

Washington County School Improvement Audit Report of Findings

School: Watauga Elementary School

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Curriculum Alignment: Written			
Indicators	Significant Findings	AOS	AI
CA 1.1 Making curriculum resources and supplementary materials available for use by teachers			
CA 1.2 Establishing specific learning objectives that align with state learning standards and address essential understandings, knowledge, and skills	School-wide goal focuses on improved student comprehension with emphasis on vocabulary development, fluency, and higher level thinking skills	✓	
CA 1.3 Listing instructional strategies and designing learning activities that align with state learning standards and address essential understandings, knowledge, and skills	Effective instructional strategies in use include word walls, questioning strategies, cooperative groups, technology	✓	
CA 1.4 Developing daily lesson plans that fit logically within the unit and within the context of the overall curriculum			
CA 1.5 Using student performance data to develop daily lesson plans that reflect consideration of the learning strengths and needs of students			
CA 1.6 Evaluating the appropriateness of pacing and mapping regularly, and making appropriate adjustments			
CA 1.7 Analyzing the curriculum components across grade levels in like content areas to identify areas of strength and areas of weakness			

Curriculum Alignment: Taught			
Indicators	Significant Findings	AOS	AI
CA 2.1 Focusing instruction on specific learning objectives that promote the attainment of state learning standards and address essential understandings, knowledge, and skills	Specific learning objective focuses on vocabulary development	✓	
CA 2.2 Using available curriculum resources and supplementary materials appropriately to promote attainment of state learning standards			
CA 2.3 Presenting accurate knowledge through meaningful contexts and connected disciplines			
CA 2.4 Employing instructional strategies that are research-based and proven effective	Instructional strategies include word study, comprehension and fluency activities	✓	
CA 2.5 Assigning projects and tasks that require students to integrate and apply their learning in meaningful contexts and to reflect on what they have learned	Students are provided with opportunities for project based learning. Watauga Elementary is encouraged to continue to develop lessons that incorporate hands-on activities and projects.	✓	✓
CA 2.6 Providing students with learning experiences that engage them in active learning	A high level of student engagement was observed throughout the school.	✓	
CA 2.7 Differentiating instruction to meet the identified strengths and needs of individual students and groups of students	Continue to implement differentiation strategies to meet the needs of all students.		✓
CA 2.8 Providing all students access to available materials, resources, and services to support learning			
CA 2.9 Providing teachers with feedback on the alignment of instruction to state learning standards and essential understandings, knowledge, and skills			
CA 2.10 Monitoring teacher implementation of the curriculum throughout the year			

Curriculum Alignment: Assessed			
Indicators	Significant Findings	AOS	AI
CA 3.1 Assessing student progress on a regular basis			
CA 3.2 Ensuring that assessments are aligned with state learning standards and essential understandings, knowledge, and skills			
CA 3.3 Providing opportunities for students to take tests that are similar in content and format to state assessments			
CA 3.4 Using a variety of classroom-based assessment methods and tools (student self-evaluation, performance checklists, rubrics, scales, projects, products, tests, quizzes) before, during, and after units of study to monitor student progress			
CA 3.5 Providing assessments that require students to use knowledge, comprehension, application and reasoning skills	Staff has received professional development on questioning strategies. Teachers are encouraged to increase the consistent use of higher order questions.	✓	✓
CA 3.6 Periodically reporting student progress toward mastery of learning objectives to students and parents in a way that is clear and understandable			
CA 3.7 Monitoring the results of classroom-based assessments to ensure attainment of the knowledge and skills required for success on state assessments			

Professional Development: Organizational Development			
Indicators	Significant Findings	AOS	AI
PD 1.1 Designing an ongoing, school-based program of professional development that is based on the analyses of data and is aligned with the school's goals for improving student achievement			
PD 1.2 Basing professional development programs and activities on research-based principles and practices	The staff at Watauga Elementary has studied The Global Achievement Gap, as well as critical thinking and questioning strategies.	✓	
PD 1.3 Allocating resources to support the professional development program and ensure implementation of improvement initiatives			
PD 1.4 Focusing the core of staff learning on research-based content and instructional practices that have been proven effective in improving student achievement			
PD 1.5 Identifying essential learning outcomes from professional development activities that will be used to change practice			
PD 1.6 Including theory, demonstration, practice with feedback, and coaching in the school's professional development programs and activities			
PD 1.7 Monitoring the degree to which new practices are implemented as prescribed			
PD 1.8 Determining the effect of changes in practice on student learning			

Professional Development: Personal Professional Growth & Evaluation			
Indicators	Significant Findings	AOS	AI
PD 2.1 Embedding professional growth and development into job performance expectations and the performance evaluation process			
PD 2.2 Analyzing data/evidence from a variety of relevant sources to identify goals for individual growth and development			
PD 2.3 Aligning plans for individual professional development with local improvement initiatives and with areas identified for individual growth			
PD 2.4 Connecting teachers' learning outcomes from professional development activities directly to their work in classrooms			
PD 2.5 Connecting teachers to external resources such as conferences, workshops, and support networks that align with the needs of individual teachers, departments/grade levels, or local improvement initiatives			
PD 2.6 Providing opportunities for teachers to experiment, practice, and obtain feedback as they integrate newly learned skills into their repertoire of instructional practices			
PD 2.7 Regularly monitoring the progress of staff in achieving individual professional development goals			

Use of Time and School Scheduling: Instructional Time			
Indicators	Significant Findings	AOS	AI
TS 1.1 Basing decisions related to the pacing of the curriculum on state test blueprints and on student performance data			
TS 1.2 Arranging classroom instructional time to allow for variety of instructional activities	Seamless transitions between activities were observed.	✓	
TS 1.3 Organizing instruction and structuring lessons to maximize student time on task			
TS 1.4 Maintaining a high level of student engagement throughout the lesson	A high level of student engagement was observed throughout the building.	✓	
TS 1.5 Using classroom instructional time to provide enrichment opportunities and support services to individuals and small groups based on students' identified strengths and needs	Strive to provide more opportunities for enrichment and acceleration of all students.		✓
TS 1.6 Establishing classroom routines that maximize the use of non-instructional time			
TS 1.7 Establishing school-wide organizational practices that minimize unnecessary interruptions to instructional time			
TS 1.8 Regularly monitoring the use of instructional time in classrooms			

Use of Time and School Scheduling: School Scheduling Practices			
Indicators	Significant Findings	AOS	AI
<p>TS 2.1 Meeting SOA requirements for length of school year, length of school day, or number of hours of instruction in core areas</p> <p>a. Length of school year (180 days OR 990 hours grades 1-12; 540 hours kindergarten)</p> <p>b. Length of school day (5 hours; 3 hours minimum for kindergarten only)</p> <p>c. Number of hours of instruction in core areas (ES: 75% in 4 core areas; MS/HS: 140 clock hours OR 560 total in 4 core areas for grade 6)</p>			
<p>TS 2.2 Building schedules that are based on identified learning and instructional needs and support the implementation of improvement initiatives</p>			
<p>TS 2.3 Scheduling non-academic events to minimally impact instructional time</p>			
<p>TS 2.4 Allocating time in the schedule for teachers to collaborate with other teachers, parents and students</p>	Allow time for vertical collaboration and planning.		✓
<p>TS 2.5 Establishing procedures and communicating expectations related to the allocation and use of time</p>			
<p>TS 2.6 Ensuring that the time allocated for specific activities is used to complete essential tasks according to established expectations</p>			
<p>TS 2.7 Utilizing a school schedule that is conducive to providing intervention and remediation strategies and programs within the school day</p>	Schedule includes intervention block for enrichment and remediation.	✓	
<p>TS 2.8 Allocating resources to extend learning time beyond the regular school day</p>			
<p>TS 2.9 Regularly monitoring the implementation of schedules and making adjustments, as needed, to maximize efficient use of time</p>			

Use of Data for Making Decisions: Instruction			
Indicators	Significant Findings	AOS	AI
D 1.1 Using data/evidence from multiple sources to plan instruction that promotes that attainment of state standards and essential understandings, knowledge, and skills	High test scores are in part a result of data disaggregation.	✓	
D 1.2 Collecting, compiling, and analyzing data related to instructional practices to determine the degree of alignment with state learning standards and to identify professional development needs			
D 1.3 Sharing responsibility for collecting and compiling data related to instructional programs and services			
D 1.4 Sharing responsibility for analyzing data and making instructional decisions based on the results			
D 1.5 Collecting and compiling individual student performance data to identify students' strengths and needs, plans instruction, and monitor individual student progress over time			
D 1.6 Using results of data analyses to design, monitor, and evaluate instructional programs, support services, and professional development activities			
D 1.7 Training staff in the processes and procedures for collecting and analyzing classroom-based, local, and state assessment data to make instructional decisions			

Use of Data for Making Decisions: School Improvement Planning			
Indicators	Significant Findings	AOS	AI
D 2.1 Compiling and using data/evidence from several sources to develop a profile of the school related to student performance	School improvement team worked collaboratively to set school-wide goals based upon data analysis.		
D 2.2 Analyzing data/evidence related to the perceived limitations of instructional practices and organizational conditions to identify goals and objectives for school improvement planning			
D 2.3 Analyzing data over time to look for trends in student performance and to identify strengths and limitations of instructional programs and services			
D 2.4 Disaggregating state and local student performance data by appropriate subgroups of students to identify needs and monitor student progress			
D 2.5 Collecting and analyzing data/evidence on a regular, periodic basis to monitor plan implementation and to evaluate improvements over time			
D 2.6 Making data relevant to the implementation of school improvement strategies and initiatives available and accessible to staff			
D 2.7 Training staff in collecting and analyzing data to identify relevant goals and objectives for school improvement planning and to monitor the plan's implementation and evaluate improvements over time			

Comments

The committee enjoyed the visit at Watauga Elementary School on April 29, 2010. The following areas of strength are noted:

1. A feeling of high expectations for all students permeates the building.
2. A high level of student engagement was observed throughout the building in all grade levels.
3. A warm and friendly environment is felt immediately at Watauga.
4. An extensive use of technology and available software contributes to the high level of student engagement.
5. Teachers are enthusiastic and well prepared. An atmosphere of collegiality exists among the staff.
6. A school-wide goal of increased student comprehension through a focus on vocabulary is evident by a wide variety of strategies.
7. Seamless transitions and quick pacing allow for highly organized classrooms and actively involved students.
8. The School Improvement Team is actively involved in goal setting and planning.
9. Teachers effectively use cooperative groups as an instructional tool.
10. Evidence of data disaggregation is reflected in high test scores.

The following areas of improvement are noted:

1. Strive to provide more opportunities for enrichment and acceleration of all students.
2. Continue to implement differentiation strategies to meet the needs of all students.
3. Continue to provide small group instruction that incorporates hands-on activities.
4. Increase the consistent use of higher level questioning strategies.
5. Allow time for vertical collaboration and planning.