

Edison's School Improvement Plan Update

November 2008

In the last few weeks, the Edison Collaborative School Committee (CSC) has worked on revising our School Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP serves as the school's strategic plan and includes academic, community engagement, and school safety goals that advance Edison's mission and vision.

As part of the SIP revision process, the CSC first identified successes at Edison. Edison students continue to perform well on the CSAP and once again attained adequate yearly progress in all 24 target areas under the No Child Left Behind mandates. The school remains the highest performing school in Northwest Denver and attracts students of choice who do not live within Edison's boundaries. This year's enrollment exceeds 570 students, making Edison the largest elementary school in the area. The parent participation at Edison warrants recognition. Have you seen the list of Enrichment Activities (www.edisonextra.com/enrichment) and PTA special programs lately? In addition, Edison boasts a strong faculty and staff. Teachers at Edison work very hard, do a wonderful job of following the DPS curriculum in all classrooms, and support the needs of each student using differentiated teaching strategies.

Yet, even with all its strengths, we know from Edison's results on the District's recently released school performance framework that we need to improve academic growth for all students at Edison. We want all children to have the best education possible. Edison's combination of students, teachers and parent involvement make it a good candidate for academic success beyond the levels achieved to date. The SIP revisions take these factors into account.

The CSC decided to focus on SIP components that emphasize consistent instruction across grade levels and differentiated instruction for all students. Consistent instruction requires use of the same curriculum or strategies in all classrooms. Differentiated instruction recognizes the varying aptitudes and learning styles of individual students within a given classroom and provides diverse learning opportunities in support of individual students' academic needs, focusing not only on the lowest-performing but also the highest-performing students. The revised SIP incorporates the following curriculum pieces that emphasize consistency and differentiation: Guided Reading Groups, Accelerated Reader, Organization in Writing, and Progress Monitoring through Data Teams.

To help you understand the SIP goals, I have included them below, with an explanation of the strategies that support the goals and ways that you can help your child achieve his or her academic potential. The goals themselves must state measurable outcomes, and the measurements tools may seem unfamiliar. I can assure you that Edison teachers use these tools and know how to interpret the data that they provide in a way that benefits the students.

Reading Goal: *In 2010, eighty-five percent (85%) of students in grades K-5 will read at or above grade level as measured by the DRA2. Currently, seventy percent (70%) of the students are reading at or above grade level.*

Strategies at School. To attain this goal, teachers will use AIMSWEB, small guided reading groups, Accelerated Reader, and other intervention and differentiation strategies to meet individual student needs. AIMSWEB is a fluency and comprehension reading intervention for students at risk. Guided reading develops literacy skills by engaging small groups of students in the reading process, often including initial predictions about a book's contents, reading out loud with the other students in the group, and responding to the text. Accelerated Reader (<http://www.renlearn.com/ar/>) is an online progress monitoring and assessment tool that tests children on their independent reading levels.

We will also monitor progress through weekly data team and grade level meetings. Data teams consist of instructors and support specialists who work with the students, analyze test scores, and evaluate instructional approaches with an eye toward improving student learning. To encourage reading at home, students will receive books from our Reading is Fundamental Program. These books are given out three times a year.

What can you do to help your child read better? You can help us achieve this goal by reading with your child every night, attending Literacy Night and Bilingual Parent Meetings if applicable, and participating in parent-teacher conferences.

Writing Goal: *By 2010, seventy-five (75%) of students in grades K-5 will be proficient in writing as measured by grade level teacher created writing rubrics.*

Strategies at School. To attain this goal, students will write monthly writing prompts. Writing prompts are used to direct student writing so that teachers can identify skill development. Teachers will collect student work in writing folders and send home writing prompts twice a month, with rubrics, so children can practice at home. Teachers will also engage students in the goal-setting process so students know where they should focus their efforts. Through grade level and data team meetings, teachers will monitor student progress.

What can you do to improve your child's writing? The more students write the better their writing becomes. You can help your child by giving him or her engaging writing activities that fit into your daily life, such as making a grocery list, writing letters to grandparents or relatives, writing directions to a place or game, or creating holiday or birthday cards for family and friends. When your child brings home writing prompts, help set aside time for your child to focus on the prompt and then have your child read his or her

writing aloud to you. You are also encouraged to discuss your questions about your child's writing skills and the rubrics with your child's classroom teacher.

Parent and Community Goal: *Ninety-five percent (95%) or more of Edison parents will participate in at least three (3) defined activities that support student learning.*

Strategies at School. Teachers will communicate with parents/guardians through the Thursday folder each week. Teachers will monitor weekly reading logs and provide monthly newsletters that highlight classroom academic content and activities.

How can you help? We need volunteers to learn how to determine the Accelerated Reader reading levels for books, and then level books throughout the school, to assist with the implementation of Accelerated Reader. If you are interested in helping with this activity, please contact me directly. I will schedule a training session in early January and will contact you with training dates and times. Also, you are encouraged, once again, to participate in school events such as Literacy Night, Build It Night, and other important family nights at Edison. In cooperation with the PTA, the CSC will track overall participation at these various events to better recognize the parent/guardian commitment to these activities that make Edison such a great community.

School Safety, Climate, and Culture Goal: *Reduce the number of conflicts in classrooms and on the playground by ten percent (10%) by 2010.*

Strategies at School. The school will provide positive playground role models through P.E. Aces. Edison will use in the Positive Behavior System throughout the school. Positive Behavior System reinforces positive behaviors. At Edison, the "Gotchas" serve as one example of Positive Behavior System in practice. Edison will implement Reading Book Clubs in first through fifth grades and will provide three project-based learning experiences for all students in grades kindergarten through five. Edison will encourage participation in the MENtors Program and Edison Enrichment Activities.

How can you help? Talk with your child at home about playground activities and peer interactions. Help him or her to problem-solve difficult situations and recognize school progress and achievements. If your child is struggling with an interaction, reach out to me or your child's classroom teacher to address the situation before it negatively impacts your child's educational experience.

Math Goal: In addition to the formal goals stated in the SIP, the CSC is developing a basic math goal that focuses on Everyday Math games. As the District approved math curriculum, Everyday Math (<http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu>) assists your child in learning math by building on and repeating math concepts throughout the curriculum. Everyday Math includes a number of games and activities that you can use at home to build your child's math skills. You probably already receive Everyday Math parent letters, homework, and games in your child's Thursday folder. I encourage you to interact with your child using the math games. The games may present math in a different way than what you learned as an elementary school student. If you need help understanding the concepts and your child cannot explain the concepts on his or her own, please speak with your child's classroom teacher.

While this summary does not provide everything that is in the School Improvement Plan, it does provide you with a majority of the goals and activities in the document. The School Improvement Plan is a working document and is adjusted each year to meet the changing needs of the school. After the Thanksgiving break, you may access a copy of the revised SIP on the Edison Google Group (send an e-mail to sandi.pond@gmail.com to subscribe). We know that working together will provide a vibrant and safe learning environment for children so they can achieve success in the 21st Century.

Sincerely,

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