

Gill Elementary School

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2007-2008 Annual Report

Principal:
Mark Morawski

About Our School

Gill Elementary School serves 514 students (261 females, 253 males) in grades K-5. There are 29 professional teaching staff members and appropriate staff to meet special needs.

School Mission Statement

The Gill Elementary Mission is to inspire lifelong learning by providing opportunities for all learners to become responsible, healthy, creative, knowledgeable and resourceful individuals who contribute and communicate within our diverse world.

Parent Participation

Following is the number of students whose parents/guardians participated in at least one conference during the school year.

2007-2008 99.6 %

2006-2007 100 %

Females: 99.6% Males: 99.6%

Education YES!

Adequate Yearly Progress Status (AYP)

2007-2008 Met AYP

2006-2007 Met AYP

Composite Grade

2007-2008 A

2006-2007 A

Graduate Profile

Graduates will be:

- Collaborative Team Members
- Effective Communicators
- Healthy Individuals
- Knowledgeable Thinkers
- Lifelong Learners
- Quality Producers
- Responsible Citizens
- Thoughtful Problem Solvers



Gill School Improvement Goals

1. All students will improve their level of reading comprehension in all content areas.
2. All students will improve their writing skills across the curriculum.
3. All students will improve their mathematical abilities across all areas of the curriculum.

Progress on School Improvement Goals

Reading:

This year we continued with a major emphasis in the area of literacy and more specifically reading comprehension K-5 using research-based best practice strategies by continuing our implementation of Reader's Workshop. Teachers leveled their classroom libraries and categorized the books by genre. Also, they made use of literacy paraprofessionals and volunteers to support meeting the needs of each student at their reading level. Along with Reader's Workshop, we have continued to effectively implement two reading comprehension programs that are well-aligned with Reader's Workshop: Making Meaning in second through fifth grades and Mondo in first grade, both of which utilize high quality literature to support increased reading comprehension skills for our students. Through these programs, staff members continue to work to emphasize a common language around comprehension strategies that first begins in a modeled/shared reading environment within each classroom. As teachers and other staff members continue to gain more knowledge of the seven comprehension strategies, they infuse these strategies in other curricular areas. Teachers continued their use of Running Records and Qualitative Reading Inventories to assess student learning, plan for instruction, and ensure individual student progress, as well as piloting the Fountas and Pinnell Assessment for reading comprehension. Staff continues to use both weekly collaboration times and early release days to focus on the area of literacy and our goal of increasing reading comprehension for each student.

Math:

We have moved toward a more inquiry-based approach to teaching math which allows for students to construct their knowledge and build their math skills at a deeper level, while also allowing for greater differentiation in order to meet the individual needs of each student. All teachers have been trained in an inquiry-based math approach, and have begun its implementation within each grade level. Kindergarten is using Bridges, first through fifth grades are using Investigations, and fifth grade teachers have also implemented the Connected Math Project (CMP) to support their curriculum. Teachers have received support from our gifted and talented coordinator to implement Investigations for whole class instruction. Manipulatives and other hands-on activities are used to strengthen concepts. Moreover, curriculum maps, along with unit pacing guides and common assessments are continuing to be refined at each grade level to formatively evaluate student progress. All grades are focusing on problem solving through the use of the Arithmetic Developed Daily program. The 10 problem solving strategies are taught throughout the grade levels using the Problem Solver series. Math skills are also reinforced through the Compass Learning Odyssey computer program. Continued emphasis in the areas of geometry and measurement is needed in order to demonstrate consistent growth and improved student achievement.

Writing:

Staff continues their efforts with the implementation of Writer's Workshop as a structure for teaching writing. Within this workshop structure, teachers deliver mini-lessons and students experience active engagement through a collaborative learning environment while conferring with teachers and each other, as well as sharing their learning with the group. Staff has attended intense, yearlong trainings through Oakland Schools in order to support effective implementation of Writer's Workshop. Staff also continues to integrate the 6+1 Traits of writing into Writer's Workshop. Staff meets regularly as both a whole group and grade level teams through our weekly collaboration times and early release days in order to effectively implement this writing program. The focus at Gill has been on the traits: ideas/content, organization, and sentence fluency with secondary focus on word choice, voice, conventions, and presentation. Staff needs to continue using the rubrics (targets of good writing) for the traits consistently with their students in order to formatively assess their students' writing progress. Continued collaboration about the rubrics will ensure consistency in the scoring of students' writing.

Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)

MEAP scores shown below represent the percent of students that met or exceeded the state standard.

	Gill 07-08	State 07-08	Gill 06-07
Grade 3			
ELA			
Composite (F 91; M 93)	92	81	90
Math (F 100; M 97)	99	90	97
Grade 4			
ELA			
Composite (F 94; M 76)	84	76	89
Math (F 92; M 93)	93	86	91
Grade 5			
ELA			
Composite (F 81; M 85)	83	78	84
Science (F 73; M 80)	76	82	93
Math (F 81; M 62)	71	74	80

Specialized Schools Serve Students

In addition to the regular K-12 program, Farmington Public Schools provides educational alternatives and opportunities for students, as well as meeting special education needs. These schools are:

- Cloverdale School
- Farmington Central High School
- Farmington Community School – Adult Education Program
- Oakland Technical Center
- Visions Unlimited

Graduation Rate

The graduation rate is the percentage of ninth-graders who graduate from high school within four years adjusting for students who move in or out of the District and to alternative programs. The rate is calculated by the State from data provided by the District.

2006-2007	87.13%
2005-2006	87.74%

District Student Achievement Data

Students are assessed through the Farmington Public Schools' Assessment Model. Assessments provide multiple opportunities and a variety of approaches to measure student achievement against the state standards and content expectations. Standardized tests are used to compare student performance against state (Michigan Educational Assessment Program and Michigan Merit Exam) and national (ACT Series) results. In addition to standardized tests, end of grade/term and unit assessments provide teachers with information about student achievement that is tied directly to the curriculum (e.g., mathematics, language arts). Classroom assessments are not limited to paper/pencil tests and may include portfolios, demonstrations, research projects and other direct measures of performance. The goal of the assessment program is to provide all students with varied and fair opportunities to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. This complete assessment program is used to monitor the learning of all students and provide feedback for instructional and curricular purposes.

Elementary School Curriculum Development

Curriculum maps (K-12) continue to be developed and updated for grade level content areas and courses. These maps identify and prioritize essential learnings for our students at each elementary grade level, K-5. Completed curriculum maps are available on the District web site and the staff curriculum shared folders. Elementary science and social studies Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations were revised this spring (08) at the State level. The process of curriculum adjustment and mapping has begun in these areas. Research-based strategies are incorporated into the maps as learning and teaching tools. Reader and writer's workshop continues to be a district direction, along with inquiry hands-on learning. Relationship building strategies among and between staff and students is also a focus. A standards-based report card was developed and utilized to reflect student expectations. All curriculum development is done by committee with strong teacher leadership, using State standards as the guide.

National Education Legislation

On Jan. 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). This law represents the President's education reform plan and contains the most sweeping changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since it was enacted in 1965. It changed the federal government's role in kindergarten through grade-12 education by asking America's schools to describe their success in terms of what each student accomplishes. The Act contains the President's four basic education reform principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work. Farmington Public Schools is addressing the implications of this federal legislation along with the Michigan Education YES! Accreditation System to meet the needs of all our learners.

School Accreditation at Gill Elementary School

Farmington Public Schools is engaged in a variety of activities relative to school accreditation. All elementary, middle and high schools are accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement. Alameda and Farmington Community School Early Childhood Programs are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Based on the successful completion of a five-year improvement process, which demonstrated gains in student achievement, Gill Elementary School has finished the NCA Performance Accreditation five year cycle. The final year of NCA focused on documenting the school improvement process at the end of the five year cycle. This year's school improvement process will focus on NCA district accreditation and state required building school improvement plans.

In 2002, the Michigan Board of Education approved a new state accreditation system after receiving input from diverse audiences across the state, including educators, parents, business and labor. Under Education YES! (Yardstick for Excellent Schools), schools will receive grades of A, B, C, D-Alert, or Unaccredited. The system takes multiple measures into account when grading schools. These factors include MEAP (elementary and middle school) and MME (high school) achievement data and school performance indicators. MEAP and MME data are used for achievement status and achievement change scores and make up two-thirds of the Ed YES! Report Card grade. The other one-third of the grade comes from the Indicators of School Performance which are reported out by strand and include; Teaching for Learning, Leadership, Personnel and Professional Learning, School and Community Relations, and Data and Information Management.

Points of Pride

1. Gill PTA wholeheartedly supports learning through coordinating student enrichments. The PTA implemented Junior Great Books, Word Masters, Math Pentathlon, Math Olympiad, Destination Imagination, Reflections, and provided support materials for students and staff. Gill's Math Pentathlon Teams competed in all three division tournaments and showed great effort in the competitions earning 3rd place in the State. These programs clearly enhance the learning experience for the students at Gill.
2. We have set a school-wide goal of establishing a caring community of learners and getting all of Gill on the same page when it comes to behavior. We developed five school-wide behavioral expectations (A+ Expectations) and are rewarded with A+ tickets when they're "caught" demonstrating these expectations. We take time out each week, either by doing skits or reading books at assemblies and through our announcements, to talk about the importance of "filling each others buckets" and how to support each other as peers.

Points of Pride (cont.)

3. We have a variety of examples to share about how Gill is a healthy and caring community of learners. We have run numerous programs throughout the year to help benefit those that are in need of help, either financially or other means. Activities such as the Good Fellows Canned Food Drive, raising money for the Arthritis Foundation, getting blood sponsors for the Red Cross blood drive, hosting an allergy awareness parent forum, starting our new Fall fundraiser the Gill Mustang Mini Marathon, which not only brings in money for the school but also promotes a healthy lifestyle. We have also increased our emphasis on healthy classroom snacks, birthday treats, and food at classroom parties.
4. Each year Olympia Entertainment holds annual auditions with the top choirs receiving the opportunity to sing at the FOX. This year Gill was chosen to perform right before the performance of the Nutcracker. After the performance, the Olympia Entertainment representative stated that the Gill VocalZones were the best choir in the nine years of the program.
5. NCA Accreditation – We are pleased with the successful completion of this NCA cycle. We have shown growth in all of our goals areas, reading, writing and math. We credit much of the growth we have seen in the goal areas to the strategies and interventions that were put in place during this 5-year cycle. Some of these include: Readers and Writers Workshop, inquiry-based math, Making Meaning, Mondo and 6+1 writing. The other powerful intervention that we used was staff working collaboratively in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). This allowed teachers to work together, looking at data and making decisions about both students and best instructional practices to use with them.
6. We began to implement the Instructional Consultation Team (ICT) model to support students and teachers. The purpose of ICT is to enhance, improve and increase student and staff performance. The result of the effective implementation of this model will be increased student achievement.

Challenges We Face

1. While meeting the cognitive needs of each student, we want to maintain the focus on their affective needs as well. We realize the importance of maintaining and promoting positive relationships among our students and valuing the various differences among our student population. We know that meeting the affective needs of students directly impacts their learning. A child who feels good about him/herself becomes a more productive and successful learner cognitively. We must continually strive to maintain this as a priority for student learning in effectively building our caring community of learners.
2. Building an inclusive community for all of our students including those with special needs, as well as students who may be experiencing difficulties academically and/or emotionally, is an important aspect of the vision for our school. We will continue to pursue this effort through training, acceptance, and responsibility for the education and success of all students with support from our parents and community. We must continue our efforts to ensure each of our students has a positive sense of belonging and enjoyment for being a part of our learning community.
3. Data needs to be the focus of our professional learning communities (PLCs) to increase learning for all students. Data is defined as any standardized or common assessments, including observations and anecdotal records. Staff needs to become more familiar with this dissemination process and the benefits that will result from driving and informing our instruction based on this information. Data literacy for staff used in timely and efficient ways will result in our better meeting the students' needs.
4. With flat to decreased funding from the State, we are concerned about being able to maintain certain educational programs and resources that enhance and support our students (ie. student assistance, technology, differentiation). Potential reductions of programs will require us to look for creative ways to continue to fund and provide these types of supports for our students.

Challenges We Face (cont.)

5. Staff, parents, and students will have to prepare themselves for reductions in support services and face the challenge of how to fill the anticipated gaps. Creatively redefining and shifting roles and responsibilities among the community will allow us to continue to uphold the support for students we have come to expect at Gill.
6. Securing time for our Instructional Consultation Team to collaborate weekly in support of the ICT purpose (increasing, improving, and enhancing student and staff performance) will be a critical component for continuing to support the model's successful implementation.