



Strengthening Quality in Schools

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Spotlight Purposes

Feature a success story about a school's use of Continuous Improvement

Celebrate a school's commitment to its journey towards excellence

Encourage new GBEE membership by sharing a school's success story with the business community

Truman Middle School

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Albuquerque, NM 87121
Judith Martin- Tafoya,
Principal

Strengthening Quality in Schools

Spotlighting Quality Schools

Journey to Excellence

Truman Middle School – Albuquerque, NM

"It's Cool to be Smart"

Truman Middle School (TMS), Albuquerque Public Schools, has a student population of 1,133 students. Located on the West Side of Albuquerque, TMS serves a predominantly Hispanic population. Although TMS had historically engaged in best instructional practices, the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA) test scores continued to be dismal and were elevated to the status of Restructuring 2 in 2004.

In 2003, Truman's best practices were as follows, but not limited to: unwrapping the standards; identification of power standards, institution of literacy based electives; such as American Dreams, Media Literacy, and World Cultures; development of a site based version of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program; writing our own curriculum maps; organization of our school into a cohesive instructional council and management team; writing our own kid-friendly standards; development of our own quarterly assessments across content areas in order to inform our instruction; initiation of after school professional development blocks using book studies and our own teachers as consultants; and Truman Instructional leaders began using data days each quarter to analyze data and make determinations and decisions.

Despite these best instructional practices, TMS's scores hovered around 8.9% in math and 19% in reading. Clearly, TMS was missing an important piece that would drive gains in student achievement. TMS began using the model of Continuous Classroom Improvement (CCI) in 2005-2006.

TMS began studying the CCI model through the leadership of Dr. Diego Gallegos and Nancy Kilpatrick of the APS Regional Quality Center (RQC). A cadre of teachers was chosen to act as demonstration teachers who were given extensive training in CCI and the use of data to drive instruction, short-cycle assessments using the PDSA cycle and other quality tools. Data folders were initiated, encouraging students to take ownership of their own learning. In addition, TMS was able to hire Karen Edwards of Jim Shipley & Associates (JSA) as a coach paid for

by the APS RQC. Karen Edwards spent an inordinate amount of time with TMS staff providing large group training, small group training, and one-on-one coaching. None of this would have been possible without the local RQC lead by such esteemed leaders. In 2006-2007, TMS's scores rose to 10.5% proficiency in math and 23.66% proficiency in reading. TMS chose the CCI Model for their Alternative Governance Plan that was required by the Public Education Department of the State of New Mexico. In addition, the entire TMS staff was trained in Answer, Cite and Expand (ACE) for reading and Answer, Compute and Explain for math.

TMS's test scores rose again in 2006-2007 to 18.16% in math and 36.85% in reading.

As a result, TMS was awarded a School Improvement Grant from the Public Education Department. The instructional council chose to allocate these funds, as well as, operational funds, and funds from the RQC to continue work with Karen Edwards. Karen Edwards worked with Nancy Davenport and Nancy Kilpatrick from the RQC to ensure that TMS was fully trained in the CCI model.

In 2007-08 TMS test scores rose again to 22.6 % in math and 41.4% in reading.

Implementation of the CCI strategies was written into the school's Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS). Strategies included: All students in Tiers I, II and III will use the ACE strategy for reading and math comprehension; the PDSA strategy on weekly targeted standards-based learning goals; will track their QA, ACE, A2L and NMSBA in their data folder; will develop measurable SMART goals to be reviewed by parents biannual; will use and understand the use of Marzano's High Yield strategies in their learning and their Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA Cycles); will use a results-based core reading and math program and will track their A2L data on their A2L card.

All TMS instructors use CCI tools, as well as, best practices. TMS undertakes peer observations, surveys, and similar Quality Tools in order to



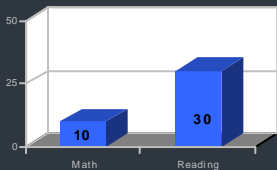
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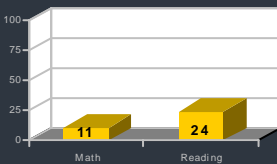
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New Mexico Standards Based Assessment Data

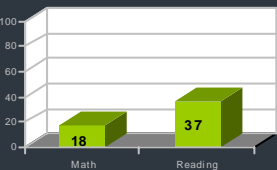
Truman MS
Albuquerque District
All Students Performance on
NM SBA 2005



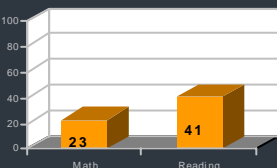
Truman MS
Albuquerque District
All Students Performance on
NM SBA 2006



Truman MS
Albuquerque District
All Students Performance on
NM SBA 2007



Truman MS
Albuquerque District
All Students Performance on
NM SBA 2008



judge the fidelity of the model. TMS has a second cadre of teachers being trained to be school-wide trainers of the CCI approach. In April, Karen Edwards will be working with the entire staff on high yield strategies. In the fall of 2009 the TMS staff will be instructed on the next level: Student/Teacher/Partnerships.

All teachers at TMS embrace ACE, PDSA and data folders. During Truman's collaboration time, data is discussed by every teacher in the school. TMS continues to explore ways to go from "good to great." TMS really appreciates the RQC and its leadership. They have truly helped move the school forward. However, the TMS teachers are the superstars putting student achievement first in their hearts and minds.

TMS's instructional coaches devised a deployment plan for CCI implementation for the 2008-2009 year. TMS chose a system of support to build capacity in CCI to be fully deployed throughout the school within the next two years.

- All staff needs to be proficient in QUALITY for the following CCI Strategies by the end of Quarter 1, 2008.
- Students will develop mission statements in each class subject and period.
- The learning target is posted daily or weekly with a measure of how students will meet the target.
- Yearly strategic learning goals are posted in the classroom.
- Student exemplars are posted in the classroom with a rubric.
- Teachers are responsible for evidence binders.
- Data Folders are not work folders but will contain pertinent data.
- Kid Friendly Standards are posted in the room.
- Student-driven PDSA cycles will utilize a plus/delta in the "study" cycle and the circle of influence in the "act" cycle.
- The use of high yield strategies within the "do" section of the PDSA needs to focus on target groups.
- All staff will engage in a self assessment of their progress toward goals as assessed by a quality rubric.
- Truman instructional coaches will work towards ADVANCED on the instructional coach CI rubric devised by the Albuquerque Public Schools Regional Quality Center.

- Truman's Leadership team will work toward proficiency in all seven strategies of school improvement.
- Truman Middle School will continue to be a demonstration school for the RQC.

Academic achievement in TMS' target groups have increased immensely. Students with Disabilities made overall improvements of 272.37% in math and 252.58% in reading during the 2008-2009 school year. Truman's English Language Learners made an improvement of 58.73% in math and 15.79% in reading during the same time frame. The African American Learners would have made AYP if they had had a sufficient number of students to constitute a cohort.

TMS's teachers collect their data using a teacher made template. This template allows the department chairs to easily graph their data. TMS's Instructional Council conducts school-wide data analysis each nine weeks. Teacher teams analyze their data monthly.

TMS's pre/post test surveys are conducted through the teams. Each team shares 110 students. Each team member chooses a math or reading problem with which the students are struggling. With the use of the teacher team collaboration and the PDSA assessment cycle, the test data can be demonstrated as successful or in need of changes to the plan.

One story principal Judith Martin-Tafoya remembers the best is a teacher telling her that she was correct and gave her all of the credit. "Why?" Judith asked. The teacher had forgotten his grade book at home and only had his student's data folder to share with the parent during the parent/teacher conference. Needless to say, the parent was impressed with the data that her student was collecting. This story came from one of the teachers who, at that point in time, did not realize the full impact of CCI. Judith was and still is so proud of his growth.

In conclusion, TMS has become a success story using the CCI model school-wide in every classroom. TMS has a long way to go on the journey toward meeting AYP but are confident that each year gains will be made in student academic achievement. Students, parents, teachers, staff, and community are filled with pride regarding their school. Is there anything that could be better than that?