



School Improvement External Team Visitation Report For Nebraska Framework Schools

School/DistrictName: Arcadia Public Schools

City: Arcadia, NE

Dates of Visit: March 13, 2018



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External Visitation Team

Team Leader: Mr. Dale Hafer, Superintendent, Sandhills Public Schools

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Onsite Review Agenda

Arcadia Public School External Consultant Team Visitation Schedule Technology Room

7:45 a.m.-8:00 a.m. Introductions & Agenda

8:00 a.m. -8:05 a.m. Observe elementary Word of the Week

8:05 a.m. -8:30 Breakfast/Coffee/Juice provided by the FCS students and Presentation by Steering Committee

8:30 a.m. -9:00 a.m. External Consultant Team Organizational Meeting

9:00 a.m. -10:30 a.m. Focus Group Presentations (Reading, Science, Caring About Self & Others, and Math)

10:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m. Building Tour (Mr. Underwood & Mr. Trampe) & free time for observations

12:00 p.m. -1:00 p.m. Lunch- Arcadia Public School CIP Steering Committee and Administration (Provided by Arcadia Public School)

1:00 p.m. -1:30 p.m. Discussion with Panel of Jr. High and H.S. Students

1:30 p.m. -3:15 p.m. External Consultant Team Work Session

3:15 p.m. -3:30 p.m. Break

3:30 p.m.-4:15 p.m. External Team Presentation for School Staff, Administration and School Board in the Music Room

*Laptops will be available the day of the visit: however, if you feel more comfortable using your own, you may bring it with you.



Introductory Comments

Team Leader: Dale Hafer

A. Purpose of the External Visit

The purpose of the external team visit is to assist the school in selecting or fulfilling school improvement goals and plans by adding an outside, objective view of the school improvement procedures and processes. Further, hosting an external team of professional peers to conduct an external review allows for professional advice and dialogue from collaborative sources other than district personnel. Having the external team's views and advice related to school improvement efforts allows for the host district to increase their understanding of the continuous improvement process. Ultimately, the visit results in positively assisting the district in moving forward to set and or achieve school improvement goals based on the views of the team, school, and participating stakeholders' input.

B. Description of the Process for Gathering Information for the External Team Report

Overall, the process for gathering information pertaining to the external review was made simple by the effort of Arcadia Public Schools leading up to their visit. The team leader was engaged early on and often by Arcadia's leadership for advice while gathering information and evidence for the review. From the start, it was clearly evident Arcadia had a firm grasp on their school improvement process, situation, and data related to the improvement of their school. The external team was not only provided a clearly successful and effective schedule, but an actual "Google Site" crafted by the Arcadia staff in order to provide a professionally organized and effective presentation of essential information, data, and artifacts. This website made the external team's work prior, during, and after the visit efficient and effective. The Google Site can be located at <https://sites.google.com/view/arcadia-public-schools/home>. The external team appreciated the effort of Arcadia's team to provide such an effective and appropriate display and record of their efforts related to the school improvement process.

C. Background Information Specific to the District

Taken from the Arcadia profile provided to the external team

Arcadia Public Schools (APS), is a school-wide Title I District serving approximately 134 PreK-12 students, and is located in Central Nebraska. Although the district has a sparsely populated constituency, it covers 143 square miles, with 52% poverty rate. APS has an average class size of 9.58 students and has a male to female ratio of 65-70. We have a 0% of ELL, 12% SPED, 6% Ethnic population and 9% mobility rate. APS provides round trip bus transportation. Arcadia Public Schools is a member of the ESU #10 consortium.

Arcadia Public School provides for data to be inclusive and show yearly improvement in student performance, through different types of assessments. Target areas for school improvement are



identified with community, staff, and student input. Surveys and conferences will provide information and guidance. Programs will be developed through Title I, and Title II. Resources will be made available, and the curriculum adjusted to make these programs supplemental to the classroom teaching. Steps will be taken to schedule staff development, staff meetings, and community awareness. Arcadia Public School employees 21 full time teachers, 4 full time and 1 part time paraprofessional. These positions include a Reading Specialist and Math specialist to work on interventions with students who struggle with Reading and Math. Programs at APS include Volunteer Community Readers, an Accelerated Reader Program and Raz-Kid Reading programs that uses technology to improve reading skills that involve all students at their individual reading levels. Math differentiated instruction includes programs such as Moby Max. Moby Max is an adaptive curriculum that creates a unique, individualized education plan for each student, allowing gifted students to progress as quickly as they like while simultaneously ensuring that remedial students get the extra instruction they need. This program uses technology as in intervention tool for students to work at their individual skill level. Scores from NWEA (MAP) and NeSA will provide data to show improvement by using comparable scores from year to year. Aimsweb will also supplement data to help show yearly progress of all students in the areas of Reading and Math.

Arcadia Public School addresses fundamental changes in staffing and curriculum design, as well as teacher-student ratio at the early transitional grades. A preschool has been added to the school district to give our young students a jumpstart on their education. The Arcadia Public Schools and staff expect that this comprehensive plan will advance the cause of all students being able to learn and to be given the support throughout the system that they will need.

APS has a student-centered environment with high expectations and a commitment to excellence. Students are actively involved in extra- curricular activities. Some activities for students to participate are sports, music, drama, speech, student council, cheer-leading, art club, and FFA.

D. Additional Remarks, etc.

The external team would like to extend its appreciation and gratitude to the Arcadia School Improvement Leadership Team, Staff, Students, and Patrons who participated in this review. The district should be commended on its overall committed approach to school improvement. The Arcadia team understands the areas in which growth and positive impact have occurred. Further, they are also quite honest and reflective in their processes on where improvements can be made. The external team felt the areas in which Arcadia feels they need to improve were right in line with the findings of the team. It was clearly evident that all staff and a respectable number of stakeholders are engaged and involved with the school improvement process. Arcadia's dedication to involve and include stakeholders was obvious and made the external team's task positive and efficient. Overall, the external team congratulates Arcadia on a job well done and strong encourages the continuation of their efforts with a fresh set of goals to maintain their excellent progress and accomplishments related to the school improvement process.



Overview of Improvement Process

Reviewer's Name: Dale Hafer

I. Description of the Continuous Improvement Process: (Team membership, timelines, summary of activities, and for public schools, a description of how multicultural education is incorporated into the process.)

The following was provided by the Arcadia School Improvement Team

School Improvement Team membership, organization, and roles:

Accelerated Reader

- Rebecca Lueck

Assessment Records

- Mindy Conner
- Craig Trampe

Class Sponsors

- 7th Grade Delta Sears
- 8th Grade Julie Dorsey
- 9th Grade Megan Hunter
- 10th Grade Marie Wadas
- 11th Grade Heather Janulewicz
- 12th Grade Mindy Conner

CIP Steering

- Wilma Kaps
- Megan Hunter
- Lindsay Lange
- Kelsi Becker

Crisis Team

- Mindy Conner
- Bobby Hurlburt
- Craig Trampe
- Vicki Bauer
- Jess Underwood
- Jose Santiago

Distance Learning Teachers

- Marie Wadas
- Jennifer Kuszak



Character Education

- Mindy Conner

High Ability Learners

- DeeAnn Roy
- Jennifer Kuszak

I.L.C.D.

- Sarah Scott
- Megan Hunter
- Craig Trampe
- Michelle Ekberg
- Bobby Hurlburt

National Honor Society

- Becky Lueck
- Trysta Asche

Parent Involvement

- Wilma Kaps

Quiz Bowl

- Jennifer Kuszak

MTSS

- Megan Hunter
- Sarah Scott
- Becky Lueck
- Heather Janulewicz
- Craig Trampe

Safety

- Vicki Bauer
- Bobby Hurlburt
- Rich Spencer
- Jess Underwood
- Craig Trampe
- Jose Santiago

Special Education

- Sarah Scott

State Standards

- Mindy Conner



- Craig Trampe

Vocational-Careers

- Mindy Conner

Tech Prep (High School Articulation)

- Jose Santiago

Technology

- Craig Trampe
- Jose Santiago
- Megan Hunter
- Jason Phelps
- Lindsay Lange

Title I

- Wilma Kaps
- DeeAnn Roy

Transition

- Mindy Conner
- Craig Trampe
- Sarah Scott

Wellness

- Barb Charles
- Mindy Conner
- Becky Felton
- Wilma Kaps
- Nicci Lewandowski

Student Council

- Megan Hunter & Trysta Asche

Prom Sponsor

- Heather Janulewicz

Timeline and Record of School Improvement Efforts:

Arcadia provided a thorough and detailed record of all meetings, efforts, and actions conducted related to their school improvement efforts for the 5 year cycle 2013-2018. The external team found the records, documentation, and artifacts to be excellent and the efforts on part of the Arcadia's administration and staff to be notable and commendable. It was clearly evident the school has embraced the school improvement process and has empowered staff, students, and stakeholders to be active participants in "Arcadia's process".



For more information, please refer to the Google Doc located here for a more detail listing and record pertaining to timeline documentation:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/15lgADnHYule3moccE6hmocNY4kPltqn9wLWfVgNKVRQ/edit#>

Incorporation of Multicultural Education Efforts

*Provided by Arcadia Public Schools

In compliance with the Nebraska Department of Education's Rule 16, the superintendent and or his/her designee is required to report annually evidence that multicultural education is being taught to students according to the guidelines set forth in Rule 16.

In a global society that encourages the exchange of people and ideas, the Arcadia Public Schools continue to provide cultural awareness in our classes in many ways. Students in grades K-12 are exposed to cultural awareness by learning about the works and contributions of numerous artists, writers, scientists, mathematicians, physicians, musicians, and political leaders. In addition, students study the social standards, clothing, foods, religious beliefs, work habits and political contributions of many world cultures; students are encouraged to appreciate and celebrate the contributions of all peoples, regardless of race, culture or gender. Students determine what makes us uniquely American and the responsibilities they have to be contributing and respectful citizens of a world-wide community.

Special consideration is given to literature from a variety of diverse cultures and authors when purchasing books for our school library and use in the classroom. Arcadia students have many opportunities through literature to compare lives of fictional characters to their own lives; to note how the culturally and ethnically diverse individuals meet the struggles/conflicts of their era and succeed as worthy individuals by overcoming obstacles.

The use of the Internet has fostered a relationship and understanding of others. An Ethernet connection in all sections of our building allows instant communication with anyone or anyplace in the world. Assessments and evaluations given to all students are culturally appropriate and, especially in the case of the Nebraska State Standards, have met the quality criterion for non-discriminatory and non-biased questions.

Arcadia was again fortunate to have foreign exchange students as part of our student body for the past school year. These young people brought with them a rich cultural heritage that helped introduce our students to new ways of looking at the world.

II. Commendations: (Successful activities, procedures and accomplishments in the overall progress of the Continuous Improvement Process.)

The external team determined the following overall commendations for Arcadia Public Schools during this visit:

1) **The whole faculty is involved in the CIP process throughout and the student body**



recognizes the CIP goal of vocabulary school wide.

The review team found it clear that genuine involvement related to school improvement efforts was present throughout the staff and stakeholder groups. This evidence was displayed in the district's profile and artifacts supplied to the external team via the well-crafted "Google Site" documenting Arcadia's entire process. Further, all staff members were strategically organized and placed in committees or groups which allowed effective participation and contribution to the process by all those involved. The team was impressed by the equity of commitment and understanding of the overall school improvement goal and processes to address the goal. Whether it be certified or classified staff, students or stakeholders, all involved were legitimately knowledgeable and had contributed to the overall efforts to address the goal of increasing academic vocabulary across all content areas.

2) Student, Parent and Community relationships and partnerships very evident.

Community support is evident throughout the building and from visiting with staff and students about community members involved within the school day. There were several examples of community support, interaction, and participation in the district. It was evident through stakeholder interviews the community feels proud of its school and is welcome resulting in collaboration in several areas from reading to students to funding projects. There is a true commitment to building and grounds which shows community and school pride. There are future plans for building and grounds development, with community center and/or Ag program. Again, there were many examples where materials, time, and resources are donated to school from community to help maintain a positive environment and successful culture which puts students first in a caring, collaborative, and safe environment. Faculty members were very appreciative of community support.

3) "Caring about Self and Others" is a unique character development philosophy.

The district has implemented CASO (Caring about Self and Others) which was developed through their school improvement efforts and inclusion of stakeholder input to address key factors, such as culture and climate, in order to enhance student learning, success, and well-being. The external team heard several times from students "Everybody likes each other" or "Nobody hates others". The culture of acceptance and caring among students is commended. Further, all stakeholders shared they feel as if they are genuinely part of team. The external team felt there was 100% participation by the faculty related to CASO and this was confirmed with student and stakeholder interviews and discussions. The team felt like the students didn't really know what we meant when we asked them about CASO, but their answers and beliefs of how all students feel and are treated by each other directly reflect a vibrant CASO philosophy. It is evident the philosophy is truly at work in the background supporting students and a safe/positive culture and climate. There exists true potential to grow this philosophy with purpose focused on a school improvement goal of character and community with the possible use of a social/emotional screener.

III. Recommendations for Next Steps in the Overall School Improvement Process



The external team determined the following overall recommendations for Arcadia Public Schools during this visit:

1) Consider a systematic data process to look at all aspects of school data where all stakeholders are involved.

Consider a systematic data process to look at all aspects of school data where all stakeholders are involved. Focus on the whole group cohort as it moves through the academic system will more than likely always have a number that fluctuates both up and down based on demographics (mobility, poverty, sped, non-spced). A data process that moves the focus to looking at individuals and their performance, growth and needs will possibly allow for celebrations of individual student growth. For example, possible next level with NWEA map testing, goal setting, reports, and data to drive the group and lift up individual teachers.

2) Encourage the strength and leadership of your “focus groups” to also consider the inclusion of technology based and blend-ed learning strategies and implementation as part of the process to accomplish or amplify the goal or future goals.

Focus on teacher and staff professional development followed by a gradual, but steady inclusion of strategies related to technology aimed specifically to accomplish the next goal(s). The use of technology is evident. However, the external team heard from several stakeholders a more robust and deliberate inclusion of technology with modern strategies connected to current improvement efforts would make an significant impact. The team encourages the continued push to use technology in such a way as to sharpen and polish already effective instructional practices. The concepts and methods related to a blend-ed approach can allow teachers and staff the tools and strategies needed to appropriate infuse technology where needed to boost or amplify teacher effectiveness and result in additional student success.

School Improvement Goals

(Duplicate Goal Report for any additional goals)

Reviewer’s Name: Dale Hafer

I. Goal #

All Students will increase academic vocabulary in all content areas.

II. Improvement Goal Commendations

The school-wide commitment to the WOW and content area specific vocabulary is very evident and consistent. Each focus group has a goal related to their content area that directly supports the overall goal of vocabulary. The implementation of L to J is clearly evident throughout the system and supports the continuous improvement goal as well.



There were several points of evidence, artifacts, and practices which supported the above commendation. Professional development was appropriately aligned and documented through agendas, minutes, and other documentation demonstrating a commitment to the implementation of the Word of the Week (WOW) school-wide in addition to fostering the support of the vocabulary goal. Further, the vocabulary goal was supported through strategies and practices related to APL and the Academic Literacy Project (ALP) as supported through Esu#10. Commitment to the L to J process was also clearly evident. Teachers and staff across all content area focus and drill academic vocabulary in their classes. Students were able to validate the efforts behind APL, ALP, and L to J and describe the positive impact they experienced. Further, the efforts promote notable performance related with reading, language arts, and vocabulary components on state and local assessments.

III. Successful activities or strategies

Here are a list of activities and strategies documented to have supported Arcadia's efforts related to their improvement goal:

- *Alignment of Nebraska Standards to the curriculum via curriculum maps.
- *Participation in the Academic Literacy Project (ALP) led by Esu#10.
- *Sustain the ALP by conducting classroom learning walks and participating in strategy refresher sessions.
- *Implementation of the vocabulary "Word of the Week" (WOW) to promote explicit instruction of academic vocabulary across the curriculum.
- *L to J Vocabulary instruction implemented to also increase vocabulary across the curriculum.

IV. Recommendations for next steps related to Improvement Goal #1

Build off your solid foundation from the ALP and other vocabulary strategies to include a more deliberate and systematic implementation of all components of the ALP (learning walks, other strategies, etc). The evidence suggest an excellent start and foundation related to ALP training, strategies, and practices. Implementation was realistic and purposeful focusing on strategies such as "fist of five, bell ringers, and think pair-share". Now consider building and incorporating more strategies with the same level of dedication and fidelity.

The commitment of APS staff with ALP is very evident. Your implementation of fist of five, think - pair share and bell ringers can be expanded by adding a focus on other ALP strategies such as summarizing, exit tickets, explicit vocabulary instruction, give one- get one, quick writes and sentence/writing frames. Utilize ESU for continued support while expanding this process, continuing the commitment to learning walks across grade levels and content areas will directly connect to your continuous improvement goal.