were chosen to attend the Lezotte training last spring as s school leadership team.

- 7.1e Leadership ensures that time is protected and allocated to focus on curricular and instructional issues.**

To add minutes to the day, passing time between classes was reduced from 5 to minutes to 3 or 4 minutes. This along with beginning the day earlier has added 15 minutes/day, 45 hours/year and another week of instruction to the school year. Even with 30 hours above and beyond PIR days that are used for full release professional development days, SGMS still has over 50 hours of instruction over and above the 1080 hours required by OPI.

- 7.1f Leadership plans and allocates resources, monitors progress, provides the organizational infrastructure and removes barriers in order to sustain continuous school improvement.**

Through the district tech levy, grants and budget reallocations, SGMS has been able to design and complete 3 computer labs for greater student learning opportunities. MORE

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- 7.1f Leadership plans and allocates resources, monitors progress, provides the organizational infrastructure and removes barriers in order to sustain continuous school improvement.**

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- 7.1g The school/district leadership provides the organizational policy and resource infrastructure necessary for the implementation and maintenance of a safe, culturally sensitive and effective learning environment. GUIDANCE: Consider how leadership ensures classroom implementation of the districts/schools IEFA policy and curriculum.**

SGMS has used school safety surveys and in-house school climate surveys to address bullying and student relationship issues. After reviewing the results of last year's surveys, SGMS instituted an Bully Prevention and Improving School Climate student retreat for all 8th graders this fall. Students were taught Bully prevention techniques as well as tolerance and relationship building. Other activities are planned throughout the year including training a core group of 8th graders to act as peer trainers for 6th and 7th grade students for strategies to improve relationships among students. IEFA has provided additional resources to promote tolerance and cultural sensitivity training for staff and ultimately students. The trainings had brought about more teachers using differentiated instructional strategies to create more inclusive classrooms for all students. Teachers post weekly lesson plans to web pages that include homework, and daily activities including IEFA activities. This measure of accountability insures that principals, parents and students are aware of lesson goals, objectives and activities that incorporate IEFA.

- 7.1h District and school leadership provides a process for the development and the implementation of continuous school improvement.**

A school leadership team consisting of teachers from all curricular areas and the principal has been created to address school improvement issues at SGMS. Last year, the team attended the Lezotte Effective Schools training as a framework for decision making and setting goals for SGMS. Other teams also review data and suggest curricular changes including the Professional Development Committee, the Technology Committee, the Math Vertical Team, the Language Arts Team, and IEFA Committee. CRT data is initially analyzed and reviewed by the entire school so that all teachers understand student performance and proficiency issues. More in-depth study of CRT scores and other school based assessments is completed in curricular teams and departments. These studies and reviews occur several times each year as new data are collected and student progress is monitored. This ongoing review allows teachers to adjust instruction based on student performance and mastery of specific goals.

- 7.1i There is evidence that the school board has an intentional focus on student academic performance.**

Not really – other than a curriculum committee exists at the board level. CRT scores are shared with the board at the beginning of each year.

- 7.1j There is evidence that the principal demonstrates leadership skills in the areas of academic performance, learning environment, efficiency and a safe culturally responsive environment.**

The ideas for teacher trainings have been a result of the principal's study of research and best practices. Literacy and math blocks that give students a 2 hour reading and writing and/or math experience were created and organized by the principal after extensive data

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- 7.1j There is evidence that the principal demonstrates leadership skills in the areas of academic performance, learning environment, efficiency and a safe culturally responsive environment.**

collection, analysis and research review. These changes have enabled greater implementation of research based strategies and best practices designed to help students mastery basic and advancing skills in reading, writing and math. After discovering that less than 50 % of incoming 6th graders were proficient in math according to their 5th grade CRT scores, the principal redesigned the master schedule to allow for more Math FTE and more sections of math classes. That change enabled teachers to teach smaller classes and created 2 hour block classes so that struggling students could get remediation as well as have time for the regular curriculum. Some classes even have 2 staff members providing intense intervention and assessment strategies for students. Language arts teachers were scheduled to collaboratively work together to provide intense intervention in a 2 hour Literacy block classes. Up to 8 interventions were designed to address the different skill deficits of 30 -34 6th and 7th graders during the 2 hour block.

#### **8 Organizational Structure and Resources**

The organization of the school/district maximizes use of time, all available space and other resources to maximize teaching and learning and supports high student and staff performance.

##### **8.1 Organization of School**

- 8.1a There is evidence that the school is organized to maximize use of all available resources to support high student and staff performance and provide extended learning time and culturally relevant learning activities.**

To further give students access to computers 2 rooms were re-made into computer labs

- 8.1b The master class schedule reflects all students have access to all of the curriculum.**

Classes are arranged to avoid scheduling conflicts for students. If a conflict does arise, individual students are offered choices about how to make their schedules work. Before school opportunities provide additional outlets for students who would like to take more arts and music classes than what our schedule accommodates.

Special education replacement classes are scheduled at the same time as regular education counterparts so that students can move easily between those classes.

- 8.1c The instructional and non-instructional staff are allocated and organized based upon the learning needs of all students.**

Staffing is determined based on student numbers and educational needs – this changes from year to year.

- 8.1d There is evidence that the staff makes efficient use of instructional time to maximize student learning**

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**8.1d There is evidence that the staff makes efficient use of instructional time to maximize student learning**

Few interruptions of learning occur. SGMS students have more contact time with teachers on a daily and yearly basis than any other school in our district. SGMS students have more than 80 hours of instructional time above the required 1080 hours.

**8.1e Staff promotes team planning vertically and horizontally across content areas and grade configurations that is focused on the goals, objectives and strategies in the improvement plan (e.g., common planning time for content area teachers; emphasis on learning time and not seat time; and integrated units).**

Vertical teams have met in all core areas to review curriculum and expectations at each grade level. Effective Schools Correlates teams will meet 6 times during the year to look at data, plan activities and evaluate current programs.

**8.1f The schedule is intentionally aligned with the school's mission and designed to ensure that all staff provide quality instructional time (e.g., flex time, organization based on developmental needs of students, interdisciplinary units, cultural needs, etc.).**

Schedule is a major focus of current LPS improvement planning. The issue of scheduling to ensure that all staff provide quality instructional time is one that is currently under review across the district. Development of interdisciplinary units, ability grouping for accelerated learning, accommodations to cultural norms of economically disadvantaged students, and block schedules are being considered.

**8.2 Resource Allocation and Integration**

**8.2a The school/district provides a clearly defined process to provide equitable and consistent use of fiscal resources.**

SGMS does not have common planning time for grade level staff, or as much prep time as other schools, and also has the shortest lunch period for staff. Equity does not exist in the teacher work day – SGMS teachers have more contact time with students, higher student loads and the least prep and lunch time of any school in the district. The district has not equitably addressed the issue – which is also a bargaining unit issue.

**8.2b The school/district budget reflects decisions made about discretionary funds and resources are directed by an assessment of need or a required plan, all of which consider appropriate data.**

Much of the discretionary funds have been utilized to pay health insurance premiums and balance the budget.

**8.2c The school board analyzed funding and other resource requests to ensure the requests are tied to the school's plan and identified priority needs.**

The budget has not been analyzed to provide for the maximum efficiency of operations. Money that should be spent on teachers and areas that directly affect student achievement, is instead spent on non-essential positions. Greater efficiency could be realized in the classified staff area.

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- 8.2d State and federal program resources are allocated and integrated (Safe Schools, Title I, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, etc) to address student needs identified by the school/district. GUIDANCE: Consider how district/school IEFA funds are used to develop curriculum, offer professional development and/or deliver instruction to students.**

The district has recently worked to combine and integrate multiple resources to address budget needs.

### **9 Comprehensive and Effective Planning**

The school/district develops, implements and evaluates a comprehensive school improvement plan that communicates a clear purpose, direction and action plan focused on teaching and learning

#### **9.1 Defining the School Vision, Mission and Beliefs**

- 9.1a There is evidence that a collaborative process was used to develop the vision, beliefs, mission and goals that engage the school community as a community of learners.**

Through our correlate team Clear and Focused Mission there were many meetings to go through the process necessary to create a vision, beliefs, mission and goals. A survey will be conducted to evaluate the current mission statement and develop something that will better fit our current school climate and goals. The current mission statement was a collaborative effort from the entire SGMS staff three years ago.

#### **9.2 Development of the Profile**

- 9.2a There is evidence the school/district planning process involves collecting, managing and analyzing data.**

The learning team is in the process of collecting data through a survey to evaluate our current strategies, tactics, and behaviors consistent with our current mission, core beliefs, and core values. The results will be tabulated and we will be able to identify where there is a gap between the state mission, beliefs, and values and how to improve how our school currently operates.

- 9.2b The school/district uses data for school improvement planning.**

Data has been collected and analyzed continually. Reading and math scores are collected and analyzed at least 3 times each year.

#### **9.3 Defining Desired Results for Student Learning**

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**9.3a School and district plans reflect learning research, current local, state and national expectations for student learning and are reviewed by a planning team.**

Six people from SGMS went to Dr. Lezotte's correlate training and came back with ideas that will help implement a plan that is based on researched based models. The plan we have designed is based on the Effective Schools correlates (national) and the Montana educational plan (9 correlates).

Our 5 year plan has focused our small group and large group activities on student achievement; by looking at CRT results, and multiple assessments (fluency probes, math tests, comprehension assessments, and writing probes) we are able to adjust our plan as needed.

**9.3b The school/district analyzes their students' unique learning needs.**

We always have our students' unique learning needs as our backbone in decision making. Making sure that we are being student centered and focused in our small group and large group activities by looking at CRT results, beginning of the year assessments (fluency probes, math tests, comprehension assessments, and writing probes) allows us to tweak annually.

**9.3c The desired results for student learning are defined.**

Through the information and data we gather and analyze, we will be able to make sure we are defining student achievement for each correlate area across all subgroups of students. Surveying parents and student will provide us with more information about areas of weakness that we need to tackle.

**9.4 Analyzing Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness**

**9.4a Perceived strengths and limitations of the school/district instructional and organizational effectiveness are identified using the collected data.**

Ongoing professional development time in correlate team meetings allows us to continually collect and analyze data for organizational and instructional effectiveness. Achievement data (CRT, etc) as well as surveys, interviews etc. will be used to provide valuable information.

**9.4b The school/district goals for building and strengthening the capacity of the school/district instructional and organizational effectiveness are defined.**

Ongoing professional development time in correlate team meetings allows us to continually collect and analyze data for organizational and instructional effectiveness. Achievement data (CRT, etc) as well as surveys, interviews etc. will be used to provide valuable information and continually define our roles and mission.

**9.5 Development of the Improvement Plan**

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**9.5a The action steps for school improvement are aligned with the school improvement goals and objectives.**

The action steps for school improvement will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis.

**9.5b The plan identifies the resources, timelines and persons responsible for carrying out each activity.**

This process will be completed throughout the year during release days and professional development. Our mission and belief statements address the goals for the staff and the students, timelines will be added and revised as more data is uncovered..

**9.5c The means for evaluating the effectiveness of the improvement plan are established.**

This process will be completed throughout the year during release days and professional development. Our mission and belief statements address the goals for the staff and the students; timelines will be added and revised as more data is uncovered and goals are further developed. Evaluating the process is continuous.

**9.5d The improvement plan is aligned with the school's profile, beliefs, mission, desired results for student learning and analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness.**

This process will be completed throughout the year during release days and professional development. Our mission and belief statements address the goals for the staff and the students; timelines will be added and revised as more data is uncovered and goals are further developed. Evaluating the process is continuous.

**9.6 Implementation and Documentation**

**9.6a The plan is implemented as developed.**

Through discussion in our release days we will be making sure implementation is occurring.

**9.6b The school evaluates the degree to which it achieves the goals and objectives for student learning set by the plan.**

We have already seen growth in math scores during this year as we continue to gather data and evaluate the effectiveness of new instruction and the math games we have implemented across the curriculum.

This process will be completed throughout the year during release days and professional development.

**9.6c The school evaluates the degree to which it achieves the expected impact on classroom practice and student performance specified in the plan.**

We have already seen growth in math scores during this year as we continue to gather data and evaluate the effectiveness of new instruction and the math games we have

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- 9.6c The school evaluates the degree to which it achieves the expected impact on classroom practice and student performance specified in the plan.**  
implemented across the curriculum.

This process will be completed throughout the year during release days and professional development.

We have recently (in the last week) talked about the necessity of a comprehensive evaluation process among all schools. Our goal is to define and provide examples of exemplary teaching and instructional strategies that can be taught to all staff members.

- 9.6d There is evidence of attempts to sustain the commitment to continuous improvement.**

We have already shown this as we continue to adjust our 5 year plan, student and teacher schedules and instructional outcomes.