

Gill Elementary School
School Improvement Plan for 2014-2016

“Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from the fiction. The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

Final Draft Completion Date: *March, 2015*

School Council Members

Ingrid Arvidson, Co-Chair

Kathleen Bailer, Co-Chair

Amy Gordon, Community Member

David Grout, Teacher

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Introduction

The Gill School Council has identified three primary focal points for the Gill School Improvement plan supporting the following core beliefs of the district:

1. Successful students and educators need 21st century skills, including the ability to think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, and collaborate.
2. Student success is best demonstrated through the authentic application of knowledge and skills in meaningful ways.
3. Schools must partner with parents and families for students to succeed.

These points are: Parent/Family involvement, 21st Century Learning, and Technology. The Parent involvement initiative enhances parent and family involvement in the Gill School community including parent involvement in the academic development of their children. The second initiative is to support our students in acquiring 21st century skills of critical thinking, problem solving, global awareness and communication. The third initiative focuses on continued integration of technology in the daily education curriculum, specifically the use of technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate. The Strategic Objectives determined by the Gill Montague School District, will be addressed by Gill School with a spotlight on these three cores initiatives.

Summary of Goals

Goal 1: Improved Readiness to Learn

Goal 2: Improved Critical Literacy

Goal 3: Improved Learning Organization

Goal 4: Improved Community Engagement

Relationship of Goals to the District Strategic Plan

The Gill School Improvement Plan meets the strategic objectives: Readiness to Learn, Critical Literacy, Learning Organization and Community Engagement thus aligning with the district strategic plan. Under Readiness to Learn, we chose to take a big picture view and focus on school-wide understandings and approaches to address student social and emotional learning needs. For Critical Literacy we concentrated on utilizing informational text and fostering critical thinking to prepare our students for the 21st century. For Learning Organization we focused on the commitment to shared goals and collaboration to strengthen the adult culture in the school. For Community Engagement our goals support parent involvement in student learning for instance, when parents are actively supporting learning at home, academic achievement rises.

1: Improved Readiness to Learn

What will be done:

Initiative 1a. Continue and expand student led conferences.

By whom: Classroom Teachers Grade 4-6

When: 2015-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Spring conferences for grades 4-6 will be student led.

Initiative 1b. Adopt explicit social skills curriculum for grades K-6.

By whom: Principal, School Adjustment Counselor and Classroom Teachers

When: 2015-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Weekly instruction in social skills.

Initiative 1c. Institute schoolwide meetings focused on reinforcing school rules of respect for self, others and the environment.

By whom: Principal

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Monthly schoolwide meetings.

Initiative 1d. Develop and implement a comprehensive schoolwide behavior system with common understandings and outcomes.

By whom: Principal and Teachers

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Schoolwide expectations for all areas of the school, schoolwide use of common documents and behavior ladders for classroom and administration.

Goal 2: Improved Critical Literacy

What will be done:

Initiative 2a. Use real-world experiences to teach content along with standards increasing academic study.

By whom: Classroom Teachers

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: At least one authentic long term project based learning experience per classroom per year (i.e.: Stock Market Game, Sargent Center, Classroom Play, etc.).

Initiative 2b. Utilize nature-based learning resources to enhance engagement and academic content.

By whom: Classroom Teachers and Intern

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Classroom involvement in at least one nature based learning experience (gardening, vernal pool, birding, maple sugaring, orienteering, river monitoring, etc.).

Initiative 2c. Continue the exploration of non-English languages.

By whom: Principal and Classroom Teachers

When: 2015-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Research and offer one on-line learning opportunity for grades 1-6 as measured by student interest.

Initiative 2d. Increase selection and use of diverse books and resources in classrooms to promote critical thinking and non-fiction reading.

By whom: Librarian

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Increased book diversity in Gill School Library.

Initiative 2e. Utilize technology and other primary sources to increase understanding of the world we live in, including the United States and other nations and cultures.

By whom: Classroom and specialist teachers

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Evidence of use of primary resources for social studies content area in all grades.

Initiative 2f. Utilize technology to enhance engagement and content.

By whom: Classroom and Specialist Teachers

When: 2015-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Two new technological resources explored by teachers per year to enhance engagement.

Initiative 2g. Enable students after school opportunities to utilize school technology.

By whom: Principal

When: 2015-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Establishment of an afterschool homework help program for grades 3-6 Monday-Thursday 3:15-4:30.

Initiative 2h. Promote regular typing opportunities to promote fluency and speed.

By whom: Technology Teacher and Classroom Teachers

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Increased typing skills K-6.

Initiative 2i. Seek technological tools to enhance reading (live scribe, speech-to-text, audiobooks, etc..)

By whom: Special Education Teacher

When: 2015-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Explore three new assisted technology tools and promote consistent special education use of them in the classroom setting.

Goal 3: Improved Learning Organization

What will be done:

Initiative 3a. Implement shared decision making across all areas of the school (administration, teachers, parents, students)

By whom: Principal

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Score of 60 or higher on the School Culture Triage Survey or a proficient score on a similar culture survey tool measuring shared decision making.

Initiative 3b. Increase shared ownership over student learning through regular collaboration.

By whom: Team Leaders

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Score of 60 or higher on the School Culture Triage Survey or a proficient score on a similar survey tool measuring regular collaboration.

Initiative 3c. Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work, and value individual contributions made by each team member.

By whom: Principal

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Recognition of staff contributions.

Initiative 3d. Provide professional development opportunities in technology, diversity, project-based learning and teaching standards through real world experiences.

By whom: Principal

When: 2015-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Staff participation in PD opportunities (workshops, faculty/vertical meetings, release days).

Initiative 3e. Establish clear communication guidelines.

By whom: School Council

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Score of 60 or higher on the School Culture Triage Survey or a proficient score on a similar culture survey tool measuring clear communication.

Initiative 3f. Seek new technology resources (i.e. web 2.0 tools, shared folders, shared calendars) to enhance communication.

By whom: Principal

When: 2015-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: 100% utilization of one common schoolwide communication method (ie: Google docs).

Goal 4: Improved Community Engagement

What will be done:

Initiative 4a. Strengthen parent involvement in reading, by either reading to their child or through daily scheduled reading time.

By whom: Classroom Teachers and Librarian

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Read Aloud Book ideas in newsletter, homework reading logs, promotion of readaloud.org and literature, afterschool/evening book club for parents and older students.

Initiative 4b. Through homework and family collaboration establish an importance for family conversations around current events and world issues.

By whom: Classroom Teachers and Librarian

When: 2015-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Homework choice ideas and assignments on current events and world issues, newsletter ideas and promotion.

Initiative 4c. Identify opportunities to include parents in academic learning and celebration.

By whom: Principal

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Classroom and specialist teacher offering of at least 1-2 opportunities per year to celebrate academic learning (field day, art show, musical performance, writer's share, social studies presentation, classroom play, science fair, parent-child night, author night, etc.).

Initiative 4d. Create grade appropriate home kits, including technology based learning.

By whom: K-3 Classroom Teachers

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Creation and circulation of classroom home kits for grades K-3.

Initiative 4e. Differentiate homework to foster engagement.

By whom: K-2 Classroom Teachers

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Homework examples.

Initiative 4f. Continue to assess effectiveness and adjust as necessary school-family communication: i.e. class buddy list, newsletter, website, edline, web site, emails, etc.

By whom: Principal and Faculty

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: 75% satisfaction for communication on a parent survey.

Initiative 4d. Explore the implementation of after school activity groups.

By whom: Principal

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: Creation of a parent/student survey for afterschool activity groups in addition to homework help.

Initiative 4e. Work collaboratively with the town to achieve internet access for all Gill students.

By whom: Principal and School Council

When: 2014-2016

What will measurable outcomes be: 100% internet access in Gill.