

TITLE III AMAO IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2013-15

CENTENNIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 12

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY INTRODUCTION:

District Demographics

The Centennial School District serves just over 6,400 K-12 students from 32,000 households within a 28 square mile area in the northern Twin Cities suburbs. Within the district, there are five elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, two alternative learning centers, and an early childhood center.



**Centennial School District
DISTRICT PROFILE
Superintendent: Dr. Keith M. Dixon**

Mission Statement

Through academic, emotional, and social development, Centennial School District 12 prepares students for life.

PERSONNEL

- 446 licensed teachers (100% highly qualified, 73.99% with Master's Degree or higher)
- 2 media specialists
- 243 paraprofessionals
- 20 administrators
- 205 support staff (instructional, special education, custodians, food service, secretaries, health office)

CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATION (2009-10 data, unless otherwise specified)

Subgroup Data:

- 18.1% Free and Reduced Lunch
- 1.3% English Language Learners
- 15.7% Eligible Special Education
- 1.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 4.9% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 3.1% Black, Not Hispanic Origin
- 3.8% Hispanic
- 86.9% White, Not Hispanic Origin

Enrollment and Student Data:

- 6419 total enrollment (April 2013)
- 928 students from other districts attend this district
- 479 students from this district attend other districts
- 93.8% 4-year graduation rate 2012

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

- **Title 1:** This federally funded program serves students meeting eligibility criteria in reading and/or math in our two qualifying schools: Golden Lake Elementary and Centennial Elementary.
- **Centennial Early Reading Foundation (CERF) Program:** This Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instructional Services (ADSIS) program, funded largely through the State Special Education Excess Cost Funding Formula, represents a district-wide initiative dedicated to providing early reading interventions for K-3 students who are performing below grade level. CERF also provides interventions for students in grades 4 & 5 who previously received direct instruction in the CERF Program.
- **Early Childhood Family Education:** The Early Childhood program, serving students from birth to kindergarten entry, helps children develop the skills necessary to be successful in school and in life through guided play, interaction with peers, and parent/child activities. The Parent and Family Education program supports families through classes, speakers, handouts, and parenting sessions.
- **English Learners (EL) Program:** Currently, 99 students are provided services to bring children's English language skills to a level where they can be successful in the mainstream classroom.
- **Kids Club:** This district program provides safe, stimulating, high-quality before and after school care for children grades K-5. Other programs include K-Time, (school day care that complements the 1/2 day kindergarten) for kindergartners, KC Preschool for 4 year-olds, and a summer program for middle school students called Adventure Camp. Kids club provided school care for 683 students from 539 families in 2010-11.
- **Gifted Services:** Gifted Services are available for K-12 students throughout the district. These services include individual, small group and whole classroom experiences.
- **Community Education:** The Centennial Community Education strives to serve residents of all ages with a variety of learning opportunities that are accessible and affordable. This program works to foster relationships within the community to involve and engage our residents, schools, agencies and institutions to identify and address local needs and interests.
- **Extra-Curricular Opportunities:** The Centennial School District offers a wide array of before and after school academic and athletic activities. The academic programs include math and reading support, homework help, and credit remediation. The district also offers after school personal and social development opportunities.
- **Special Education:** The district provides special education in-district services for 985 students with learning disabilities, emotional behavioral problems, speech/language impaired, physical/hearing/visual impaired, cognitive delays and/or autism who reside in our attendance area.

II. COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT:

In response to the Centennial School District's 2012 AMAO Needs Improvement designation, the following needs assessment was completed. This assessment is loosely modeled after the district's NCLB Needs Improvement Plan and where applicable, portions of that plan have been incorporated.

AMAO Needs Assessment Completed: April 30, 2013 (portions of the District Improvement Plan were also updated and included)

Leadership Team Members Involved:

Scott Johnson	Executive Director of Teaching and Learning
Chris Gerst	Elementary Principal/Parent
Dawn Madland	District Assessment Coordinator
Barb Stein	EL Teacher/Parent
Sharon Belich	EL Teacher
Linda Guinn	EL Teacher/Parent
Kathy Berrios-Cordero	Cultural Liaison
Cyndy Yang	Parent of EL students

Components evaluated as part of this needs assessment process:

- Assessment and Use of Results
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Engaging Families and Communities
- Professional Development

ASSESSMENT AND USE OF RESULTS

This section focuses on the first of the three areas that are key to developing an effective educational program: Assessment. The Minnesota Regional School Improvement Model describes assessment as gathering, analyzing, and using information about students and their academic progress to improve learning. Data driven, fact based decision-making uses measurements that align with the school's overall goals and provides critical data and information to assist staff in improving student learning. The school should disaggregate the data to determine trends among various groups of students. Schools open opportunities for learning about new approaches for improvement by comparing their results with those of schools with comparable student populations and with those of high performing schools.

The following section captures Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement related to Assessment:

Strengths:

- Systems are in place to collect standardized test data and teachers have access to the data.
- Assessment results, including ACCESS for ELL, are disaggregated by EL staff and this data is used to inform curricular, instructional, and planning decisions.
- SMART goals are developed and used to guide instruction by all staff.
- Minnesota Academic Standards are embedded in the curriculum.

- Common assessments with embedded standards have been developed and are being used across the district.
- Structures are in place for assessment conversations.

Opportunities for Growth:

- Ensure that common assessments are regularly reviewed and improved.
- Continue to discuss how formative assessments are being used to impact instruction.
- Ensure that all teachers are using assessments that evaluate the skills and concepts required by academic standards.
- Expand classroom teachers' understanding of ACCESS assessments and corresponding performance data.
- Consider interventions that are effective with EL students in other school districts.
- Ensure all licensed staff are familiar with WIDA Standards.
- Educate all staff on the importance of each student's growth relative to the district's AMAO status.
- Inform stakeholders, including parents, about how data is used.

CURRICULUM

This section focuses on the second of the three areas that are key to developing an effective educational program: Curriculum. The Minnesota Regional School Improvement Model describes curriculum as an intentional and rigorous plan for what students will learn and when they will learn it.

The following section captures Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement related to Curriculum:

Strengths:

- Curriculum is being implemented in the classroom and is aligned to standards.
- Processes are in place to ensure curriculum is aligned with student needs, including supplemental and alternate curriculums.
- The district has a well-defined and responsive curriculum review cycle.
- Curriculum-related staff development is comprehensive and ongoing.

Opportunities for Growth:

- The district needs to broaden the availability of standards-aligned curriculum resources for students working below grade level.
- District and building administrators will continue efforts to ensure that the district-adopted curriculum is being embedded with integrity into classroom instruction.
- District and building administrators will ensure that instructional targets are aligned to district learner outcomes.

INSTRUCTION

This section focuses on the third of the three areas that are key to developing an effective educational program: Instruction. The Minnesota Regional School Improvement Model describes instruction as the scientifically research-based strategies that staff uses to help students learn at high levels.

The following section captures Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement relevant to Instruction, as identified by the district team during the Quality Indicators exercise and discussion.

Strengths:

- District-wide structures are in place to discuss instruction. For example, all teachers are members of a Professional Learning Community.
- There has been a district-wide focus on building positive relationships among all district stakeholders.
- Systems are in place for meeting the needs of students, including those working above or below grade level.
- Student data that can be used to inform instruction is readily available for all teachers.

Opportunities for Growth:

- The district must maintain consistent district-wide differentiation and intervention efforts at each level, including more staff development on research-based differentiation and intervention strategies.
- The district needs to continue efforts to clearly articulate the scope and sequence of skills within and between grade levels.
- The district will sustain efforts to align instruction with grade level standards/outcomes.

ENGAGING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

This section focuses on Engaging Families and Community, especially on how to engage both in supporting and facilitating the learning of students.

The following section captures Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement relevant to Engaging Families and Community as identified by the district team during the Quality Indicator exercise and discussion.

Strengths:

- Many opportunities exist for family engagement, including some outreach opportunities.
- The community exhibits a culture of high expectations for its students and schools.
- Important information regarding the School District's EL Program is hosted on the district website.

Opportunities for Growth:

- The district will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of parent involvement and be open to additional opportunities to expand partnerships with the community.
- The district will explore additional opportunities to expose all students to other cultural experiences.
- The district will explore additional options for communicating information to parents.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional Development is a continuous and systematic process of individual and collaborative in-depth learning experiences designed to further educators' knowledge and skills in their professional growth.

The following section captures Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement relevant to Professional Development, as identified by the district team during the Quality Indicators exercise and discussion.

Strengths:

- Professional development priorities are determined via a comprehensive needs assessment process.
- Data is gathered to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development efforts and to plan subsequent learning opportunities.
- Professional learning communities are firmly in place and ongoing efforts exist to evaluate their impact on student achievement. PLCs examine data and use research-based strategies in their efforts to increase student achievement.

Opportunities for Growth:

- The district will ensure that professional development is firmly aligned with needs indicated by standardized assessment results.
- The district will continue to develop effective methods for teachers to collaborate, coach, and share best practices.

District AMAO Needs Assessment: Summary of Results**Strengths:**

- All qualifying students receive EL services by a fully licensed EL teacher.
- Highly qualified paraprofessionals are used as necessary to support EL program.
- Supplemental curriculum has been adopted to meet EL learner needs.
- Assessment data is used regularly to drive curriculum and instruction decisions.
- EL teachers are included on program planning for English language learning needs.
- EL teachers have ongoing communication with parents/guardians of EL students.
- The district is improving systems for monitoring the identification and academic growth of all subgroups, including EL learners.
- Each building develops annual SMART goals as part of their continuous improvement plan and all teachers establish personal goals related to those plans.
- All certified staff members are a member of a Professional Learning Community (PLC).
- Systems are in place to collect standardized test data and teachers have access to the data.
- Curriculum and instruction is aligned to WIDA standards at all levels.
- The district has a well-defined and responsive curriculum review cycle.
- Staff development around curriculum and instructional practices is excellent and ongoing.
- The Department of Teaching and Learning has facilitated the adoption of curriculum for all students, including at risk students.

Opportunities for Growth:

- Need for ongoing training and staff development around WIDA standards and effective instructional strategies (i.e. SIOP).
- Provide opportunities for collaboration between specialist and classroom teachers by including specialists on PLC teams.
- Ensure that all staff understands their individual responsibilities relative to the educational needs of EL learners.
- Promote ongoing parent and community involvement.
- Identify and provide staff with strategies that differentiate instruction to meet students' unique needs.
- Improve efficiency in documenting students within the district's student information system.

III. GOALS AND ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

The goals of this AMAO Improvement Plan were developed in a direct response to an analysis of 2012 ACCESS for ELL results and an assessment of other needs previously identified in this plan. Each of these goals, which represent the highest priorities identified through our needs assessment, is defined in detail in Section IV: Strategies and Activities. These two-year goals focus on the following areas: improved proficiency in speaking, improved proficiency in writing and an improvement in overall language proficiency.

The major initiatives that will support the achievement of these goals include:

- Increased instruction in academic vocabulary by EL and general education teachers, including subject specific vocabulary.
- Further training around and inclusion of SIOP strategies.
- EL teachers will increase opportunities for oral reporting and group discussions.
- EL teachers will regularly incorporate opportunities for their students to write, including note taking, journaling and multi-paragraph essays.
- EL staff will further their own professional development via the WIDA website and other pertinent training opportunities.
- The district will support ongoing training for general education staff regarding WIDA standards and strategies that will best meet the needs of EL learners.

The anticipated outcome of the focus of these goals and the implementation of these outcomes is that all EL students will be proficient as measured by the ACCESS for ELL assessments. It is our desire that all EL students in our program acquire the skills necessary to successfully exit our EL program and thrive in our general education programs and beyond.

IV. STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

Timeline/Date for Assessment/Completion of Initiatives:

Unless otherwise noted, each of the strategies/initiatives identified in this section of the AMAO Improvement Plan will be reviewed on a quarterly basis in a meeting of EL staff and program administration. When appropriate, EL parents will also be included in this review process. During these quarterly reviews, each initiative and strategy will be assessed relative to its frequency of use/implementation along with its impact of student learning. Where appropriate, EL staff and program administration will develop benchmarks in 2013 to assess this impact.

GOAL/OUTCOME 1:

By June 2014, 12.53 % of the LEP/EL students in grades K -12 will increase their proficiency level score in the speaking domain to a 4.0 or greater as demonstrated by the scores in speaking on the ACCESS for ELL assessment.

By June 2015, 14.63 % of the LEP/EL students in grades K -12 will increase their proficiency level score in the speaking domain to a 4.0 or greater as demonstrated by the scores in speaking on the ACCESS for ELL assessment.

Intended audience:

All Level 4 EL students in Grades K-12

During the 2011-2012 school year as demonstrated by the ACCESS for ELL assessment, there were 30 students that demonstrated an overall language proficiency level of 4.0 - 4.9. Of these 30 students, 43% accrued their lowest domain scores in the area of speaking.

Activities/ Strategies for Speaking

Grades 1-2

- The EL teacher will incorporate frequent story retells including supporting details with an emphasis on transition words.
- In the fall of 2013, the EL teacher and the general education teachers will integrate an “academic vocabulary word wall” in each classroom to facilitate an increase usage of academic language into class discussions.
- The EL teachers will consistently use SIOP strategies such as “Think-Pair-Share” and role playing to increase the level of oral interaction within lessons.

Grades 3-5

- In the fall of 2013, the EL teacher and the general education teachers will integrate an “academic vocabulary word wall” in each classroom to facilitate an increase usage of academic language into class discussions.
- The EL teacher will incorporate opportunities for oral reporting during content units
- In the fall of 2013, the EL teacher will post reference materials detailing phrases and language commonly used to:
 - Verbally compare and contrast various relationships
 - Articulate solutions to various problems
- The EL teacher will consistently use a variety of SIOP strategies and Kagan’s Cooperative Learning Structures into daily lessons.

Grades 6-8

- The EL teacher will incorporate opportunities for comparing and contrasting content information in various forms including similes and metaphors.
- The EL teacher will incorporate opportunities for presenting information to the class that is content-based, using visuals or multi-media.
- The EL teacher will integrate into group discussions opportunities to defend position with reasons, communicate fluently, connect ideas with reasons for beliefs, and discuss abstract, content-based thoughts.

Grades 9-12

- The EL teacher will explicitly teach the use of slang and idioms in conversation.
- The EL teacher will incorporate opportunities for students to participate in group discussions that include pros and cons of issues and point of view, using technical and content-related language.
- The EL teacher will integrate into lessons the process of how a problem is solved and the thought process involved.

Other Strategies:

- At the beginning of each school year, the EL teachers will communicate to the general education staff information concerning the EL program including topics such as: entrance/exit criteria, the purpose and use of the WIDA ACCESS for ELL test and information related to the WIDA language standards.
- The EL teachers will intentionally access the professional development opportunities offered through the WIDA website in order to increase our understanding of the connection of the language standards to classroom instruction.

GOAL/OUTCOME 2:

By June 2014, 12.53% of the LEP/EL students in grades K -12 will increase their proficiency level score in the writing domain to a 4.0 or greater as demonstrated by the scores in writing on the ACCESS for ELL assessment.

By June 2015, 14.63 % of the LEP/EL students in grades K -12 will increase their proficiency level score in the writing domain to a 4.0 or greater as demonstrated by the scores in writing on the ACCESS for ELL assessment.

Intended Audience:

During the 2011-2012 school year as demonstrated by the ACCESS for ELL assessment, there were 30 students that demonstrated an overall language proficiency level of 4.0 - 4.9. Of these 30 students, 36% received their lowest domain score in writing.

Activities/ Strategies for writing:

Grades 1-2:

- The EL and the general education teachers will regularly incorporate opportunities for students to generate original written sentences.
- The EL teachers will integrate journal writing into the curriculum.

Grades 3-5:

- The EL teachers will use graphic organizers to provide opportunities to take notes and express ideas in writing.
- The EL teachers will explicitly teach summarizing and provide opportunities to summarize content-based lessons.

Grades 6-8

- The EL teacher will explicitly teach the writing of a 5 paragraph essay with an introduction, supporting ideas, transitions words, and a conclusion.
- The EL teacher will regularly incorporate opportunities to take notes on content material and write a summary.

Grades 9-12

- The EL teacher will integrate opportunities to write narrative, explanatory, descriptive, and persuasive text.
- The EL teacher will explicitly teach how to revise writing based on feedback from teacher or peers.

Rationale:

1) We should target academic English, as opposed to BICS, which is the language the students are required to generate for classroom and standardized testing

2) Jeff Zwiers (2008) spent six months researching how teachers can develop the language needed for success in different content classes. His research targeted grades 5 – 12, but we can modify his recommendations for elementary. Zwiers’ research indicated that “academic language is:

- a. intricately linked to higher-order thinking processes
- b. developed by extensive modeling and scaffolding of classroom talk
- c. accelerated by weaving direct teaching of its features while teaching content concepts” (p. xv).

Some of the activities suggested by Zwiers include building classroom discussions by asking open-ended questions, oral presentations, students “teaching” other students, and reading aloud.

We should ask higher-order thinking questions, where students have to access academic English in order to answer them. We should develop an environment where students are required to use academic English. We should develop more activities requiring oral and written expression.

3) We should focus more on student-centered teaching vs. teacher-centered. Rothenberg & Fisher (2007) recommend that teachers should provide “daily opportunities for authentic use of language, perhaps best accomplished through student to student interaction where students must listen and speak in order to accomplish a task” (p. 48).

4) Herrera & Murry (2011) recommend using multiple types of student groupings where students can use language that pushes them beyond BICS in a less intimidating setting (p. 253). More proficient peers can provide scaffolding and support. One idea is to use a more proficient peer to explain unfamiliar terms in the native language (p. 266). Examples of cognitively engaging activities include: research projects, solving a problem that affects the students, and writing essays, plays, and poetry (p. 256).

GOAL/OUTCOME 3:

By June 2014, 12.53% of identified LEP/EL students in grades K-12 will meet an overall language proficiency of 5.0 or higher with no language domain falling below 4.0 as measured by ACCESS for ELL.

By June 2015, 14.63 % of identified LEP/EL students in grades K-12 will meet an overall language proficiency of 5.0 or higher with no language domain falling below 4.0 as measured by ACCESS for ELL.

Intended audience:

During the 2011-12 school as demonstrated by the ACCESS for ELL assessment, there were 16 students in the Centennial district that did not meet proficiency, but were at a 4.5 or above. These are students who are close, but need an academic boost to get them to the proficiency level. Proficiency would be a 5 overall and no score less than a 4 in on the speaking, listening, reading, and writing components of the test.

Activities/ Strategies:

- EL and classroom teachers will target content vocabulary in Math, Science, Social Studies, and English. All teachers involved in the education of ELs will use SIOP strategies such as flip charts with vocabulary, student drawn pictures, think alouds, visuals around the room with pictures of new vocabulary, and having students work with a partner to decide which vocabulary in a reading is important.
- Every lesson by the EL teacher or classroom teacher should begin with questions to find out what the ELs already know and do not know about the material that will be presented. Scaffolding techniques need to be used to assist the EL’s to be able to access the lesson being taught. Some common scaffolding techniques are paraphrasing, using think alouds, reinforcing contextual definitions, providing correct pronunciation by repeating student responses, and slowing speech, increasing pauses, and speaking in phrases. (Echevarria, Short, and Vogt, 2008)

- EL teachers will advocate for all EL students to gain entrance into the district support programs to increase their exposure to academic language and extend their day in some cases. These opportunities include: (High School) Cougar Café (homework help), Freshman Support, Academic Support/Reading, Reading Remediation Support, Math Remediation Support (Middle School) Promise Fellow, Targeted Services in math and reading, Academic Support in math and reading, Read 180, and coming in the future, Math 180 (Elementary) Targeted Services, Reading Core, Title I reading and math, CERF, Extended Day Kindergarten, Early English – Centerville Elementary, Lunch Bunch – Centennial Elementary

Rationale:

- 1) Classroom teachers need to understand that much of the vocabulary that non-EL students already know, may not be known by the EL's in their classroom. The teachers need to have professional development to assist them in using strategies to help with teaching vocabulary.
- 2) Accessing prior knowledge is very important for EL's. Classroom teachers need to understand that the background knowledge of the non-EL's in their classroom is most likely much greater than that of the EL's.

Funding Sources:

The initiatives identified in this AMAO Improvement Plan will be funded through district funds specifically allocated to the EL Program. Where necessary and to the extent possible, additional district funds will be redirected to meet the needs identified in this plan. Very limited Title III funds will continue to be used to cover EL program needs.