

STERLING

Inclusiveness

Experiential
Learning



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL

Each year, the School Improvement Council (SIC) prepares the School Report to the Community. This document highlights the accomplishments of our school in implementing our 5 year Strategic Plan for School Improvement and our plans for the future.

Sterling's School Improvement Council (SIC) has been working hard this year to help shape the direction of Sterling. The following report outlines much of what has been done this year and summarizes much of what has been accomplished by the students and faculty of Sterling as well.

A key focus of the SIC was on school culture. We conducted multiple brainstorming sessions and developed a concrete understanding of how we hope to see Sterling's school culture develop over the next five years. The tag line "where the uncommon is common" came

from those brain storming sessions on school culture. We feel it does a great job of capturing what is unique and wonderful about Sterling, its students and teachers, as many wonderful, uncommon things happen at Sterling every day. Furthermore, this sentiment transcends school culture and represents all aspects of the school.

Sterling is a strong school that serves our children well. We should all be proud. SIC's efforts this year have been focused on taking it to the next level. We are lucky that we have the benefit of building on such a strong foundation.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Summary of 2011-2012 Plan	2
Goals 2011-2012	3
Test Scores 2011-2012	4
Looking Forward 2012-2013	4
Goals 2012-2013	5
Accomplishments	6
School Improvement Members	6

"Where the Uncommon is Common."

PARENT & STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



Project Days

Throughout the school year, students in all grade levels demonstrated their learning to parents and the community during Project Days. These well attended events gave parents a deeper insight into the learning taking place at Sterling School

Through our brainstorming, we developed a list of many items that we felt were indicative of the current culture as well as the culture that we want to see develop and flourish at Sterling School.

Upon reflection, we realized that items fit fairly neatly into two key objectives: **inclusiveness** and **experiential learning**.

Inclusiveness: Through this objective, the school seeks to create an environment in which students, teachers, parents and community members feel accepted and a part of the school. Inclusiveness values these roles and appreciates and values the differences that each individual brings in fulfilling their respective roles. Characteristics of inclusiveness identified through our brainstorming include:

- Tolerance
- Acceptance
- Engagement
- Collaboration
- School pride

Inclusiveness

Experiential Learning: Through this objective, the school seeks to encourage students and teachers to engage in the learning process in a manner that allows for learning from

Experiential Learning

and through failure, risk taking and trial and error.

This is consistent with the currently used approach of inquiry based learning, as many of the characteristics are seen in the current teaching. However, there is a desire to see this approach expanded, encouraged, and emphasized.

Characteristics of experiential learning identified include:

- Value failure
- Trial and error
- Continuous improvement
- Create relationships of trust
- Safe and nurturing
- Support from peers
- Administration leadership

Summary of Current Plan 2010-2012

The following is a summary of our current plan. It focuses on the high level goals and objectives. The detailed plan is available for review on the school's website. There is significant detail in the plan, including timelines, responsible persons, costs, funding sources and indicators of implementation. These details, while tremendously useful in managing and assessing the performance, have been omitted from this summary.



Boosterthon:
Raised thousands of dollars for PTA while emphasizing healthy choices

Three Goals of the Current Plan & Supporting Strategies

Goal Area 1: Raise the Academic Challenge and Performance of Each Student.

PERFORMANCE GOALS:

Increase Sterling Elementary students achieving MET and above on PASS English Language Arts from 87% to 90%
Results: 78% (Not Met)

Increase Sterling Elementary students achieving MET and above on PASS Math from 53% to 63%
Results: 83% (Met)

Accomplishments:

Teachers met in curriculum committees across all grade levels to address curriculum and instructional issues outlined in the strategic plan. Teachers also met by program to evaluate the units that they teach and review their effectiveness. To target struggling students in reading, our 5K-2nd grade teachers assess all students three times a year and use response to intervention strategies to assess and intervene with students identified as struggling readers. In math, our CTC 3rd grade teachers continued to use the M3 math curriculum to expand problem solving. All of these strategies were enhanced and student access increased through the addition of new computers, ipads, Promethean Boards and updated software.

Partners with the Community: City Council member Jil Littlejohn speaks to 2nd Graders.



Goal Area 2: Insure Quality Personnel in All Positions

PERFORMANCE GOALS:

All personnel will be "highly qualified"
Results: 100% (Met)

Accomplishments

Teachers were trained on the new hardware and software purchased this year. Teachers also participated in peer observations and feedback building the relationships and skill levels of all teachers. Five teachers were chosen to attend and present at the National Association of Gifted Children National Conference in New Orleans. Teachers also continued their training by sharing Best Practices via Program Committees for Gifted and Talented and for Inquiry Based Instruction in Sterling Elementary. The Sterling elementary program also worked with Dr. Karen Sparkman throughout the school year refining their inquiry based instructional practices.

Goal Area 3: Provide a School Environment Supportive of Learning

PERFORMANCE GOALS:

85% approval rating from students, parents and teachers.

Results: Students 97% Parents 88.8% Teachers 98.9% (Met)

Accomplishments:

Sterling School has a strong relationship with the Nicholtown Neighborhood Association and attend monthly meetings to share data and provide resources to parents. Sterling also provided parent workshops, orientations and partnerships address CTC & Sterling Elementary student developmental and academic needs. Along with these workshops, Sterling implemented the CATCH Program to promote health lifestyles and fitness. The CATCH program was directly connected to our pilot of the school district Culinary Creations Program, providing healthy choices for lunch.

Test Scores:

The PASS scores reported on the South Carolina Department of Education Report Card show combined scores of both programs. As a School Improvement Council, we look at the scores by program to ensure quality achievement for both programs in the school.

The table showing the 3rd grade Sterling elementary students are based on two different groups of third graders. We continue to watch for trends and build consistency across all areas tested. We also want to see continued student improvement in 4th and 5th grades. Sterling elementary students made some positive gains as well as showed some areas that still need improvement.

3RD GRADE LEVEL PASS SCORES 2010-2011

	2010 ELA	2011 ELA	2010 Math	2011 Math	2010 Science	2011 Science	2010 Social Studies	2011 Social Studies
Exemplary	70%	62%	20%	59%	27%	36%	40%	50%
Met	17%	10%	33%	14%	40%	36%	47%	22%
Not Met	13%	28%	47%	28%	33%	27%	13%	28%

The 4th grade scores are the same group of students measured over time. Their 2010 scores are from 3rd grade. We saw a drop in the percentage Exemplary to Met in English Language Arts. In Math we were thrilled with the tremendous jump in the percentage of students scoring Exemplary as well as a sharp decrease in the percentage of students scoring Not Met.

4TH GRADERS PASS SCORES 2010-2011

	3rd 2010 ELA	4th 2011 ELA	3rd 2010 Math	4th 2011 Math	3rd 2010 Science	4th 2011 Science	3rd 2010 Social Studies	4th 2011 Social Studies
Exemplary	70%	48%	20%	67%	27%	22%	40%	44%
Met	17%	37%	33%	26%	40%	48%	47%	41%
Not Met	13%	15%	47%	7%	33%	30%	13%	15%

**Sterling was
1 of 11 Schools
serving a new
healthier school
lunch!**

PASS Scores: Charles Townes Center								Percent Exemplary
CTC	ELA 2010	ELA 2011	Math 2010	Math 2011	Sci 2010	Sci 2011	SS 2010	SS 2011
3rd	100%	100%	97%	100%	92%	97%	100%	100%
4th	97%	96%	99%	100%	88%	88%	100%	96%
5th	97%	96%	95%	99%	76%	100%	89%	100%
6th	97%	97%	87%	93%	97%	89%	97%	89%
7th	99%	99%	97%	97%	99%	97%	97%	100%
8th	95%	99%	95%	94%	100%	100%	90%	94%

Charles Townes students have continued to post a high percentage of Exemplary scores. This year showed many historical highs. These levels of achievement are the highest in South Carolina. We continue to review our program to continue to improve beyond what the test scores can measure.

Looking Forward: Whats Next 2012-2013

The SIC agrees that the best approach to encourage the vision of school culture, derived from the brainstorming, is to update and improve the instructional program at the Charles Townes Center and the Sterling elementary program by adding depth, rigor and choice to current offerings. This approach combines the two areas of focus. We are working more closely with students to include them in the designation of the types of experiential learning from which they can choose. There is still a path for course acceleration when needed; however, the vast majority of student needs can be better met with a program that adds attention to student strengths through extended lessons, in-depth studies in a field of interest and ongoing enrichment. We further expand the idea of inclusiveness by having teachers, parents and students work together to develop comprehensive student portfolios which will guide large group extensions, individualized enrichment and student course and project selections.

The strategic plan has specific goals and strategies for attaining a school culture built around experiential learning and inclusiveness. This plan consists of three goal areas with each having measurable performance goals aligned to national and state guidelines for performance.

Inclusiveness

**Experiential
Learning**



Goal Area 1 encompasses performance goals for Reading, Writing and Math. These performance goals are based on the prior years' PASS scores and are focused on areas needing improvement. Within the plan, interim performance goals further target additional areas of improvement. You may notice in this goal area that Sterling elementary is designated rather than Sterling School. Sterling elementary indicates elementary students in grades 3rd-5th not in the Charles Townes Center. This designation is due to the extremely high number of Charles Townes students who score exemplary in English Language Arts, Writing and Math. Our improvement in the Charles Townes Center will be focused on the additional rigor built upon building extensions and enrichment strategies in the plan.

Goal Area 1: Raise the Academic Challenge and Performance of Each Student.

PERFORMANCE GOALS

- The percentage of Sterling elementary students scoring Met and Exemplary on the PASS English Language Arts test will increase from 78% to 83% in the 2012-2013 school year.
- The percentage of Sterling elementary students (5th grade) scoring Met and Exemplary on the PASS Writing test will be 85% in the 2012-2013 school year.
- The percentage of Sterling elementary students scoring Met and Exemplary on the PASS Math test will increase from 82% to 85% in the 2012-2013 school year.

Strategies

- Develop periodic school-wide enrichment and extensions for all students based on individual student interests and aptitude.
- Develop and implement extensions and/or acceleration for identified individual students based on strengths in subject or concept, regardless of grade.
- Rewrite & modify our current instructional program & assessments: specifically middle school and math.
- Continue to develop and review the program of study for the Sterling elementary program.

The development of school-wide and individual enrichment and acceleration allows for expanding the experiential nature and focus of our school at the individual level. Inclusiveness will be addressed as well by considering individual student interests and addressing them directly. Teachers and administrators will continue to refine, rewrite and expand the inquiry-based units of the Sterling program and the course selections at the middle school level.

Goal Area 2 addresses the need for quality staff. The Sterling School vision requires extensive training for teachers and staff members. All teachers in both programs have or will have Gifted and Talented certification and every staff member will receive extensive diversity training. This area defines the school-wide professional development for the year as well.

Goal Area 2: Insure Quality Personnel in All Positions

PERFORMANCE GOAL:

- All personnel will be highly qualified and specialized through 2012-13.

Strategies

- Train for implementation of electronic student portfolios.
- Redevelop middle school courses and intermediate to middle math.
- Develop and implement a school-wide enrichment program.
- Training to implement and support the CATCH program.
- Continue diversity training.
- Continue intra-staff sharing of best practices.
- Continue cross-grade and cross-program observations by teachers.

The goals in this area are supported by national and state guidelines defining quality personnel. The strategies in this area are designed to support the two areas of focus in developing the school culture and are integral to implementing the strategies in Goal Areas 1 and 3.

Goal Area 3 addresses school climate. This goal area is very important at Sterling School and is directly aligned with the focus of inclusiveness. Sterling School is a diverse school covering a wide range of ages and student needs. Sterling School plays a critical role in the local community as well creates a community for our parents from around the county. The strategies for meeting and maintaining this goal are designed to identify and meet the needs of this diverse population.

Goal Area 3: Provide a School Environment Supportive of Learning

PERFORMANCE GOAL:

- Maintain or exceed 85% approval rating from students, parents and teachers on the State Report Card Survey.

Strategies

- Develop and implement parent workshops and orientations to address student developmental and academic needs.
- Create a new family/student inclusion/orientation program.
- Redevelop parent-teacher conferencing to compliment the developing student portfolio.
- Offer diversity training for SIC and PTA members.

Accomplishments

The school staff, PTA and School Improvement Council has been involved in the review and assessment of the Strategic Plan. Teachers have worked throughout the year improving their instructional units through careful review and training. Teachers have worked between programs by grade levels and have observed other teachers across the school to improve our teaching. In 2011, Sterling School received the Gold Award for General Academic Performance and the Silver Award for Closing the Achievement Gap. Sterling was highlighted by the Riley Institute's Diversity Leadership Initiative in the fall of 2011. Finally, for the fourth year in a row, Sterling had a Top Ten Teacher of the Year Finalist. (Ms. Sara Newell 5th Grade)

Bylaws Update

In addition to the other work of the SIC this year, we also updated the Bylaws in a manner to be consistent with the legal requirements but preserving for the SIC as much flexibility as was reasonable.



SIC MEMBERS 2011-2012	PARENTS	COMMUNITY	TEACHERS
Ex-Officio	Terrell Mills Chair	Nancy Halverson The Children's Museum of the Upstate	Ashleigh Hambright
David Johnstone Principal	Jeff Dishner Vice-Chair	Margaret McJunkin Past-President Nicholtown Neighborhood Association	Connie Gordon
Ashley Lomax PTA President	Carol Beard	Jane Snyder Dir. Gifted & Talented	Linda Reynolds
Casey Noble Guidance	Bonnie Dixon	Dr. Harry Shucker	
Mike Strickland Past SIC Chair	Kim Gibson	Yvonne Reeder President Nicholtown Neighborhood Association	
	Maurie Lawrence Secretary		

TEACHER TRAINING



Professional Development

Teachers have worked throughout the school year improving themselves as teachers. Teachers shared best practices, visited other schools, presented at the National Association of Gifted Children and attended district trainings.