

1. Comprehensive needs assessment

Based upon data from student achievement, our District's strategic planning process and the Assessment Continuum of Schoolwide Improvement Outcomes, we identified needs in the areas of Parent/Community Involvement, Culture and Climate, and Standards-based Curriculum.

Parent and Community Involvement

The Pine Tree School recognizes the importance of effectively working with parents and the wider community in order to best support the achievement of our students. With the changing demographics of our school population, it is more challenging for many families to spend time at school with their students. We must implement strategies to ensure all families feel welcome and have opportunities to engage with the school community. Scheduling events at varied times, providing child-care as well as food will enable more families to actively participate in their children's education. We will structure times during which parents will meet with their children and their teachers at least twice a year to set learning goals and review progress towards them. Weekly newsletters will include information for parents about strategies that can be used to support their children's learning. Newsletters will be available in both print and electronic forms. Parent education activities will take place several times within a trimester. These will be coordinated with PTA events and be held at different times of the day and evening. Events may include meetings with the Literacy Specialist, Family Math Evenings, Learning Celebrations, and/or Internet Safety presentations.

Culture and Climate

The goal in the area of culture and climate is to clearly identify school-wide expectations and build upon our PBIS successes. By clearly redefining our three-tiered system for behavior, all stakeholders will have a clear understanding of what is expected and how to respond if expectations are not met. Our focus will be on creating proactive strategies to prevent inappropriate behaviors from occurring. By strengthening our Tier 1 supports we will have the resources available to intervene with students in need of Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions.

Strategies will include the establishment of "buddy classrooms" for all teachers, professional development in effective Tier 1 strategies, and the implementation of social emotional curriculum for students in need.

Standards-based Curriculum

In order for students to achieve high standards, curriculum and instruction must be focused and deliberate. The goal of ensuring that curriculum is aligned will create consistency in student experiences. It will help students to see how learning is connected from one discipline to another, and from one year to another. It will help students to see relevance and application to what they are learning. It will also help students assess their own progress and set individual goals.

2. Specific strategies (with research findings supporting the choice of strategies) for instruction, assessment and evaluation.

Following strategies identified in Focus by Mike Schmoker and Leaders of their Own Learning, teachers will be identifying learning targets and communicating them to students using “I can...” statements. Teachers will provide focused instruction, incorporate choice and personalization into learning opportunities. They will use formative assessment data to determine instructional grouping and individual student needs. They will engage in student-led conferences to provide students opportunities to reflect on their learning and share their successes and challenges with their families.

Pine Tree Elementary School is implementing Reader’s and Writer’s Workshops based upon Lucy Calkin’s Units of Study. This model is based upon the work that comes from the Teachers’ College Reading and Writing Project. Their research shows that “kids need to read a lot of texts, with high comprehension, in order to move up levels of text complexity. TCRWP reading workshops are structured to allow for students to read (eyes on print) every day for 35-45 minutes in the reading workshop. Volume is vigilantly watched.”

There is not the only significant research that supports the importance of engaging in a high volume of reading in increasing reading achievement (Allington, 2012; Brozo et al, 2008, Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992). Cullinan (2000) reviewed the research on the effects of independent reading and concluded that independent reading supports learning and school achievement. The Reader’s Workshop model also aligns with the research that shows students should be reading texts they can read independently, with at least 96% fluency, accuracy, and comprehension.

Pine Tree School Title I Schoolwide School Components

In this model teachers confer with students, taking data in the form of conferring notes and running records. We then use the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System to conduct more formal assessments three times each year. For students who need more frequent monitoring we use tools from TCRWP as well as LLI. An efficacy study was conducted by CREP (Center for Research in Public Schools) in 2010 and in 2012 and found that students using LLI had greater reading gains than those who did not. Our District Literacy Committee continues to meet, update and revise the literacy curriculum guide. It has created a scope and sequence for instruction to ensure all standards are addressed and to clearly identify what students must know and be able to do at each grade level.

Having the Common Core State Standards at the heart of our curriculum, Pine Tree Elementary School is currently implementing EveryDay Mathematics 4 in kindergarten through grade two, and the 2007 version in grades three through six. We are expanding the use of EDM4 to grades three to six for the 2015-2016 school year. As a District, we are providing professional development for our mathematics curriculum team this summer and then expanding to training for all teachers this year. We will be working with a consultant, Ann Mordecai. As a result, grade level instructional teams will unpack common core standards, and identify 'power standards' within each unit. They will determine a scope and sequence by trimester as well as common assessments to be used each trimester.

The grade level instructional teams (comprised of the grade level teachers, a special educator, a Title 1 teacher, and the Guidance Counselor) will develop instructional strategies aligned to the standards-based curriculum and monitor the progress of student achievement. Within their PLCs, the instructional teams will meet weekly to review student work. They meet monthly to review overall progress of each student.

Pine Tree Elementary School will use a variety of assessments to monitor the progress of students. We will use common unit assessments, NWEA, F&P Benchmark Assessment System, and the Smarter Balanced Assessment. We will continue to review benchmark data three times a year for all students, looking at common assessments.

3. Effective instructional practices reflected in strategies and activities to support children experiencing difficulty mastering the standards.

As part of the common assessment practice teachers will be collecting formative assessment data for each unit of study. Students in need of reteaching or extension of concepts within units will receive that support during small group instruction and/or our “T-time” (targeted learning) time blocks. Those blocks are half-hour times dedicated to no new instruction for students. They provide time for students to get what they need without falling behind in another area. The scheduling of those blocks has been done in such a way as to maximize the availability of our certified specialists.

As a staff we have been discussing effective instructional practices that could be used to support students having difficulty mastering the standards. The following suggestions were made:

- Guided reading/strategy groups based upon conferring notes and reading assessment data
- Individualized conferences
- Articulating specific learning targets for students
- Providing effective wait-time after posing questions
- Using “turn and talk” to increase engagement and help all students actively participate
- Cooperative problem solving exercises
- Gradual release of responsibility model
- Using group share at the end of lessons to reinforce objectives and provide closure
- Incorporating personalization and choice into assignments
- Using the workshop structure across the curriculum
- Using sorting activities in which students identify similarities and differences

Reading interventions include the use of LLI (Leveled Library Interventions), Wilson Reading, Orton-Gillingham and providing support through classroom teachers, Title 1 teachers and the Reading Specialist.

Special education teachers take a proactive approach and provide services to any student who is not performing at grade level for a particular topic or unit in reading, writing or mathematics.

Instructional teams, including grade level teachers, special educators, and Title 1 teachers/our Reading Specialist meet weekly to plan and analyze formative assessments to determine supports for students.

4. A family/community involvement program aligned with the instructional program

Parents are highly involved in our programming. Parent activities within our present targeted Title 1 program have been very successful. We would like to continue our activities and add additional events in which parents and families can participate. We have found that the school has been most successful in getting parents/families to school when dinner and childcare are provided, and when students are involved in the events. These elements need to be incorporated as often as possible.

The following ways of involving parent/community within the instructional program were discussed:

- **Family Math Evenings** - Students will play math games with their families to show how we teach skills in the classroom and how they can better help their children at home. Each child receives a kit to take home that includes directions and materials for the games which they can continue to play at home to reinforce skills
- **Literacy Events** - These provide opportunities for families to engage in shared literacy experiences. Students share favorite books and poems, engage in Reader's Theater presentations, and share their writing with their families. Our reading team also will provide opportunities for parents to learn about the instructional methods used to support literacy development.
- **Family Science Events** - Students may be given the opportunity to engage in inquiry-based activities with families. They will engage in challenges and reflect upon their experiences.
- **Curriculum Evenings** - During our annual Open House, we will share with families the types of activities that occur in the classrooms. We will share Common Core State Standards and better explain assessments used with students.
- **Arts Festival** - This event provides an opportunity for students to share experiences in art and music with their families and the community.
- **Take Your Family to School Week** - This event provides an opportunity for family members and community members to spend

- the week with our students, learning about the instructional program and sharing the experience of coming to school.
- **Communication Home** - Our website provides links to help parents support learning at home. Our weekly newsletter is a format through which parents can learn about strategies to support their children's growth. We also provide book bags for students to bring home to ensure they have access to just right texts.
 - **Student-led Conferences** - Twice a year students take on the responsibility of facilitating their conferences with parents and teachers. In the fall they set goals and talk about what is working for them in their classrooms. In the spring students present portfolios of evidence of attaining/working towards their goals to their teachers and families.
 - **Parent Outreach on Website**
 - Continue with parent, student and teacher surveys
 - Continue practice of each teacher contacting each parent at least 2 times per year
 - Request parent feedback from each event held so we know if we are meeting their needs.
 - Provide brochures to parents outlining the standards and expectations for each grade level

5. A professional development program aligned with the instructional program:

The professional development program is aligned to the instructional and the established curriculum in the District. Professional development opportunities planned by the District are geared to provide support for the introduction of research-based strategies to improve teaching. This has included, but is not limited to, the following

- Work with Cynthia Merrill from UNH for the past three years to learn how to effectively and fully implement a workshop model in writing
- Work and professional development to implement Words Their Way as our core word study program
- Data-driven decision making
- Technology integration
- Writer's Workshop courses
- Walk-throughs

- Professional development with Ann Mordecai to support common assessment practices and implementation of CCSS in mathematics, using EDM4 as a base

6. Describe steps for assisting preschool children transitioning to school:

Pine Tree Elementary School does not have a preschool; however, students transition from private preschool programs into kindergarten at Pine Tree. To ensure that process is smooth, students are invited to be a part of our kindergarten registration process. Students come to school in small groups to meet with teachers and specialists. Parents also meet with teams of educators to share information about strengths and needs and to ask questions. There is a Parent Information Evening held to help families learn about the school and become comfortable with the setting.

In the summer, children are invited to attend a two-day transition to kindergarten program at the school. Our kindergarten teachers and guidance counselor engage the students in fun, school-related activities to ease concerns. Finally, we hold a “Popsicle Party” one evening before school begins to welcome children and their families to school. The children spend time with the classes and teachers while parents meet with administration and the guidance counselor to answer any last minute questions.

7. Ensure instruction by highly qualified staff

For many years, the Conway School District has made a commitment to all teachers being highly qualified. All teachers at Pine Tree Elementary School are highly qualified teachers.

This school year, with Pine Tree Elementary School becoming eligible for a Title 1 School-wide program, the conversation turned to the paraprofessionals being certified according to the NH Department Education. The Director of Special Services has worked in cooperation with the school principal to explain the requirements to become certified.

Paraprofessionals who did not meet the requirements were not rehired for their positions.

8. Extended Learning Opportunities

In what ways does you plan increase the amount and quality of learning time?

Pine Tree School Title I Schoolwide School Components

Pine Tree's school-wide plan will increase the amount of time and quality of learning time for our students by:

- Homework Help Plan: Students are provided with the opportunity to access Project SUCCEED's Homework Club. When children arrive at school they check in and if they were unable to complete homework they are provided support to accomplish this before the start of school. Parents can also choose to send their children to Homework Club after school, which is operated by teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Pine Tree School operates a "Bookmobile" bookshelf in the front lobby. Any child is welcome to take a book from or donate a book to the shelf.
- Pine Tree provides individual tutoring by certified educators for students after school. This year 7 students took part in the program.
- Pine Tree invited the librarian from the Conway Public Library to visit students and introduce their summer reading program.