



# School Improvement Plan 2009 – 10



## The Skokie School

520 Glendale Avenue  
Winnetka, Illinois

### **The Winnetka Public Schools Vision**

*We are a dynamic community of learners committed to respecting childhood, challenging the intellect, nurturing creativity, fostering reflection, encouraging action, and exploring possibilities for the future. We believe that a developmental, child-centered approach to education is the most effective way to meet the needs of our students and the high level of expectations we set for them. We are guided by a set of beliefs embedded in a culture that honors tradition, reflects on transitions, and makes choices about transformations.*

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# **SECTION 1**

## **DEMOGRAPHICS & BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Analysis of Existing Conditions and Community Characteristics**

#### **The Community of Winnetka**

Winnetka is a primarily residential village of four square miles, located on the shore of Lake Michigan twenty miles north of Chicago. A convenient forty minute drive or train ride to Chicago allows ready access to the city for cultural activities and professional sports events. Ravinia Festival Park, the summer home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, is ten minutes north of Winnetka. Northwestern University, Lake Forest College, and National-Louis University are close by.

Incorporated in 1869, Winnetka derives its name from the Native American word for “beautiful land.” The forest preserve on the village’s western border features many acres of magnificent lagoons and wooded picnic sites. Winnetka has a relatively stable population of approximately 12,400 and contains 4,310 housing units, which are predominately upscale single-family residences. The traditional architecture and well-maintained lawns along tree-lined streets of this attractive suburb reflect the pride that citizens take in their community.

Continued citizen support of the Park District allows extensive use of two public golf courses, indoor and outdoor tennis courts, paddle tennis courts, an indoor ice-skating rink, several beaches, a boat launch area, and many parks. An exceptional variety of recreational activities are available for children and families throughout the year. Annual fairs, parades, holiday celebrations, and contests fosters a strong sense of community identity. Some fifty organizations attract adults with interests ranging from history, historic preservation, gardens and government to sports, music, arts, and theater.

Another source of local pride is the Winnetka Community House, which has enriched the lives of residents by providing educational, recreational, fine arts, and fitness activities for all ages. This unique institution is supported entirely by citizen donations in addition to user fees and rentals.

A further example of the child-centered nature of the community is the nonprofit Winnetka Alliance for Early Childhood. The Alliance was founded by village organizations dedicated to promoting the healthy growth and development of young children from birth to age eight.

A community with affluence, advanced academic degrees, and professional success of many of its residents, Winnetka remains a friendly, informal, family-focused community that values education and achievement yet possesses a strong sense of civic and social responsibility. Many families moved to Winnetka because of its nationally-recognized school system and remain as “empty nesters” because of their enduring attachment to the village.

Community members' participation in the schools is considerable and their expectations for the district and for their children are high. They provide learning opportunities outside of school for their children and enrichment in the areas of travel, cultural exposure, and sports participation.

## **The Winnetka Public Schools District 36**

Winnetka schools have a long tradition of leadership in progressive public education. Throughout its history, the District's commitment to the consideration of the individual needs of the whole child and to the mastery of academic skills has never wavered. That commitment to educational excellence is grounded in a firm belief in individualized education and relies upon the active involvement of teachers and parents in the educational process.

The District serves 1,970 junior kindergarten through eighth grade children in three elementary schools, one fifth and sixth grade center, and one middle school for grades seven and eight. Children in grades kindergarten through fourth attend Hubbard Woods, Crow Island, and Greeley Schools. The Skokie School and Carleton W. Washburne School currently serve about 964 fifth through eighth grade students.

In addition to the Superintendent, the central office is staffed with a Chief Financial Operating Officer, a Director of Curriculum, a Director of Pupil Services, a Director of Human Resources, and a Director of Technology and Communications. Each building has a principal, and The Skokie School and Carleton W. Washburne School have assistant principals.

Over 89% of the 220 member professional staff hold advanced degrees and average nine and a half years of teaching experience. Ninety-nine Teacher Associates support the instructional program.

Special education services are provided through both the district and the Northern Suburban Special Education District (NSSSED), which is comprised of eighteen school districts. Individual students are served through a learning disabilities program, reading improvement programs, social workers, and speech therapists.

The District's dedication to developmental and integrated learning is evidenced by programs that develop a wide range of interests. In the elementary schools, children may start the Suzuki string program in kindergarten or join the orchestra in fifth grade. Spanish and technology are integrated into the regular curriculum beginning in first grade.

Fifth and sixth graders are assigned to a two-teacher-core program. They also spend two periods each day in exploratory classes, which include art, computer literacy, music, dramatics, movement, keyboarding, service, and second language. Seventh and eighth graders are taught English, social studies, math, and science classes by a team of four teachers. Students also devote one period to second language and/or three twelve-week blocks of exploratory classes. All students are assigned to an advisor who monitors their academic and social progress, provides guidance for improving study skills, and arranges additional parent conferences when necessary.

Strong financial support of education by Winnetka residents dates back to 1859 when the first public school building was financed by private funds. In 1917, having reached the limit of its bonding power, the community responded generously to volunteers in a door-to-door fundraising campaign to build a new junior high school. Extensive parental involvement in school programs, PTO activities, and parents as volunteers in the classrooms has assisted the district in achieving its outstanding reputation. The District's annual budget for 2007–2008 was approximately \$45 million. The annual operating expense per pupil was \$15,214 of which approximately 95% was derived from local sources. Furthermore, the community has funded the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation, which raises money annually to support school programs.

Winnetka is one of six elementary districts sending graduates to New Trier Township High School, from which approximately 96% attend college.

### **The Students of Winnetka**

Students have, for the most part, participated in early childhood education programs and are positive in their attitudes toward learning. Active participation in sports, cultural activities, and other areas of interest occupy a significant proportion of their out-of-school time. Their enriched environment is exemplified by the degree of travel that they have experienced, their awareness and use of the newest technology available, and the availability of material goods. Although the student community is experiencing some changes demographically, it remains largely Caucasian and homogeneous.

### **Process for Identifying and Reviewing Students' Needs and Encouraging Community Involvement at The Skokie School**

The Skokie School is the fifth and sixth grade center and part of the Washburne/Skokie campus in The Winnetka Public Schools. Our current enrollment is approximately 465.

All of The Winnetka Public Schools share the same philosophy of instruction, which is developmental in nature and defined by the individual needs of children. The needs of each child change over time, thereby requiring a flexible response from the school setting. There are fundamental organizing concepts of any school, however, which will ensure an appropriate and consistent disposition for decision making and problem solving as those needs arise. This annual report is presented with those fundamental organizers in mind which serve as the basis for identifying and reviewing the needs of children at The Skokie School. We believe that when a child experiences a learning environment that is committed to intellectual growth with attention to emotional, social, physical, and cultural development; consistent communication between home and school; close coordination of the instructional program; building on a positive culture; promoting a responsible community; encouraging positive attitudes for learning; and developing multiple forms of assessment to evaluate student progress, that children's learning needs will best be served.

**The Winnetka Public Schools are guided by a philosophy which is contained in a district document entitled *Winnetka: A Community of Learners*. The original version of this document was written in 1986. Following the community's and staff's input, it**

was revised in 1998. Excerpts from the document appear in boxes throughout this annual plan to show how the philosophy of the school district is being implemented in our annual goals. The complete version of the *Winnetka: A Community of Learners* document is available [www.winnetka36.org](http://www.winnetka36.org).

## **Teaching and Learning**

The primary mission of a school is teaching and learning. The learning environment, our instructional strategies, and the manner in which we assess our students and their responses to the learning environment all constitute components of thoughtful and meaningful decision making on the part of faculty and parents.

### **Learning Environment**

**We create environments in our schools that support and challenge the child. While such environments are initially constructed by the teacher, they are also responsive to the child. Learning is participatory and experiential. Thoughtful and appropriate decisions are made by all participants. Physical design features enhance children's comfort. As our students move through the grades, the content expands while the context remains interactive and dynamic. During this process, we reflect on our practice and adapt our responses to our developing students. Careful observation deepens our understanding of the children and heightens the importance of the experiences we create. The children's expression of their discoveries and acquired knowledge is their response to the environment; the teacher responds and the dialogue continues.**

### **Encouraging Positive Attitudes for Learning**

The Skokie School is dedicated to providing our students with a strong, comprehensive core of academics; experiences in the fine and applied arts; guidance in physical education, fitness, and wellness; and the development of an attitude that learning is a life-long process. Integrated learning is a hallmark aimed at developing the student's ability to discover, to interpret critically, and to understand the connections between ideas. We are committed to diversity in learning styles. Through these diversities, our hope is that students will develop the powers of intelligence through applications of reflective observation and critical analysis, experience opportunities for choice and decision making, and develop and enhance the art of questioning.

### **School Design as Responsive to Children**

The Skokie School has been in existence since 1921. Over time, enrollment dictated that Skokie School be closed, fifth grade become a part of the three elementary buildings, and sixth grade become a part of Carleton Washburne School. The Skokie School reopened in August 1998 for sixth graders. As part of the process of reopening The Skokie School, there were a series of study groups, facility committees, etc., each of which incorporated the district's child-centered and Washburne's middle school philosophies into the new Skokie/Washburne campus. The fifth grade was moved to The Skokie School in the fall of 2000. Faculty and staff continue to meet to refine the changes that Washburne and Skokie are undergoing. These constituencies have routinely reported to and included the school,

parent, resident, business, and cultural communities within Winnetka. The decision to reopen The Skokie School originally was financed by a \$5.8 million public bond, approved by the voters of Winnetka.

Dr. Carleton W. Washburne, a noted progressive educator, embraced a child-centered philosophy. Because of this shared philosophy, there is a cohesiveness between the five district schools, a community of learners. The Skokie School embraces and practices a middle school philosophy. The Skokie staff sets annual goals and objectives and evaluates school services and the impact of those services. All of Skokie's constituents have been a valued part of looking at our school and assisting us in serving children well over time. Predicted increased enrollments, our continuous desire to look at ourselves and evaluate our work with and for children, and our desire to maintain and further our collective work (parents/community/board/staff/students) on behalf of children each influence the learning environment of our school both now and in the future.

Students at the fifth and sixth grade levels are assigned to a two-teacher team, one of whom is the child's advisor. The student's entire academic core (Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, and Science) is taught by this team. Our advisory program is an important part of each student's experience at Skokie addressing the social and emotional well-being and development of the pre-adolescent. Each classroom includes children spanning a wide spectrum of academic abilities. Because our goal is to respond to our students based on their individual needs, competitive activities are de-emphasized and heterogeneous and flexible grouping is a fundamental principle. Class sizes are small with teaching associates provided for special education. Associates also assist in the Resource Center. Additional resources include our Pupil Services Team (i.e., Advisor, Nurse, Social Worker, Psychologist, Reading Specialist, Learning Disabilities Teachers, Speech and Language Therapist, and Administrators). All are available for consultation and/or direct service to children, their families, and faculty. Close coordination between student, teacher, and parent permits this individualized instruction to take place and assures student success.

## **Instructional Strategies**

### **Developmental Learning**

**Learning is more efficient and effective when instruction is organized and presented in a manner that is compatible with each child's developmental stages. Skills and concepts are introduced and reinforced appropriately. Learning takes place most effectively when children are challenged by genuine problems associated with their interests.**

### **Integrated Learning**

**Organizing concepts and skills from different disciplines around a common theme help students to make connections. Integrated units of study foster higher order thinking and creativity while emphasizing subject matter.**

## Experiential Learning

**Our schools provide students with an opportunity to explore the world. Direct contact with places, events, people, and materials are essential to cognitive and emotional development. Children need experience to share and understand forms of information. Meaning emerges because of the interplay between the child's experience and new information.**

The Skokie School offers a framework for instruction that encourages positive dispositions for learning. These instructional strategies incorporate a variety of approaches to teaching that are aligned with the learning needs of the students. For example, because professionals closest to the children are best equipped to plan effective instruction, educational decision making is de-centralized. While a district curriculum creates a consistent content approach, teachers are free to respond to individual student needs out of a broad professional repertoire. Teachers are free to bring their own "magic" to their classrooms. Because all teachers are well versed in the developmental imperatives of the age group they teach, instruction is balanced to achieve academic as well as social emotional goals.

## Learning Processes and Student Responses

**Brain/intelligence research, which supports and challenges current practices, enhances our curriculum planning and instruction. The identification of each student's talents and strengths, and areas in need of growth and development, presents opportunities for teacher and student to reflect upon the best strategy(ies) for learning. Students are encouraged to understand how they think and learn.**

There are several vehicles in place that review the manner in which The Skokie School engages its students in learning. Grade level committees across the district meet multiple times a year to review pedagogy, curricular decisions, and student responses. In addition, grade level and team meetings at the building level provide opportunities for teachers to discuss the same as it relates to Skokie students. Multiple forms of assessment are implemented to document student progress.

## Learning Technologies

**Rapid and continual changes in technology challenge us to provide the appropriate tools and instruction for our community of learners. Understanding the possibilities inherent in technology and developing the ability to make productive and ethical choices in a technological environment require intellectual and social skills that have their foundation in the basic curriculum.**

Technology is integrated throughout the curriculum in fifth and sixth grades and aligned with the National Educational Technology Standards for Students (NETS-S). The Skokie School has over 180 networked computers, two computer labs, at least one computer in each classroom, 40 wireless laptops, and 70 AlphaSmart keyboards. The Skokie School is connected to the Internet by fiber optics. Accessibility to the computers and appropriate professional development has further enhanced teachers' skills in developing technology-enriched lessons. Currently, a district-wide technology

committee oversees the implementation of the 2007–10 Technology Plan. Current classroom and teacher uses include:

- **Productivity tools:** word processing, spreadsheets, desktop publishing, and presentation development for multimedia projects.
- **Internet:** global communication, research tool, database of information, parent communication, and community information.
- **Intranet:** district-wide communication for curriculum guides, lesson plans, student projects, professional development, technical support, and staff directory.
- **Databases:** student data, scheduling, attendance, report cards, and IEPs.
- **Graphic Organizers:** developing and formatting ideas.
- **Multimedia tools:** for students, teachers, and administrative projects.
- **Webpage Development:** student webpages, teacher webpages, school and district information, parent communication, and community information.
- **Problem-Solving Software:** develop and support mathematical concepts.
- **Library Automation System:** electronic circulation for students and teachers for print and non-print resources, bibliography citations, interlibrary connection, and web-based interface for home link.

## Student Learning, Progress, and Achievement

School learning, progress, and achievement are best assessed through a combination of evaluative techniques including standardized instruments, parental communication, teacher observation, and child reporting.

### Curriculum Design and Alignment

Carleton W. Washburne, former Superintendent of The Winnetka Public Schools, wrote in *A Living Philosophy of Education* (1940) that “a philosophy of education, evolved by those who are living among children, helping them, and being taught by them, is itself living, and like all living things, it is ever-changing.” This fluidity is equally descriptive of effective curriculum. At The Skokie School, we are constantly adapting, expanding, and modifying our curricula to meet the needs of our students in the rapidly changing world in which we live.

The foundation on which all curricula are constructed is the *Winnetka: A Community of Learners* document which states the mission of the Winnetka Public Schools. Making the goals of the statement operational is dependent on several district- and school-wide committees.

- **Curriculum Committees:** Serving each of the academic areas are committees made up of faculty from each grade level. Discussions regarding curriculum, materials, assessment, and instruction are disseminated through individual grade level and faculty meetings. Chairs of the curriculum committees sit on the Curriculum Council where broader, district-wide decisions are made.
- **Grade level meetings:** permit teachers to work with colleagues to assess the alignment of their instructional decisions with district goals.
- **Informal classroom assessments:** determine progress of individual students and the group toward stated goals.

- **Team meetings:** allow teachers to discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of a variety of educational approaches to different curricular topics.

## **Assessment System and Student Work**

In The Winnetka Public Schools, we are committed to the growth of the whole child in all of his/her academic, social, emotional, and physical dimensions. We recognize that all of us come to school differently endowed and each with his own timetable for development. Our intent is to recognize individual differences, interests, strengths, and weaknesses with the hope of fostering positive growth for each student in a way that leads to a sense of success and satisfaction; to a sense of one's own capability; and to the acquisition of the skills, attitudes, and understanding needed for success as a student and as a person.

**We believe that our children should have multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they know. Assessment is a tool that provides a picture of the child in the process of being a learner. This perspective guides educational priorities and includes parents in the process. The value of the individual and his/her contribution to the world lies in the manner in which he/she uses intelligence, experience, and creativity in real-life circumstances.**

At The Skokie School, we view learning as a process whereby children (and teachers) construct knowledge and understanding as they interact with the environment (teachers, activities, books, other students, objects, and problems). Our understanding of children is developed as we observe their interaction with the environment. Our approach to each child is heavily influenced by our understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, motives, knowledge, and methods of each student. Therefore, to assess the relative progress of each student we use a variety of tools, focusing on cognitive, affective, social, and emotional areas. Assessment and evaluation of children's learning is an ongoing process and an integral part of our instructional program. Careful and collaborative observation of children over time is a fundamental part of our program. In addition to this observation, we utilize a number of assessment and communication tools to gain a fuller understanding of how children learn. These include, but are not limited to:

- Annual Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) testing, grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.
- Common assessments across the curriculum.
- Regularly-scheduled team and building meetings.
- Regularly-scheduled Pupil Services Team meetings.
- Regularly-scheduled building and district curriculum meetings.
- Teacher contacts, by telephone or in-person, with parents. Likewise, parents contact teachers or other school personnel as they have questions or concerns that may arise regarding their children.
- An advisor/advisee system.

Newsletters from teachers to parents, and school to parents, reinforce curricular goals and objectives. Their purpose is to provide information as well as to encourage parent participation in both the process of their child's learning as well as to develop a greater understanding between the school and family.

Curriculum Summaries are distributed at Go-To-School Night. These overviews give the parent a broad scope and sequence of the curriculum for particular grade levels.

## **Learning Community**

### **Mission Statement**

*We are a dynamic community of learners committed to respecting childhood, challenging the intellect, nurturing creativity, fostering reflection, encouraging action and exploring possibilities for the future. We believe that a developmental, child-centered approach to education is the most effective way to meet the needs of our students and the high level of expectations we set for them. We are guided by a set of beliefs embedded in a culture that honors tradition, reflects on transitions and makes choices about transformations.*

### **Expectations**

Our mission statement challenges us to seek and value excellence in our students. The value of school learning is dependent upon the students' ability to use it effectively and responsibly. Our world will depend on individuals who can:

- **read with comprehension;**
- **communicate effectively in writing, and speaking by formulating and expressing ideas clearly and by understanding the ideas conveyed by others;**
- **access and evaluate information by interpreting content and assessing its usefulness and meaning;**
- **demonstrate quantitative reasoning and use mathematics as a language for understanding relationships in the world;**
- **use scientific principles as a basis for making hypotheses, interpreting data, and drawing conclusions;**
- **be reflective and resourceful in making rational decisions, solving problems, and understanding the consequences of actions;**
- **understand and interact responsibly with the environment;**
- **understand the diversity and commonality among people;**
- **communicate in languages other than English so they may participate with awareness and sensitivity as productive members of a global society;**
- **encourage, appreciate and participate in the expression of multiple art forms and value the importance of the arts to society;**
- **understand the role and impact of technology on society and utilize technological resources when appropriate;**
- **understand the importance of the individual in relationship to society and the effect that each person can have on others, on the community and on the world;**
- **develop and maintain enduring relationships and healthful living habits;**
- **work cooperatively with others to achieve a common goal.**

## **Leadership and School Administration**

The office of the principal, which includes the principal, two part-time assistant principals, and other support staff, is responsible for the administration of The Skokie School. Leadership within the building is guided by a strong belief in the shared decision making process. A variety of teams and committees have been established to address diverse agendas. Their membership is reflective of their particular topics and may include staff, parents, and students. Grade level issues, faculty book groups, parent book groups, instructional improvement, special education, and the REACH Program are a few examples of the areas of interest for teams/committees. In addition, the Principal's Advisory provides an avenue for the sharing of student ideas and concerns.

## **An Organizational Structure**

The Skokie School is committed to a middle school philosophy. This philosophy significantly influences our curriculum, facilities usage, and organizational structure. Organizationally, the school's developmentally-appropriate, child-centered philosophy is manifested in many ways, including:

**Teaming:** Skokie students are assigned to a team for their fifth and sixth grade experiences. This helps build a sense of community and ownership amongst the students and helps teachers get to know their students as individuals. As a team, teachers of differing subject matters are able to work closely with each other to achieve academic and personal goals for each student. Teaming also provides teachers with a support group and thereby helps eliminate the isolation that teachers can experience.

### **The Role of Effort and Self Esteem**

**Self-esteem is acquired by working diligently in school. It is achieved by the continued development of useful skills and knowledge. Confidence in oneself is the result of interacting with ideas, people, and the environment in healthy and satisfying ways. Confidence develops in the presence of objective standards, healthy competition, and a nurturing environment that encourages social, as well as individual growth.**

**Advisory:** Each student is assigned to one of their academic team teachers who serves as their advisor. Advisors meet with their advisees every day, talking with them about academic matters, personal problems, performing well in a middle school, and the general confusion and tribulations of entering and moving through adolescence. An advisor provides guidance and monitors a child's academic and social progress. The trusting environment of advisory allows discussion of difficult issues like resisting peer-pressure, developing sound decision making skills, and seeking academic help. In the advisory cycles in the middle schools, students move from seeing themselves as the center of the universe to recognizing that they are a citizen of their school, the community, the nation and the world, and have a responsibility to participate in and contribute to that world.

## **Consistent Relationships**

**Because of changing family roles and social structures, children now more than ever, need opportunities for continuing relationships. Our schools are a place where these long-term relationships occur. A child learns to maintain enduring relationships through experience. Trust in friendships, teachers, and school culture develops confidence. Our goal of developing relationships guides our organizational structures.**

**Block Scheduling:** The daily schedule at Skokie is based on a block model. Block scheduling enables a team of teachers to have a large block of time in which to teach a team of students. A block schedule allows flexibility in the duration of classes. In addition, it encourages an interdisciplinary approach to subject matter, with classes co-taught by two teachers sharing a block. In these ways, learning is no longer driven by a set amount of time or the bell, but by the needs of the students and the nature of learning activity. The specific block schedule utilized at Skokie has designated common planning times for team and related studies (exploratory) teachers respectively.

## **The Arts**

**Historically, the arts have been an integral part of our school experience. The arts provide the context that makes regard for and response to the whole child possible. Our commitment to the integration of the arts in our school experience is validated by research about learning. The arts are fundamental to literacy. Giving students the opportunity and tools with which to enter the world of the arts provides them with avenues for the expression of their intellect, creative imagination, and curiosity. The arts are the voice of our humanity.**

**Exploratory Program:** The related studies program is based on the assumption that the middle-level years are a time when students should explore and test their interests in various subjects and curricular activities. They should have the opportunity to explore classes that may help them make decisions about future educational goals and activities that will last a lifetime. In fifth and sixth grades, students take a “package” of exploratory classes, thereby guaranteeing them exposure to a variety of classes. In seventh and eighth grades, students have the opportunity to choose related studies courses that interest them. In this way we allow every student to have a certain basic exposure to classes ranging from foreign language to performing arts and then they can explore, in greater depth, the subjects that appeal to them. Every student has two periods per day of related studies exploratories. In addition, a daily opportunity to explore kinetic wellness is provided to all students at the middle schools.

## **Physical and Emotional Well-being**

**All members of our community must work together to instill the attitudes, skills, and knowledge necessary for the physical and emotional well-being of our children. Information that aids the necessary development of good nutrition, exercise, and health habits promotes a sound mind and body.**

## **The Role of Play and Exploration**

**School is a place where opportunities and time for play and exploration are valued and sought. The use of play as both the work and language of the young child changes as the children grow. In play, children practice the concrete processes that they will eventually internalize as abstract thought. Play and exploration are the media through which children can formulate and test their own ideas.**

**REACH Program:** (REACH stands for Responsibility, Empathy, Appreciation, Confidence, and Hope.) The goal of the REACH program at The Skokie School is to enhance the social and emotional development of students through the teaching of specific life-long skills. Examples of some units in the REACH curriculum include: Community Building, Team Building and Helping Others, Habits of Mind and Personal Goal Setting, Acts of Kindness, Relationships, Media Literacy, and Diversity. Lessons are taught on a regularly-scheduled basis by a team of teachers that include the advisor and another faculty member. All-school REACH assemblies and opportunities to practice specific skills in various activities enrich these lessons.

In these and other ways, Skokie teachers, staff, and administrators are able to meet the emotional, physical, social, developmental and academic needs of all our students.

## **Professional Development Opportunities and Other Supports for Teachers and Staff**

A good school is a collection of good classrooms. To encourage teachers to expand their pedagogical repertoires requires long-term professional development projects. These include not only school- or district-sponsored opportunities, but also various personal ventures that teachers engage in to enhance their professional competence. Access to current professional publications, visiting other classrooms, the mentor program for new teachers, and teacher study groups are but a few of the means for increasing teacher competence. To create this environment schools must be sites where teachers work collegially in a problem-solving framework focused on improving instruction.

### **The Role of the Teacher**

**When students work with and learn from individuals of character and intellect, they interact with role models whom they may wish to emulate. Teachers must be deserving of this admiration. Therefore, allocating time for learning is as important for teachers as for children. The district is committed to addressing the educational needs and interests of teachers as well as the educational needs and interests of children.**

To provide an instructional program to meet the high standards of our faculty and of the community, an extraordinary amount of time is devoted to coordinating, communicating and refining our practice. Maintaining and refining knowledge of current theory, practice and materials is a priority as we grow in the understanding of our goals as a community of learners. The following practices are examples of this commitment:

- **WTI and Consultants:** Faculty attend Winnetka Teachers' Institute seminars and workshops as well as a multitude of other professional growth activities. Consultants

from neighboring colleges and universities are available to our faculty for review of current research and practice.

- **District-wide Grade Level and Curriculum Planning meetings:** Faculty members meet regularly to plan and organize curriculum.
- **Faculty Meetings:** Skokie faculty meets regularly on Monday afternoons.
- **Team Meetings:** Teaching teams and content area teams meet regularly at Skokie to plan and discuss students, curriculum and teaching practices.
- **Pupil Services Team:** A weekly forum for the discussion of the learning needs of children both on special education case loads and those who are not currently identified through an examination of current instructional practice, modifications, and programming.
- **Informal Meetings:** Regular meetings occur between support services personnel and classroom teachers.
- **Distribution of articles and periodicals:** Faculty and administration share articles germane to issues of instruction and learning with follow up discussion at faculty, department, and/or team meetings.
- **Staff development:** Faculty share expertise in the form of workshops, lectures, and discussion groups within and outside the school.

## **Community Participation in the School Based-Learning Community**

### **Communication**

The constant flow of information inherent in the process of communication has many facets and occurs in many settings. Within the classroom and in parent teacher conferences, in the school newspaper, at fireside chats, at PTO and School Board meetings, on Go to School Night or at the dinner table at home, the process of communication gives voice to each invested individual at the level which they are best able to respond. The absence of any single constituency diminishes the forces that make democracy work. The critical balance between the needs of the individual and the good of the whole is put in perspective by constant communication between all shareholders. Therefore, each individual has the responsibility to listen, encourage, and impart ideas. Each individual also has the right to be heard respectfully. In a democracy, individuals are encouraged to interpret and analyze, ask questions, challenge, make choices, think reflectively and collaborate with others. Communication begins early in life and is nurtured by those who have the benefit of experience.

### **Home-School Communication**

The value of a child-centered philosophy of instruction and requisite home-school communication are areas of emphasis which exemplify our mutual goals. The following events, documents, and practices are only a partial listing of the value we place on communication with parents:

- **Go-To-School Nights:** Fall open houses when each teacher's instructional program for the year is presented.

- **Parent/student/teacher conferences in October, February and May:** include reports and descriptions of child's current performance and behavior as related to goals and current measures. Relevant special services staff are included in parent conferences.
- ***The Skokie School Scoop Home Edition:*** this publication is sent home with students and emailed to families on a biweekly basis to keep families informed of happenings at The Skokie School.
- **Informal communication:** telephone and in school conversations, email, and notes are encouraged as need arises.
- **Washburne/Skokie Word:** a newsletter edited and published by the PTO where current issues, events, and educational topics of the school are reported by parents, teachers, and administrators.
- **School directory:** a publication of the PTO providing general information about the school as well as an alphabetized listing of all students, families, and faculty.
- **Regularly-scheduled daytime and evening PTO meetings:** where issues and programs are discussed.
- **End-of-year letters from parents to Principal:** are an opportunity for parents to evaluate the current year and help the school plan for the following year for each child. A letter is sent home to parents inviting this end of year assessment.
- **School Board Reports and *Learners Newsletters:*** are sent to all residents in Winnetka.
- **Winnetka Parents Institute:** these formal presentations provide parents an opportunity to learn about the philosophy and practices of our district and school community.

## Building a Positive Culture

The culture of The Skokie School can be characterized as welcoming, thoughtful, respectful of children and committed to excellence in teaching and learning. Some of the more deliberate activities that contribute to our positive culture are:

- **Advisory:** through the advisory program students form a small community within the larger school. Advisors act as advocates for their advisees, advisors help students with academic matters, personal problems, and the turbulence of early adolescence.
- **Service Exploratory:** students learn about democratic leadership and participation in their community.
- **Mentoring:** experienced staff assists new teachers to facilitate their adjustment to our school and community.
- **Faculty Meetings:** time for the faculty to exchange ideas, share information, and become grounded in our school culture.
- **PTO Welcome Committee:** is helpful to new families in the community and provides a number of events and contacts to assist families in their adjustment to Winnetka.
- **Room Parents:** assist in both an educational and social classroom contexts.

## The Development of Community

We are a village of individuals and of groups who are deliberate and intentional about developing community. Individual growth is indebted to group experience and complex networks of interaction. The free and open flow of ideas encourages differences. We value those differences and recognize that growth is made possible through reasoned dialogue. Knowledge and experience are not possessions of individuals alone, but of groups that work to promote the growth of all their members.

## Collaboration with Parents to Augment Instruction

In addition to reporting and communicating to parents, programs are co-developed with parents and teachers to augment the instructional program. Many parents have assumed leadership roles for projects which are a part of our school culture. In addition, our parents have assumed the roles of research project assistants and speakers sharing their interests and expertise. Another invaluable resource has been the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation that generates funds to support programs that enhance instruction.

## Being Part of a Responsible and Inclusive Community

The social experience of the child in the school setting is a crucial part of their overall development. Clearly, the school must communicate standards of safety, discipline, and behavior. More important, however, is that children experience school as a safe place where they feel free to participate in wholesome and positive activities. During the middle school years, especially, children are defining themselves and their social relationships and require guidance in their daily interactions.

In general, our students are well behaved and incidents of misbehavior, which require communication, are well received by parents. The school and the family collaborate to communicate appropriate values and standards of behavior. Some guidelines and practices that are part of our school routine include:

- **Skokie Student Handbook:** written statement of school rules and information provided for parents and children.
- **Supervision of Students:** before- and after-school educational activity space in the Resource Center and Computer Lab supervised by staff.
- **Emphasis on Conduct and Social Responsibility:** Expectations are discussed with students in advisory, all classes, and in the lunchroom. These discussions help to codify the standards and procedures to follow when instances of behavior require response.
- **Presence of School Nurse and Entrance Monitor:** to assist in providing a healthy and safe environment.
- **Consultation from the Social Worker:** assigned to our school and available to classroom teachers, children, and their families regarding issues of social and emotional adjustments.
- **School District Policies:** provide guidelines to ensure a safe and respectful school environment for students and staff.

## **Appreciation of Diversity**

**Democratic principles contemplate an open society founded on tolerance of differences and on mutual respect. It is appropriate that students be encouraged to understand the American culture in which they are growing as they prepare for an active role in shaping that society. It is imperative that students understand the modern world and the past, respect divergent cultures and traditions, exercise judgment and perspective as appropriate to their age and experience.**

# SECTION 2

## SCHOOL REPORT CARD

14-016-0360-02-2004

The Skokie School 1

**The Skokie School**  
**Winnetka SD 36**  
**Winnetka, ILLINOIS**



**ILLINOIS**  
**SCHOOL**  
**REPORT**  
**CARD**

**GRADES : 5 6**

State and federal laws require public school districts to release report cards to the public each year.  
 Starting in 2009, charter school information is included in district statistics.

### STUDENTS

RACIAL/ETHNIC BACKGROUND AND OTHER INFORMATION													
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Native American	Multi racial /Ethnic	Low- Income Rate	Limited- English- Proficient Rate	High Sch. Dropout Rate	Chronic Truancy Rate	Mobility Rate	Attendance Rate	Total Enrollment
School	93.9	0.0	1.3	4.2	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.2		0.0	1.2	94.7	479
District	94.1	0.1	1.1	3.1	0.1	1.5	0.0	0.2		0.1	2.0	94.6	1,958
State	53.3	19.1	20.8	4.1	0.2	2.5	42.9	8.0		3.7	13.5	93.7	2,070,125

Low-income students come from families receiving public aid; live in institutions for neglected or delinquent children; are supported in foster homes with public funds; or are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches.

Limited-English-proficient students are those students eligible for transitional bilingual programs.  
 Mobility rate is based on the number of times students enroll in or leave a school during the school year.  
 Chronic truants are students who are absent from school without valid cause for 18 or more of the last 180 school days.

### INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING

PARENTAL CONTACT*		STUDENT-TO-STAFF RATIOS			
	Percent	Pupil- Teacher Elementary	Pupil- Teacher Secondary	Pupil- Certified Staff	Pupil- Administrator
School	100.0	--	--	--	--
District	100.0	13.2		9.2	157.0
State	96.7	18.4		13.3	201.8

\* Parental contact includes parent-teacher conferences, parental visits to school, school visits to home, telephone conversations, and written correspondence.

AVERAGE CLASS SIZE (as of the first school day in May)										
Grades	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 - 12
School						21.2	22.1			
District						21.2	22.1			
State						22.6	22.0			

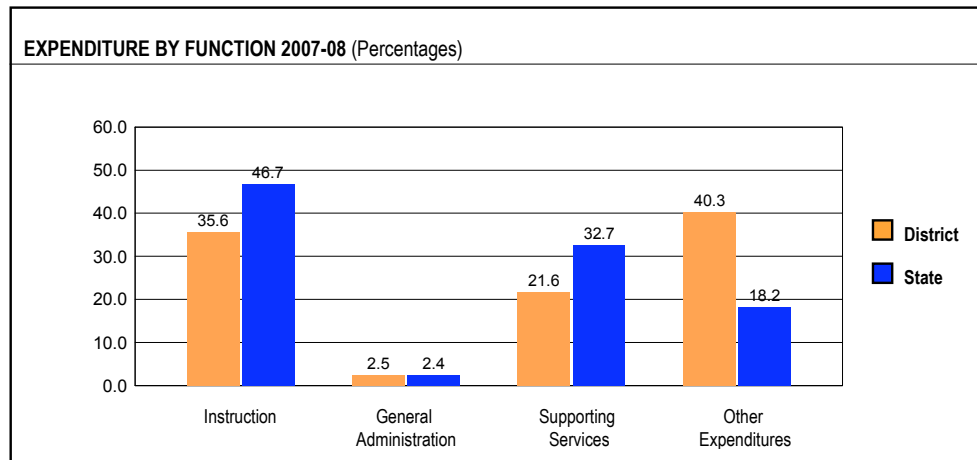
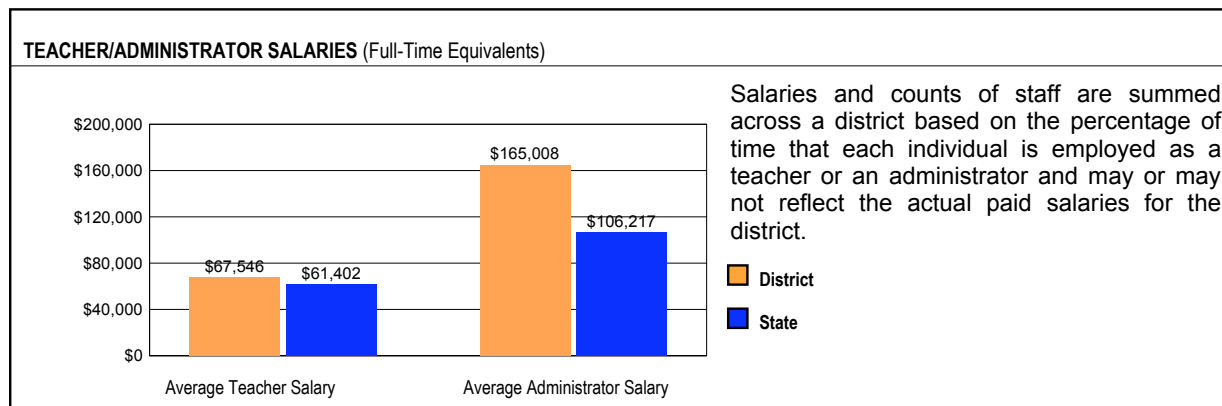
TIME DEVOTED TO TEACHING CORE SUBJECTS (Minutes Per Day)												
Grades	Mathematics			Science			English/Language Arts			Social Science		
	3	6	8	3	6	8	3	6	8	3	6	8
School		60			60			60			60	
District		60			60			60			60	
State		54			43			104			43	

TEACHER INFORMATION (Full-Time Equivalents)								
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Native American	Male	Female	Total Number
District	94.1	0.6	2.3	3.0	0.0	21.4	78.6	173
State	85.1	8.3	5.0	1.4	0.2	22.9	77.1	133,017

TEACHER INFORMATION (Continued)					
	Average Teaching Experience (Years)	% of Teachers with Bachelor's Degrees	% of Teachers with Master's & Above	% of Teachers with Emergency or Provisional Credentials	% of Classes Not Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers
School	--	--	--	0.0	0.0
District	12.9	12.5	87.5	0.0	0.0
State	12.5	44.1	55.8	0.6	1.2

Some teacher/administrator data are not collected at the school level.

### SCHOOL DISTRICT FINANCES



REVENUE BY SOURCE 2007-08				EXPENDITURE BY FUND 2007-08			
	District	District %	State %		District	District %	State %
Local Property Taxes	\$30,932,785	85.1	58.7	Education	\$25,440,321	56.1	71.5
Other Local Funding	\$3,639,522	10.0	6.3	Operations & Maintenance	\$2,375,058	5.2	8.6
General State Aid	\$424,549	1.2	18.6	Transportation	\$469,410	1.0	3.9
Other State Funding	\$1,039,669	2.9	9.0	Bond and Interest	\$2,749,770	6.1	6.3
Federal Funding	\$310,099	0.9	7.4	Rent	\$0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	\$36,346,624			Municipal Retirement/ Social Security	\$811,973	1.8	1.8
				Fire Prevention & Safety	\$0	0.0	0.9
				Site & Construction/ Capital Improvement	\$13,529,700	29.8	6.8
				TOTAL	\$45,376,232		

OTHER FINANCIAL INDICATORS				
	2006 Equalized Assessed Valuation per Pupil	2006 Total School Tax Rate per \$100	2007-08 Instructional Expenditure per Pupil	2007-08 Operating Expenditure per Pupil
District	\$636,291	2.61	\$8,816	\$15,214
State	**	**	\$6,103	\$10,417

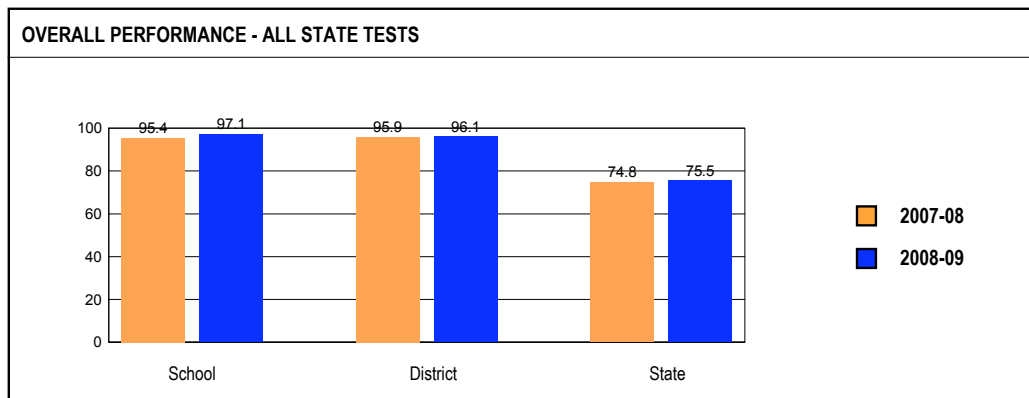
\*\* Due to the way Illinois school districts are configured, state averages for equalized assessed valuation per pupil and total school tax rate per \$100 are not provided.  
**Equalized assessed valuation** includes all computed property values upon which a district's local tax rate is calculated.  
**Total school tax rate** is a district's total tax rate as it appears on local property tax bills.  
**Instructional expenditure per pupil** includes the direct costs of teaching pupils or the interaction between teachers and pupils.  
**Operating expenditure per pupil** includes the gross operating cost of a school district excluding summer school, adult education, bond principal retired, and capital expenditures.

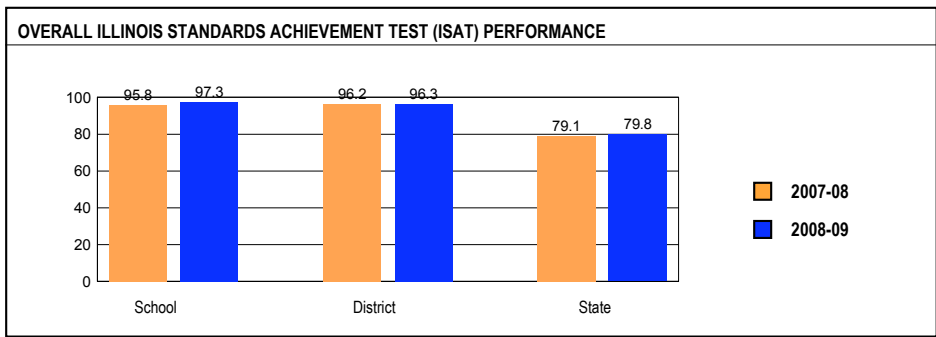
## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

### OVERALL STUDENT PERFORMANCE

These charts present the overall percentages of state test scores categorized as meeting or exceeding the Illinois Learning Standards for your school, district, and the state. They represent your school's performance in reading, mathematics, and science.

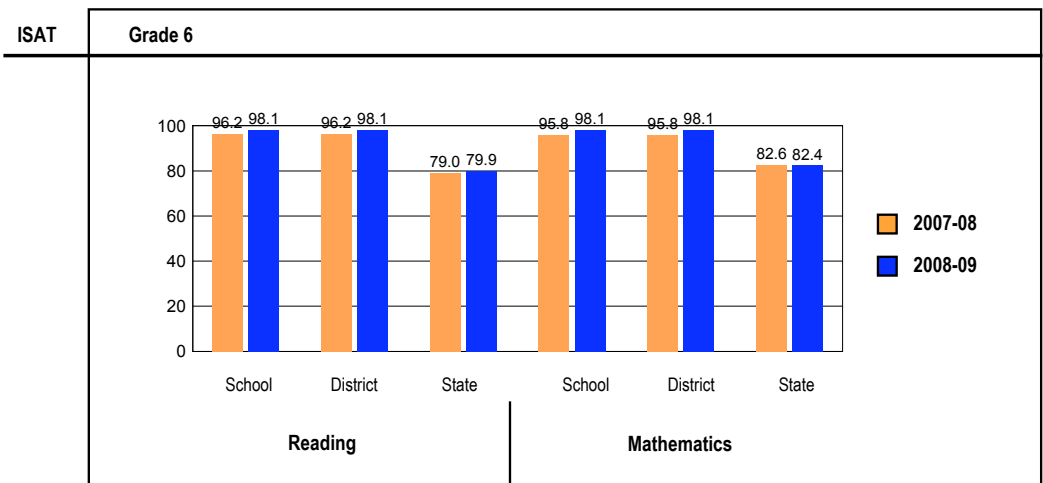
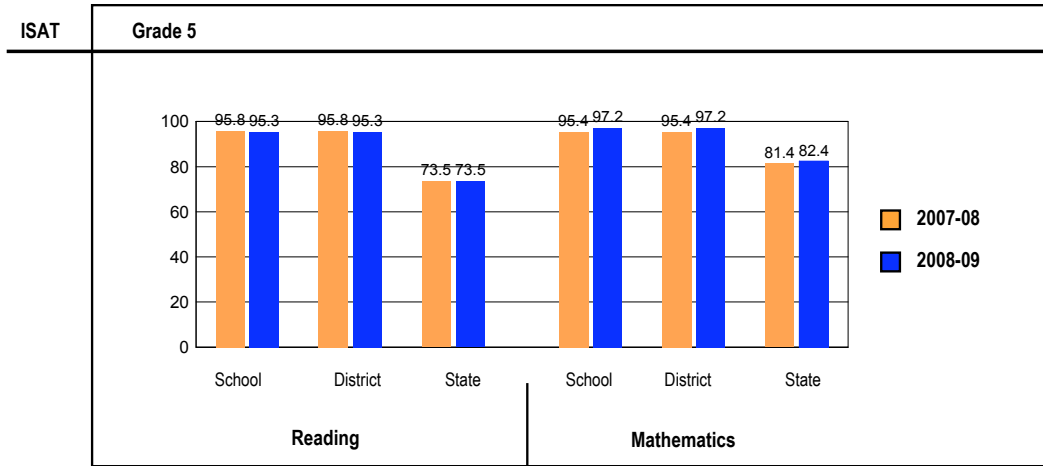
The 2007-08 school year was the first time that Limited English Proficient (LEP) students took the ISAT or PSAE (with accommodations) instead of the IMAGE test. Therefore, any comparisons with prior year's achievement levels for LEP students should be made with appropriate caution.





**ISAT PERFORMANCE**

These charts provide information on attainment of the Illinois Learning Standards. They show the percents of student scores meeting or exceeding Standards for the grades and subjects tested on ISAT.



**PERFORMANCE ON STATE ASSESSMENTS**

Federal law requires that student achievement results for reading, mathematics, and science for schools providing Title I services be reported to the general public.

The Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) is administered to students in grades 3 through 8. The Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) is administered to students in grade 11. The Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) is administered to students with disabilities whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) indicate that participation in the ISAT or PSAE would not be appropriate.

Students with disabilities have an IEP (No Child Left Behind Act). An IEP is a written plan for a child with a disability who is eligible to receive special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Reading and Mathematics are tested in grades 3 through 8 and 11. Science is tested in grades 4, 7, and 11.

In order to protect students' identities, test data for groups of fewer than ten students are not reported.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS NOT TESTED IN STATE TESTING PROGRAMS FOR READING AND MATHEMATICS														
		Gender			Racial/Ethnic Background						LEP	Migrant	Students with Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged
		All	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Native American	Multi racial /Ethnic				
School	*Enrollment	484	257	227	454	0	6	21	0	3	1	0	85	0
	Reading	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4			0.0					1.2	
	Mathematics	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4			0.0					1.2	
District	*Enrollment	1,396	727	669	1,319	2	15	44	1	15	4	0	237	0
	Reading	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2		0.0	0.0		0.0			0.8	
	Mathematics	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2		0.0	0.0		0.0			0.8	
State	*Enrollment	1,073,392	548,452	524,651	574,717	203,366	215,934	43,962	1,676	32,799	72,638	258	152,593	473,876
	Reading	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.4
	Mathematics	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.4

\* Enrollment as reported during the testing windows for grades 3 - 8 and 11.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS NOT TESTED IN STATE TESTING PROGRAMS FOR SCIENCE ONLY														
		Gender			Racial/Ethnic Background						LEP	Migrant	Students with Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged
		All	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Native American	Multi racial /Ethnic				
School	*Enrollment													
	Science													
District	*Enrollment													
	Science													
State	*Enrollment													
	Science													

\* Enrollment as reported during the testing windows for grades 4, 7, and 11.

**ILLINOIS STANDARDS ACHIEVEMENT TEST (ISAT)**

The following tables show the percentages of student scores in each of four performance levels. These levels were established with the help of Illinois educators who teach the grade levels and learning areas tested. Due to rounding, the sum of the percentages in the four performance levels may not always equal 100.

- Level 1 -- Academic Warning - Student work demonstrates limited knowledge and skills in the subject. Because of major gaps in learning, students apply knowledge and skills ineffectively.
- Level 2 -- Below Standards - Student work demonstrates basic knowledge and skills in the subject. However, because of gaps in learning, students apply knowledge and skills in limited ways.
- Level 3 -- Meets Standards - Student work demonstrates proficient knowledge and skills in the subject. Students effectively apply knowledge and skills to solve problems.
- Level 4 -- Exceeds Standards - Student work demonstrates advanced knowledge and skills in the subject. Students creatively apply knowledge and skills to solve problems and evaluate the results.

**Grade 5****Grade 5 - All**

Levels	Reading				Mathematics			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
School	0.0	4.7	30.7	64.6	0.0	2.8	65.6	31.6
District	0.0	4.7	30.7	64.6	0.0	2.8	65.6	31.6
State	0.4	26.0	47.6	25.9	0.3	17.3	66.2	16.3

**Grade 5 - Gender**

Levels	Reading				Mathematics				
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
Male	School	0.0	7.0	31.6	61.4	0.0	5.3	57.0	37.7
	District	0.0	7.0	31.6	61.4	0.0	5.3	57.0	37.7
	State	0.6	29.2	46.5	23.7	0.3	18.3	64.2	17.1
Female	School	0.0	2.0	29.6	68.4	0.0	0.0	75.5	24.5
	District	0.0	2.0	29.6	68.4	0.0	0.0	75.5	24.5
	State	0.2	22.7	48.8	28.3	0.2	16.2	68.2	15.4

**Grade 5 - Racial/Ethnic Background**

Levels	Reading				Mathematics				
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
White	School	0.0	4.5	30.0	65.5	0.0	3.0	64.5	32.5
	District	0.0	4.5	30.0	65.5	0.0	3.0	64.5	32.5
	State	0.2	15.6	48.8	35.4	0.1	9.6	67.9	22.4
Black	School								
	District								
	State	1.0	43.4	44.4	11.2	0.7	33.6	60.9	4.7
Hispanic	School								
	District								
	State	0.6	39.6	47.8	12.1	0.3	24.2	68.3	7.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	School								
	District								
	State	0.2	11.9	44.5	43.4	0.1	5.8	54.6	39.4
Native American	School								
	District								
	State	0.0	21.0	53.3	25.7	0.9	14.2	70.6	14.2
Multiracial/Ethnic	School								
	District								
	State	0.4	23.3	49.7	26.7	0.3	16.3	68.5	14.9

**Grade 5 - Students with Disabilities**

Levels	Reading				Mathematics				
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
IEP	School	0.0	21.6	45.9	32.4	0.0	13.5	78.4	8.1
	District	0.0	21.6	45.9	32.4	0.0	13.5	78.4	8.1
	State	2.3	60.1	29.9	7.7	1.4	43.7	49.9	5.0
Non-IEP	School	0.0	1.1	27.4	71.4	0.0	0.6	62.9	36.6
	District	0.0	1.1	27.4	71.4	0.0	0.6	62.9	36.6
	State	0.1	20.6	50.4	28.8	0.1	13.1	68.7	18.0

**Grade 6****Grade 6 - All**

Levels	Reading				Mathematics			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
School	0.0	1.9	31.7	66.4	0.0	1.9	41.4	56.7
District	0.0	1.9	31.7	66.4	0.0	1.9	41.4	56.7
State	0.2	19.9	52.7	27.2	0.6	17.1	58.9	23.5

**Grade 6 - Gender**

Levels	Reading				Mathematics				
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
Male	School	0.0	2.2	31.4	66.4	0.0	1.4	37.0	61.6
	District	0.0	2.2	31.4	66.4	0.0	1.4	37.0	61.6
	State	0.3	22.9	51.1	25.7	0.7	18.5	57.2	23.6
Female	School	0.0	1.6	32.0	66.4	0.0	2.4	46.4	51.2
	District	0.0	1.6	32.0	66.4	0.0	2.4	46.4	51.2
	State	0.1	16.8	54.3	28.8	0.4	15.5	60.8	23.3

**Grade 6 - Racial/Ethnic Background**

Levels	Reading				Mathematics				
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
White	School	0.0	1.6	32.4	66.0	0.0	2.0	42.0	55.9
	District	0.0	1.6	32.4	66.0	0.0	2.0	42.0	55.9
	State	0.1	11.5	51.5	36.9	0.2	9.6	58.9	31.3
Black	School								
	District								
	State	0.4	34.7	54.4	10.5	1.5	33.2	57.1	8.3
Hispanic	School								
	District								
	State	0.2	30.3	55.6	13.8	0.6	23.5	63.7	12.2
Asian/Pacific Islander	School	0.0	7.1	21.4	71.4	0.0	0.0	28.6	71.4
	District	0.0	7.1	21.4	71.4	0.0	0.0	28.6	71.4
	State	0.0	8.0	44.8	47.1	0.3	5.2	43.2	51.3
Native American	School								
	District								
	State	0.0	20.2	53.1	26.8	1.8	16.7	59.9	21.6
Multiracial/Ethnic	School								
	District								
	State	0.2	18.9	52.7	28.2	0.4	17.7	59.3	22.6

**Grade 6 - Students with Disabilities**

Levels	Reading				Mathematics				
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
IEP	School	0.0	11.9	52.4	35.7	0.0	11.9	61.9	26.2
	District	0.0	11.9	52.4	35.7	0.0	11.9	61.9	26.2
	State	1.0	55.1	37.0	6.9	2.7	46.6	44.8	5.8
Non-IEP	School	0.0	0.0	27.7	72.3	0.0	0.0	37.6	62.4
	District	0.0	0.0	27.7	72.3	0.0	0.0	37.6	62.4
	State	0.1	14.5	55.1	30.3	0.2	12.5	61.1	26.2

**2009 ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP) Status Report**

Is this school making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)?	Yes	Has this school been identified for School Improvement according to the AYP specifications of the federal No Child Left Behind Act?		No
Is this school making AYP in Reading?	Yes	2009-10 Federal Improvement Status		
Is this school making AYP in Mathematics?	Yes	2009-10 State Improvement Status		

	Percent Tested on State Tests				Percent Meeting/Exceeding Standards *						Other Indicators			
	Reading		Mathematics		Reading			Mathematics			Attendance Rate		Graduation Rate	
	%	Met AYP	%	Met AYP	%	Safe Harbor Target **	Met AYP	%	Safe Harbor Target **	Met AYP	%	Met AYP	%	Met AYP
State AYP Minimum Target	95.0		95.0		70.0			70.0			90.0		78.0	
All	99.6	Yes	99.6	Yes	96.7		Yes	97.8		Yes	94.7	Yes		
White	99.6	Yes	99.6	Yes	97.0		Yes	97.7		Yes				
Black														
Hispanic														
Asian/Pacific Islander														
Native American														
Multiracial /Ethnic														
LEP														
Students with Disabilities	98.8	Yes	98.8	Yes	83.8		Yes	88.8		Yes				
Economically Disadvantaged														

**Four Conditions Are Required For Making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP):**

1. At least 95% tested in reading and mathematics for every student group. If the current year participation rate is less than 95%, this condition may be met if the average of the current and preceding year rates is at least 95%, or if the average of the current and two preceding years is at least 95%. Only actual participation rates are printed. If the participation rate printed is less than 95% and yet this school makes AYP, it means that the 95% condition was met by averaging.
2. At least 70.0% meeting/exceeding standards in reading and mathematics for every group. For any group with less than 70.0% meeting/exceeding standards, a 95% confidence interval was applied. Subgroups may meet this condition through Safe Harbor provisions. \*\*\*
3. For schools not making AYP solely because the IEP group fails to have 70.0% meeting/exceeding standards, 14% may be added to this variable in accordance with the federal 2% flexibility provision.
4. At least 90% attendance rate for non-high schools and at least 78% graduation rate for high schools.

\* Includes only students enrolled as of 05/01/2008.

\*\* Safe Harbor Targets of 70.0% or above are not printed.

\*\*\* Subgroups with fewer than 45 students are not reported. Safe Harbor only applies to subgroups of 45 or more. In order for Safe Harbor to apply, a subgroup must decrease by 10% the percentage of scores that did not meet state standards from the previous year plus meet the other indicators (attendance rate for non-high schools and graduation rate for high schools) for the subgroup. For subgroups that do not meet their Safe Harbor Targets, a 75% confidence interval is applied. Safe Harbor allows schools an alternate method to meet subgroup minimum targets on achievement.

# **SECTION 3**

## **SUMMARY OF 2008-09 BUILDING LEVEL GOALS**

### **Skokie School Goals for 2008-09**

#### **Goal 1**

To expand our assessment scope to include more specific expectations for portfolio assessment, to expand the collection of data, and increase the consistency of student preparation for and the sharing of our portfolios with parents.

Prior to the 2008-2009 school term, portfolio assessment and reporting was inconsistent. Sixth grade continued to work toward bridging elements of Habits of Mind with grade level content and fifth grade lacked consistency in product, delivery and timeline.

Fifth grade staff met during the summer and during the school year. They developed a binder for staff use, which outlined a consistent system for developing, sharing, and evaluating student portfolios. Resources in the binder prepared for each staff member included a timeline, sample organization options, and a series of required lessons developed to facilitate student reflection, goal setting, and preparation for sharing. Staff recognized the need to explicitly teach techniques to help students evaluate their work and set appropriate goals. Student lessons were discussed during the course of the year to establish efficacy and make necessary adjustments.

Portfolio conferences were held in school in early February prior to parent conferences. Families were invited to school for the sharing, with students leading the conference. Teachers, and parents reported that the portfolio share set the stage for productive conferencing during which specific work samples were referred to during the conversations. Parents completed an exit survey after their portfolio conference. Parents were impressed with the level of work and student ability to reflect and set goals. Students were well prepared to share their growth and challenges. Portfolios were also shared at the end of the year. Teachers had a choice to conduct evening portfolio shares or send the portfolio home for a conference. We questioned which modality would best support a positive student experience. Parent responses to the conference at home and at school were equally positive. Families experiencing the portfolio share at home offered that they appreciated the extra times and comfort of home as positive factors. The depth of parent feedback on the reflection form did not vary based on the location of the conference.

Sixth grade met with the fifth grade staff toward the end of the school year to discuss and reach a collaborative decision about which samples of work from the fifth grade student portfolios would be sent to sixth grade. Teachers decided that each fifth grade student would select a writing sample that they felt reflected his or her best work. Additionally, the end of year math assessment would be included, as well as a math reflection in which each student would reflect on their fifth grade experiences in math. Sixth grade teachers agreed to review the work samples to help familiarize themselves with each student, as well as utilize the

portfolio contributions as a transition piece for students when they returned to the classrooms in the fall.

## Goal 2

To examine the language arts reading and writing continuum provided by Bonnie Campbell Hill and Laura Benson to enrich our conversations, further differentiate our curriculum, and provide strong links to our assessment goals.

Fifth and sixth grade language arts teachers spent last year becoming familiar with the reading and writing continuum that was introduced as part of the language arts curriculum review conducted by the district. We felt very strongly that not only should we be working as grade levels, but also as a building on developing our knowledge base and conducting shared conversations. Our fifth and sixth grade district committee representatives sat down together to plan staff development exercises for the building to help scaffold collective understanding. Each grade level began by reading sections of Developmental Continuums: A Framework for Literacy Instruction and Assessment K-8 by Bonnie Campbell Hill, and discussing the readings in small groups. Teachers shared the natural connections they observed with best practices teaching of reading and writing, and compiled a list of questions for investigation as we moved forward with our conversations.

One of the goals for discussion was to build a common language around reading and writing that would allow for consistent dialogue across the building for teachers as well as students. Fifth and sixth grade language arts teachers then created a list of what they typically expected a 5th and 6th grade student to be able to do as readers and writers when they arrived at the beginning of the year and what they typically were able to do at the end of the year and examined their lists in the context of the continuum being presented. The two grade levels then examined the fifth grade list of typical skill sets at the end of fifth grade and the beginning of 6th grade for patterns or disconnects. What were our students able to do independently and what still required scaffolding? How do we differentiate for this range? How do we help them pick up where they left off at the end of the year? How can the continuum be used a tool to address the unique educational growth of each child?

Once the grade levels discussed the philosophy of the continuum, examined the continuum student learning profiles, and reviewed the reading and writing criteria on the continuum, teachers suggested we collect one sample of student work from learners at three different levels to guide our next conversation involving practical use of the continuum as a group. Bridging, Fluent, Proficient, Connecting, and the Independent pillars of the writing continuums would be examined closely and reviewed using student work.

All fifth and sixth grade teachers read student case studies for the four continuum pillars in order to familiarize themselves with the qualities and characteristics of the learners represented within each section of the continuum. Teachers again discussed their connections and questions they had for future investigation. They also used the continuum to analyze the student work samples to determine which skills the student work exemplified. The teachers individually looked at the same student work samples and then collectively shared their findings. While they found the exercise purposeful as a diagnostic exercise, the continuum is

also designed to look at student growth over time. Both fifth and sixth grade teachers agreed to select the work of two to three students to create continuum case studies in order to gain practical experience in using the continuum. Fifth and sixth grade teachers will spend the 2009-2010 school year following the growth of the selected students, and will regularly articulate as a building about discoveries, questions, and possibilities they see for future implementation of the reading and writing continuum.

### **Goal 3**

To strengthen communication between staff and administration and among the staff itself as identified in the district survey as important to examine and improve. We will collect data throughout the school year by developing rubrics to assess the effectiveness of our communication systems.

The district survey that was administered at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year highlighted building communication as an area that needed to be examined more closely. The staff began the year establishing group norms that they felt were important to successful group interactions, communication, transparency, and increased accountability. The norms were created and revised by the staff, and adopted as the staff credo using a consensus model for decision-making. The School Improvement Committee agreed to meet throughout the year to monitor our communication progress by creating surveys and collecting and presenting data to the staff.

The School Improvement Committee created a survey to administer to the staff that would provide a baseline of staff perceptions based on the established norms. The idea was to gather the data, analyze the feedback, and establish goals for the school year. We would then come together at a later point in the year to survey the staff again and look at our progress over time.

While the survey pointed to general trends, it didn't offer a lot in the way of specific information. It was difficult to determine the thought process behind the responses, if the responses were sparked by specific events, or based solely on perception as opposed to experience. In looking at the summary of the data, the staff observed that the majority of the people that took the survey thought that they were adhering to the norms, and that the problem was that most other people were not.

The School Improvement Committee recognized this as an opportunity to conduct smaller focus groups with the staff in order to gather qualitative information about our progress over the course of the year, which they felt would yield more specific data in order to extrapolate on the quantitative measures we used previously. The focus groups were created to represent a cross-section of the staff as a whole so all points of view could be represented in each conversation. Facilitators worked through a series of questions and collected staff responses to be analyzed for trends. The Committee noted that staff felt communication and professionalism had improved over the course of the year, but that it was important to stay vigilant about our norms and seek to continue and sustain improvement in the 2009-2010 school year.

As a result, the School Improvement Committee expanded its membership for the 2009-2010 school year, and will continue its work this fall by looking at organizational dynamics, how dynamics influence decision making and organizational innovation.

# SECTION 4

## SUMMARY OF 2008-09 DISTRICT GOALS

District goals from the 2008-09 Plan and the major progress attained in each area are listed in this section.

In addressing the district focuses each year, it is recognized that we approach all of our work in teaching and learning with the *Winnetka: A Community of Learners* document firmly in mind. This means we:

- Apply our philosophy to all of our work regarding curriculum review, development and implementation.
- Communicate to parents and the community how our teaching is carefully guided by our philosophy.
- Strive to meet the needs of diverse learners.
- Recognize the importance of teaching to the whole child.
- Recognize the importance of preserving our district culture through our mentoring and induction program.

### Teaching and Learning

The school's primary purpose revolves around teaching and learning. In this category, the elements of learning environment, instructional strategies, learning processes, student responses, and learning technologies will be considered in relation to the school as an institution.

#### Goal 1

To expand the work of the following committees including discussions of curriculum development, professional development, assessment and differentiation.

- **Social Studies**
- **Language Arts**
- **Kinetic Wellness**

The Social Studies Committee completed its curriculum review in the summer of 2009. The work for the 2008-09 school year included finalizing the K-8 scope and sequence and completing the Major Themes template at each grade level. This template outlines the essential questions, unifying themes, context, possible performance tasks and global connections at each grade level. It also distributes questions across the five major strands of the social studies (political science, economics, history, geography, social science and culture.) In addition, teachers worked in grade level teams to design units using the "Backwards Design" model in which established goals and outcomes are outlined in detail. From these goals and outcomes, teachers design performance tasks (assessments to serve as evidence of what students

understand and know how to do) and learning plans (the activities that help students gain understanding). The completed document was posted online for teachers during the summer of 2009 and curriculum summaries were updated accordingly. In addition, the curriculum was presented to the Board at the September 2009 Board meeting.

The Language Arts Committee began its review process last year in the summer of 2008. With a focus on assessment, looking at student growth over time and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners, we asked Dr. Bonnie Campbell Hill to join us for a release day and share her reading and writing continuums. The Committee worked to understand how continuums are used to document student progress and began the process of sharing the continuums across the district. Further, Laura Benson, one of Dr. Campbell Hill's colleagues, visited the district three times throughout the year to support teachers in these efforts. Ms. Benson also helped the Committee work with all staff to create a K-8 Essential Agreement Document in which we outline what types of instructional practices reflect best practice and that we value and use across the district. In addition, Ms. Benson supported the Committee's work to research best practice in Word Study (which encompasses phonemic awareness, spelling, vocabulary, and grammar) and gradual release of responsibility (in which students take increasing ownership for their own learning).

The Kinetic Wellness Department began its curriculum review process by revisiting the Illinois State Standards and assuring the alignment of our curriculum to these standards. In addition, the Department began the process of updating the curriculum by including new units of study such as those involving mental health and nutrition. The curriculum review is scheduled to be completed by early 2010.

## **Student Learning, Progress, and Achievement**

This area addresses the instruction offered, contributes to an assessment of its effectiveness, and provides necessary information on teaching and learning, as well as the learning community. It addresses the three main categories of curriculum design and alignment, student work, and assessment systems.

### **Goal 2**

To continue to evaluate the Reporting/Conference guidelines, gather information, and make adjustments as recommended.

The Reporting and Conferencing Committee continued its review process during the 2008-09 school year. It began by surveying all parents about their reporting and conferencing experiences and preferences. The Committee then combined this data with survey data from two teacher surveys. In addition, the Committee researched the reporting and conferencing schedules and practices of surrounding districts, and read articles about reporting/conferencing best practice. With this data in mind, a new reporting and conferencing schedule was developed to be piloted in the 2009-10 school year. The new conference schedule eliminates the in-take conference in October and sets a November and March conference period. Further, the Kindergarten conference schedule is now better aligned with grades 1-8. The new schedule was shared with parents via newsletter, communication from principals,

and information contained in the summer packet. Next spring, we will gather feedback from teachers and parents on the new schedule and protocols and make any necessary adjustments.

### **Goal 3**

To continue to explore both authentic and standardized assessment practices in curricular areas in order to best meet the needs of all students.

We have continued to research standardized and authentic assessment practices. Last year, we focused our efforts on designing a Literacy Assessment Plan for the district. This Plan includes several different types of assessment (those providing national norms and local norms) and also integrates the Response to Intervention framework so that we are collecting multiple data points on each student in Literacy. The Assessment Plan is meant to serve as a baseline for assessment in that every student at a given grade level will be administered the assessments listed. Teachers supplement these assessments with other informal and formal assessments and teacher observation on an ongoing basis. All of this data is used together to make instructional decisions for students. We will be building our Math Assessment Plan during the 2009-10 school year.

## **Learning Community**

A learning community is one that is committed to continuing its own learning as well as encouraging, supporting and facilitating all of its members in its learning. Areas addressed in this section are a shared vision and mission statement, leadership and school administration, organizational structure, professional development opportunities, and supports for teachers and staff, and community participation in the school-based learning community.

### **Goal 4**

To create a plan to implement the federally-mandated initiative, Response to Intervention (RtI)

Last year, the district created a committee called the District Differentiation Committee (DDC). The DDC was comprised of a teacher representative from each building who also served as a member of their building RtI team and an administrator from each building. The DDC was chaired by our District Differentiation and Assessment Coordinator (a Teacher on Special Assignment position). In addition, a representative from NSSED (Northern Suburban Special Education District) served as a consultant to the DDC and its related work throughout the year. The first goal of the DDC was to create and submit an RtI Plan to the State by January 1, 2009. In addition, the DDC helped support buildings as each began related staff development. Further, the group began the process of discussing how to best educate parents about RtI. An article was written by the Differentiation and Assessment Coordinator and placed in all school newsletters. In addition, the Coordinator met with several district PTOs to begin discussions and an evening WPI (Winnetka Parents Institute) session was held in the spring. A podcast of this presentation is available on our website. Further, the DDC shared building initiatives with each other and generated a list of goals to guide our future work at both the building and district levels.

# SECTION 5

## ACTION PLANS FOR 2009-10

### Skokie School Goals for 2009-10

#### Goal Setting Process

Our goal setting process was initiated by listening to the questions, thoughts, and concerns of faculty and staff members, as well as parents and community members. After discussions with the various groups and committees that are integral to the life of The Skokie School, repeated themes were translated into goals.

Goal one emerged from regular conversations among the faculty regarding how we can best support learning for all of our students. We desire to know each student as an individual and to design learning experiences that take each learner forward on his or her journey. The second goal reflects our desire to expand our assessment practices in order to support further curricular innovations. It operates in tandem with our goal of supporting individual needs of learners. Goal three is intended to support the strategic planning process of the district by developing a process to explore and implement the district action plan.

We have begun to discuss plans for meeting our goals. We will continue to meet as a staff and as committees throughout the year to continue to implement these goals and to gauge our progress in each of these areas. We realize that goals of this magnitude will continue to be ongoing benchmarks through the years, but we endeavor to make progress toward them by keeping them central in our conversations during the current school year.

- Goal 1** To expand our portfolio assessment process to sixth grade by creating a consistent process for data collection, student goal setting and reflection, and portfolio presentation to parents.
- Goal 2** To create student case studies in order to assess student growth in the areas of reading and writing using the developmental continuum criteria. Student data will be used to benchmark progress, track growth, and set academic goals for future growth.
- Goal 3** To respond to the district strategic planning process by reviewing survey data, collecting more information as needed, and developing action plans, including specific ways to assess our progress toward the district goals as defined by the Strategic Development Team.

## **District-Wide Goals for the 2009-10 School Year**

The following district-wide goals were developed with input from the *Winnetka: A Community of Learners* document and the work of the Curriculum Council throughout the 2007-08 school year. Some of these are continuations of goals set in previous years and others are new initiatives.

In addressing the district focuses each year, it is recognized that we approach all of our work in teaching and learning with the *Winnetka: A Community of Learners* document firmly in mind. This means we:

- apply our philosophy to all of our work regarding curriculum review, development, and implementation.
- communicate to parents and the community how our teaching is carefully guided by our philosophy.
- strive to meet the needs of diverse learners.
- recognize the importance of teaching to the whole child.
- recognize the importance of preserving our district culture through our mentoring and induction program.
- engage in professional articulation across the district as it pertains to curriculum, the use of technology, and developmental practice.

## **Primary Focuses for 2009-10**

1. To build on the work of the Language Arts Committee from 2008-09 including the integrated discussions of professional development, assessment, continuum work and differentiation.
2. To effectively differentiate instruction for all students.