

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12MN4

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2011-2012 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

12MN4

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 9 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 (per district designation): 2 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
12 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 10723

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	
PreK	6	6	12			6	13	10	23
K	9	12	21			7	0	0	0
1	13	10	23			8	0	0	0
2	7	13	20			9	0	0	0
3	11	2	13			10	0	0	0
4	14	10	24			11	0	0	0
5	10	9	19			12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:									155

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
1 % Black or African American
1 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
94 % White
0 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2010-2011 school year: 1%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	2
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	0
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	2
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	155
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.01
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	1

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 0%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 0

Number of non-English languages represented: 0

Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13%

Total number of students who qualify: 20

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 15%

Total number of students served: 23

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>1</u> Autism	<u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>3</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>8</u>	<u>13</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	<u>0</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>0%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0%</u>
Found employment	<u>0%</u>
Military service	<u>0%</u>
Other	<u>0%</u>
Total	<u>0%</u>

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

No

Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

PART III - SUMMARY

12MN4

Nestled in the countryside of Hugo you will find Withrow Elementary, a school which serves 155 students in preschool through grade six. Withrow Elementary is one of nine elementary schools included in the Stillwater Area Public Schools District, and it is one of two elementary schools in the district that has been a STEM pilot school for the past four years.

Our mission is to have a school where high achievement for all learners is expected, positive relationships are developed, and opportunities for choice are provided.

In a survey, students indicated they felt safe and welcome at Withrow Elementary. They view their teachers as being supportive and fun. One student remarked that “teachers give a lot of homework but it pays off.” Parents believe Withrow is the “best kept secret in the district”. They describe Withrow as a “small school that delivers big”.

Teachers at Withrow exemplify hardworking, caring educators who are dedicated to students growing and succeeding. Over 85% of Withrow teachers have ten or more years of teaching experience, and all of classroom teachers and specialists have a Master’s Degree. This collective expertise has resulted in teachers working collaboratively on best instructional practices, examining student data and providing curriculum based upon student needs as well as district and state standards.

There are wonderful traditions at Withrow Elementary, which parents and students look forward to each year. One is the annual school carnival held in the spring. Students and parents look forward to attending this event, which draws the community together. It’s a chance to showcase our school to the public as well as enjoy activities together. Another tradition involves pairing kindergarten students with sixth-grade reading buddies for the year. The students look forward to spending lunch and recess together on a regular basis, as well as enjoying other “buddy events” throughout the year. Other traditions include monthly all-school sing-alongs as well as our annual Science Fair Exhibition.

Many wonderful opportunities for students exist because of partnerships with others in the community. The parent organization works closely with the staff to fund projects that correlate directly with our school improvement plan. Parents hold an annual fund raiser, with all proceeds going directly to purchasing additional books for our school library, and parents volunteer weekly to help in the media center. Local families take turns maintaining the ice rink on the school grounds. The Lions Club provides dictionaries for every third grader to have at home. Students also receive six art lessons each year from a local professional artist, through an artist in residency program., funded through the support of our parents.

One word that describes the interpersonal relationships among people involved in the Withrow School is teamwork. Community members strongly support the work of students and educators at Withrow. Parents send their children to school with high expectations for learning, and both the students and the teachers meet those expectations.

1. Assessment Results:

All Minnesota public elementary schools must participate in the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA). These assessments meet the requirements of the Federal No Child Left Behind Act and are used to evaluate district, school, and individual student progress on the state high standards in mathematics and reading. Last year, the math and reading tests were administered to all students in grades 3 through 6. There is also a science test in grade 5.

Students receive a scale score which places them in one of four categories: “Does Not Meet the Standards”; “Partially Meets the Standards”; “Meets the Standards”; or “Exceeds the Standards.” A student must achieve a level of ‘Meets’ or ‘Exceeds’ in order to be considered proficient on the state standards. Each year, cut scores are raised, as schools are expected to work towards 100% proficiency of all students across areas by 2014.

The math test is an online test, and it consists of multiple choice and open-response items in the strands of number and operation, algebra, geometry and measurement, and data analysis.

The reading test consists of multiple choice and open-response items in the strands of vocabulary expansion, comprehension, and literature.

Withrow Elementary is a school with high-achieving students! Although we have experienced gains in both math and reading during the past five years, the most impressive student gains are in the area of mathematics. The number of students who met or exceeded the state standards went from a low of 81% in 2007 to a high of 96% in 2011. Our trend data shows that the percentage of students who met or exceeded the state standards consistently rose each year, with the exception of 2009: 81%, 92%, 89%, 94%, and 96%.

In reading, the spring 2011 assessments results were our highest in over five years, with 94% of students meeting or exceeding the state standards. It’s also interesting to note that our highest gains in this area occurred between 2010 and 2011, as the percentage of students who met or exceeded the state standards increased from 85% to 94% in reading.

There is no subgroup information because there are not sufficient numbers to be statistically significant. Further information regarding the Minnesota Comprehension Assessments can be found at <http://www.education.state.mn.us/mde/index.html>

Each year when the state assessment results are released, we examine the data to inform our instructional practices and use it to develop building improvement goals. At the beginning of the year, each teacher creates a math SMART goal and a reading SMART goal after reviewing the state testing results, and teachers meet 1:1 with the building principal two times during the course of the year to review student progress. Higher student achievement is the goal.

2. Using Assessment Results:

What do we know? How does that link to what we are doing? Are we getting the results we want?

Assessment data drives the decisions we make regarding these three questions. All teachers at Withrow review a variety of student data at the beginning of each school year. The data provides a school-wide view of student behavior, attendance, academic performance and social dynamics. It also includes specific grade-level data as well as individual student data. One key component of the data is the MCA test

results. Teachers who have already worked with the students talk to the new teachers. Individual growth targets and grade level targets drive the discussion about instructional materials and programs the teachers will use. All of this data provides us with answers to the question regarding “what do we know?”

The next step is to reflect upon our school improvement plans and make changes or additions that may be needed. The Building Staff Development team and principal meet prior to the start of the school year to adjust and finalize recommendations. This information is shared at a staff meeting with all the teachers, so that everyone is aware of the building goals for the upcoming school year.

The stage is now set for the Withrow teachers to consistently analyze what they do and inform their instruction accordingly. Beginning in the fall, teachers meet weekly in their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), teaming with other classroom teachers, special education teachers, Read With Me teachers, and Math With Me teachers. These conversations allow them to continue to build upon their own skills as an educator, while constantly reviewing the progress that each student in their class is making. Additional meetings take place throughout the year. Data from pre-tests, unit tests, fluency tests, phonological assessments and word study evaluations are discussed. Not only does this data help the current teacher determine pacing and type of instruction, it also helps future teachers prioritize what concepts need further emphasis.

As a school, we have increased the amount of instructional time for reading and math. After reviewing specific grade-level standards, we have increased teaching emphasis for specific concepts in reading, writing and math. There is greater communication regarding teaching materials and concepts between the special education teacher and the classroom teachers. Additional materials and programs have been added.

Since the results of the first MCA tests in 1998, educators in the district have designed an aligned K-12 curriculum in which the state standards are embedded across content areas. At Withrow, there is a colloquial focus on student data. Teachers regularly discuss instructional challenges and their solutions. As a result, teaching has improved and student achievement has improved.

COMMUNICATING STUDENT PERFORMANCE & ASSESSMENT DATA TO THE PUBLIC

Sharing information and empowering students and parents to share ownership in our goals is key to our success with student learning. At the first parent meeting in the fall, the principal shares a summary of all the school data which was presented to staff members in August. School improvement plans are also discussed. The parent organization uses this information to guide decisions regarding funding activities throughout the year.

When the teachers have their conferences with parents and students in November, they review a variety of assessment data. Examples include test results from a leveled achievement test and the MCA test. In addition, a phonological/phonics assessment is reviewed with parents who have students in kindergarten through second grade. Academic goals for individual students are set. Other goals may include attendance, behavior or study skills. Throughout the year teachers meet with students about their progress. Report cards are sent to parents three times a year. The bi-monthly school newsletter and the school website are other vehicles for sharing school assessment data. Some parents will be asked to attend a spring conference to discuss their child's progress and ideas for maintaining learning over the summer.

The district assessment director shares district student assessment data with school board members. Local cable TV, newspapers, a district newsletter twice a year and the website are all vehicles used for communicating this information to community members. The school website has a link to information from the Minnesota Department of Education if citizens wish to access more information regarding MCA results. The superintendent also writes a column for the district newsletter that often features a variety of information regarding student achievement.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

It is imperative that all teachers in the district belong to a professional learning community that recognizes and capitalizes on the skills of all the teachers. Last year, Withrow teachers collaborated with teachers from three neighboring “sister schools.” They met six times during the course of the school year, on late start days. This year, Withrow teachers are working together in vertical teams, since we have only one section of each grade level. There is a K-3 team and a grade 4-6 team. Three times during the year, the facilitator from each PLC team will meet with the principal and a PLC coach to guide staff through this new initiative.

While each grade level examines their own classroom assessment data during their PLC work, rich discussions take place regarding materials and teaching strategies that are being used to meet student needs. Common grade level math assessments are used by classroom teachers and incorporated into the discussion. Teachers discuss ways to maximize the math program, offering ideas for both remedial and enrichment activities, as well as review the new Language Arts State Standards that will soon be implemented. The entire continuum of skills needs to be taken into account, since teachers are teaming vertically. Often tasks are divided so the process of creating new materials is more efficient for all. Information is shared via ‘google docs’ with fellow colleagues, and at the end of the year, teachers will share their ideas, successes, and challenges of teaming vertically in their PLCs.

Teachers have also shared their expertise with colleagues on district professional development days. One example is the ‘Navigating the Digital Landscape Day’, where staff from across the district serve as the presenters at the various break-out sessions that are offered. One of our Withrow teachers spoke on the topic of using data and formative assessments to help students succeed.

Throughout the year, the principals also discuss student performance and share information with each other about programs in their schools that have led to increased student achievement. The district math and reading coordinators work with principals and teachers who wish to change or add instructional components to meet the needs of students. The two coordinators are resource people who share ideas they have heard from other schools. Collegial interdependence is a key component for all educators growing and making changes that will benefit students. Sharing and listening are two components that are part of daily life at Withrow Elementary.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

The small size of Withrow Elementary enables our school to work cooperatively with families for the success of students. Our parent organization works closely with the staff to help support initiatives that provide valuable learning experiences for our students. One example of this is through school-wide service learning projects. This year our school chose to ‘adopt’ a platoon of service men and women through the ‘Adopt a Platoon’ (AAP) program. Students, staff, and families are taking part in this campaign which included a kick-off assembly, collecting supplies for care packages, and creating letters and drawings to be sent with the packages throughout the year. Each grade level had a different list of items they were to provide for the care packages, and parents are assisting in gathering these items as well as preparing the packages for mailing.

Another example of making a community connection takes place each year, usually around the holidays, when our fifth and sixth-grade choir travels to a local senior care facility to share their musical talents with the residents. This year, they enjoyed performing several ‘jazz tunes’ from this year’s fall musical. This outreach is always very much appreciated.

We want to build positive relationships with our families and communities throughout the year. To this end, each grade level hosts a special ‘parent information night’ in September, to share an overview of the year ahead and what students and parents can expect. It’s a valuable time to continue building positive rapport with parents and students. Teachers also take turns attending monthly PTA meetings, often sharing and presenting important information that will help parents better understand their child’s school experience as well as make informed decisions towards the funding of important items, such as technology.

1. Curriculum:

The foundation of the curriculum at Withrow Elementary is based on Minnesota state standards and district outcomes. There is a direct link between what we teach and what we test. While each grade level has designated curricula in all content areas, teachers monitor and adjust to accommodate the needs of individual students. Volunteers, specialists and resource people work along side of the classroom teacher to offer remedial and enrichment opportunities.

The reading program incorporates the five areas of reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel Report--phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Students read and discuss quality literature while learning the skills. Our goal is for students to be confident, motivated and successful readers.

Writing, spelling and grammar are also interwoven in the reading program. Beginning in kindergarten, students write in a variety of forms and for a variety of audiences. Teachers help students develop writing skills for narrative, descriptive, expository and persuasive writing. The spelling program incorporates word study and high frequency words. Students are held accountable for spelling these words correctly in their daily writing. We want students to apply writing, grammar and spelling skills in written and spoken communication.

Another goal is that students demonstrate accuracy and efficiency in computing numbers and problem solving. Our primary students spend a great deal of time learning mathematical foundations by manipulating objects and solving problems related to their world. Math skills in the older grades build upon that foundation. Traditional algorithms as well as using different strategies to solve problems are two components of the math program. A student's rapid recall of the basic facts is monitored and evaluated from grade three to grade six.

The social studies state standards include four key components: History (including U.S., Minnesota, and World History), Geography, Economics, and Government & Citizenship. Responsible citizenship and acceptance of differences are two themes woven throughout the seven years of curriculum. Often teachers will link an area of study in social studies to a novel in reading class. Frequently students will explore specific concepts more in depth as individuals or small groups and then report their findings to the class. Current events are discussed on a regular basis.

Hands-on learning with an inquiry base describes the FOSS science program. All grade levels explore physical, life and earth science concepts. The new State Science standards also incorporate a 'human interaction' component in each area, where students learn the way in which human beings have an impact on their environment. Students predict, experiment, record findings and solve problems. The learning takes place in small cooperative groups. Often each member of the group has an assigned task. It is an environment where students can follow their curiosity and build a knowledge base focused on meaningful concepts. The study of science concepts is linked with non-fiction reading and writing.

There are always opportunities in music class to sing, dance and play instruments. Students are introduced to a variety of music and learn listening skills so they are able to discuss the work with others. Performing for an audience is another part of the music program. Each grade level holds a concert for parents and performs in front of the student body. This year, our school secured a grant which afforded all K-6 students the opportunity to work with the Minnesota Opera during a five-day artist in residency. Parents attended the final concert at the end of that week and were awed that their children were singing Italian opera!

The physical education program emphasizes fitness and team building and is taught by a specialist twice each week. Classroom teachers facilitate the physical education instruction on the opposite days, and many also incorporate ‘movement breaks’ during the day for students. This correlates with information about brain research that short bits of exercise to raise the heart rate are beneficial to learning.

Technology supports instruction in all curricular areas. During the past three years, and through the collective efforts of our parents and staff, Withrow Elementary now has interactive white boards in all of classrooms, and teachers use this equipment to conduct lessons that are highly engaging for students. In addition, we also have a total of 64 student responders available for teachers to use, as well as portable lap top computers and 10 iPads. This technology allows teachers to gain immediate feedback on students’ understanding of a given skill and inform their instruction accordingly.

2. Reading/English:

Withrow participates in the district’s reading program, which was chosen because it is a research-based, developmental reading program for kindergarten through sixth grade, focusing on the components recommended by the National Reading Panel—Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. It consists of high-quality children’s literature and informational texts; promotes the systematic teaching of skills and strategies; and provides diagnostic tools, instructional support, and intervention strategies. The program is linked to state and national standards and to language arts lessons that help students develop writing forms; grammar, usage, and mechanics skills; and spelling generalizations.

Learning experiences within the reading program include read aloud, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading. Teachers read books aloud to children on a daily basis. This is a wonderful way to model fluency and expression. They also make sure they read a variety of genres. In guided reading, small groups of students receive direct instruction in their specific reading needs. Fluency, reading strategies and skills are all addressed in these small groups. There is a balance between fiction and non-fiction texts. Struggling readers also receive intervention help from the “Read with Me” teacher and the special education teacher.

A critical factor in the success of the reading program is continuing staff development. Teachers participate in district workshops, school and grade-level meetings. We have also successfully incorporated in-class observations provided by literacy coaches in the past.

Reading expectations for students go beyond the school day. All students are expected to read at home. Parents are asked to monitor this request. Parents also model the importance of reading by volunteering to run our Read Naturally lab and by volunteering in the media center.

More time is spent on teaching language arts/reading than any other subject at Withrow Elementary, as we have increased instructional minutes in this area. Teaching a child to be a good reader is a skill that lasts a lifetime.

3. Mathematics:

District-wide, K-6 teachers use consistent common grade-level assessments for math. Many teachers also use pre-tests to gain more information about what their students already know and what they need. Two years ago, our district adopted a new math curriculum which better aligns with the updated state standards. Although our elementary building is configured as a K-6 school, we incorporated Math Expressions curriculum for K-5 students and Holt curriculum for grade 6 students. Since the Holt curriculum is used in all secondary schools in our district, introducing it at the sixth-grade level allows these students to have the individualized attention and support they need to understand the rigorous content.

Foundational math skills are taught starting in Kindergarten, and each grade progressively builds upon these skills. Students in grades 1-5 learn skills which are divided into three major areas: Number and Operation, Algebra, and Geometry and Measurement. Beginning in grade 3, students also learn how to apply and interpret data, in a variety of forms. The sixth-grade math curriculum focuses on geometry, statistics/data analysis, probability, graphing, and the application of fractions. The Holt curriculum provides on-line tutorials so that students and parents can preview and review any content they wish. In addition, staff, students, and parents have access to on-line support tools for Math Expressions as well.

Another computer software program allows students to work on math problems in a continuous progress model. Teachers monitor each child's progress and reinforce concepts when needed. Some students receive additional math instruction because the assessment results indicate they are ready for higher level concepts.

This year, the fifth-grade teacher at Withrow is also one of six grade 5 teachers, district-wide, who is participating in a 'flipped math' pilot. Through this model, students preview the new math content at home ahead of time, by viewing a tutorial created by a teacher in the district. The next day, the classroom teacher serves as a facilitator – rather than delivering the content through a more traditional model- to ensure the student understands the material. One-to-one coaching takes place between the teacher and student, and the student progresses at a more rapid level, appropriate to their individual level.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The science curriculum at Withrow is a hands-on, inquiry-based program using FOSS kits. In addition, Withrow has been one of two STEM pilot schools in the district. Lego kits are used at every grade level, beginning with simple machines in Kindergarten, culminating with programming robotics in grade 6. This is a great engineering component. Through a 3M grant, we have also included an "Engineering is Elementary" (EiE) in grade 6 and will implement EiE units in all K-6 grades over the course of the next two years. The EiE units utilize open-ended engineering problems that students solve as a team and incorporate the higher-order thinking skills we want all students to acquire.

Withrow has a partnership with a local nature center. Teachers have worked with naturalists to create field trip experiences that correlate directly with district curriculum. A naturalist visits the classroom prior to - or following - each field trip to teach and review the science experiences students encounter at the nature center. The naturalist visits are funded through the support of parents.

This year, our fifth and sixth graders are also participating in a special program funded through the Minnesota State Arts Board, entitled 'Read, Explore, Create.' Students will be reading a book featuring children's poems and works of art chosen as award-winning pieces and will then work with an artist-in-residence to create a garden sculpture of an animal native to the Midwest. As they work, students will discuss what elements are needed to keep different organisms alive, integrate concepts of life science, physical science, measurement, and weight and balance. Students' work will culminate in a public display of their garden creature, along with a poem they've written about their creation. This inter-disciplinary experience allows students to build connections with classroom curricula, and explore global history and cultural diversity.

All aspects of the science program at Withrow are focused on students demonstrating an understanding, interest and appreciation of the world in which they live. We want students to realize the impact of being good stewards of their environment.

5. Instructional Methods:

The criteria to determine instructional methods are directly related to the learning needs of the students. Decisions about instructional methods become "situational" and flexible. There is large group instruction in all of the content areas to introduce new curriculum. However, the key to meeting individual student

needs lies in small and flexible instruction groups. Grade-level curriculum and individual student assessment drives the content of the instruction and the delivery of the instruction.

Students are taught reading in large and small groups in the classroom. Teachers know the reading levels of each child from the achievement leveled test and select appropriate reading materials for different groups of students. Often children are working and learning cooperatively in pairs or groups. Centers allow students to be working independent of the teacher in a focused and structured environment. A special program called Read With Me enables an additional teacher to work with the classroom teacher with students who are struggling in the early grades with reading. We have also offered a reading class before school twice a week as another intervention for increasing student performance in reading. The special education teacher coordinates her schedule with the classroom teachers so reading goals on Individual Education Plans can be implemented in conjunction with the classroom reading time. Another successful strategy is having the special education teacher "front loading" the curriculum so the child works with the concepts a week prior to actually having it presented by the classroom teacher. As a result, the children feel much more confident about participating in the regular classroom. In all of these programs, the specialists discuss student needs with the classroom teacher and then present the curriculum in different ways, using different materials.

Consistency in instructional methods across all grade levels is another part of the teaching methods at Withrow. All the teachers use a consistent comprehension strategy and writing strategy in grades kindergarten through sixth grade. This approach results in students knowing the terminology and expectations from one grade level to the next.

Math instruction is large group, with several individualized components that help teachers monitor each student's progress. As of this year, we have consistent common grade-level assessments for math, and teachers use pre-tests to gain more information about what the children already know and what they need. A computer software program allows students to work on math problems in a continuous progress model. Teachers monitor each child's progress and reinforce concepts when needed. Some students receive additional math instruction because the assessment results indicate they are ready for higher level concepts.

Whatever the curriculum area, teachers design lessons where there are opportunities for students to problem solve and apply learning to real-life situations. Graphing, recording data, and making change are some examples of this.

In addition, resource people provide unique instructional methods. The naturalists who team-teach with the classroom teachers often use demonstrations as an instructional method. The professional artist, who is funded by the parent group, works with students throughout the year to help them apply the elements of art to make unique projects of their own.

Technology is integrated throughout the curriculum. At Withrow, we have wireless Internet access and interactive white boards. Teachers and students have access to computer labs, laptops, iPads, student response systems and other technologies. There are several web-based systems that are used both at home and at school, which allow students to be working at their appropriate level. This is also a good way to extend learning opportunities beyond the regular school day.

6. Professional Development:

Professional development at Withrow occurs at both the school level and the district level and involves much more than learning something new. The goal for educators is to affect growth in others. Taking in new knowledge is one thing, but applying that knowledge by taking direct action that guides growth in others is where real progress is made.

A new form of professional development that is taking place at Withrow Elementary this year is entitled 'flipped professional development.' Each teacher works one-on-one with the district's technology integration specialists six times during the year, for 90 minutes each. Prior to the session, the teacher communicates the specific goal they have in mind for the training session from one of four strands created by the technology specialists: Collaboration (google and moodle applications); Communication (websites, teleconferencing, skype); Creative Media (iMovie, iDVD, etc.); and Presentation (showcasing projects through various media). The integration specialist then creates a content module (instructional movie) for the teacher to view beforehand that aligns to the goal. During the training session, professional coaching is provided by the technology specialists, as they assist each teacher in developing projects to implement with students and parents. One example of a third-grade project developed this year includes having students use google docs and work collaboratively in small groups to write one story. To finish this project, the teacher coached her students in the editing process, capturing their illustrations with a digital camera and image editing software, assembling their stories and illustrations, adding them to the iTunes book collection, and syncing it to an iPad. This project fulfilled several skills within the required state standards for language arts as well as media, and is just one example of how technology can be incorporated throughout all disciplines and grade levels.

There is a direct link between our school improvement goals and our professional development goals. We begin with student data as we start planning staff development activities. Ultimately we evaluate the success of those activities based on changes in student achievement.

MCA test data indicates that only 74% of the third graders scored at or above proficiency level in 2009 in the area of reading. Different test data indicated that in some of the grade levels students were not meeting their growth targets in reading. As a result, our main focus of professional development was reviewing best practices for reading instruction and informing teaching practices based upon this. Teachers meet to review the state standards by scrutinizing specific skills which are being assessed on the MCA's. Teachers are using the materials, assessments and additional programs to better meet the needs of students. For example, our media specialist is assisting all classroom teachers to make sure there are ample materials for them to use to address the higher lexile reading levels expected at each grade level, as well as helping students gain skills in the area of successfully comprehending non-fiction and informational text. Two years ago we increased the amount of instructional time devoted to math and reading across all grade levels.

Our district-wide reading program includes leveled books and specific ideas for teachers to manage small group instruction. Recently, all elementary teachers participated in training in reading. A key component to this training was working with the principal and a consultant/coach. Teachers received feedback as they implemented new teaching strategies. Research has proven that this model will help to sustain the new practices. Providing opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively in PLCs, outside of the regular student contact day, is another professional development activity which occurs on a school level and a district level.

The third grade MCA reading scores have increased. Last year, 88% of the third graders scored at/above the proficiency level.

In math, we have looked at specific skills which are part of the state standards and made sure we are teaching and assessing them in a sequential and consistent manner.

According to Ernest Boyer, "When you talk about school improvement you're talking about people improvement". At Withrow, teachers are eager to enhance their teaching skills because they know it will make a difference in the lives of students.

7. School Leadership:

Withrow Elementary has a part-time principal who is shared with another building. This model requires that the Withrow teachers take a greater leadership role in the daily happenings that occur within the building. The most important component that makes this work is the fact that we have skilled educators with the necessary skill sets, and the willingness to work together. The principal sets a positive, welcoming tone in each building and is approachable and accessible to staff, even when not physically present in the building. She also connects with students in a variety of ways, including having upper elementary students assist with the daily morning announcements, being a guest reader in classrooms during 'I Love to Read Month', and providing an annual donation to the school's silent auction fund raiser for a student to be 'Principal for a Day'.

Academic achievement and relationships are at the forefront of everything we do at Withrow Elementary. The principal leads by example, building strong relationships with staff, students, and parents, supporting them as needed, and encouraging them to use their individual strengths for the good of the entire school. Some examples of the opportunities that have been made possible through our collaborative efforts include a Youth Frontiers Kindness Retreat, service learning initiatives, recycling projects, and the purchase of iPads and other technology, which offer additional ways for students and staff to continue to learn in unique ways.

A strong administrator gathers information and solicits ideas on how to improve the school. Our staff development team meets prior to the start of the school year to review data and develop new building-level goals for staff and students. These goals are aligned to the district's goals and 'Vision 2014.' We also use Response to Intervention as a way to collect and analyze data and monitor the progress of all students, building-wide.

The principal has also been a strong role model by seeking out professional development experiences. One example of this occurred when the principal joined several teachers in a five-day Responsive Classroom training during the summer. This training directly aligned to the school climate goal we were planning for the following year, and the principal wanted to experience this training first-hand so she could have a thorough understanding of what students would be learning. It also helped in knowing what components were most important to emphasize to parents, as well as provide more well-rounded feedback to teachers during drop-in visits and when completing appraisals.

Our school continually strives to become better each year. We will continue to develop our staff professionally and look for ways to incorporate engaging learning activities for our students, aligned to our district's Vision 2014 strategic roadmap.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 3 Test: Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment
Edition/Publication Year: N/A Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	96	90	96	96	94
Exceeds Proficiency	50	74	48	52	39
Number of students tested	24	19	25	25	33
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12MN4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 3 Test: Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment
Edition/Publication Year: N/A Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	88	74	92	96	94
Exceeds Proficiency	67	53	68	68	64
Number of students tested	24	19	25	25	33
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12MN4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 4 Test: Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment
Edition/Publication Year: N/A Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	100	100	91	84	86
Exceeds Proficiency	74	68	44	41	67
Number of students tested	19	22	23	36	21
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 4 Test: Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment
Edition/Publication Year: N/A Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	95	90	83	84	86
Exceeds Proficiency	58	71	52	65	62
Number of students tested	19	21	23	37	21
Percent of total students tested	100	95	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 5 Test: Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment
Edition/Publication Year: N/A Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	100	95	89	100	77
Exceeds Proficiency	55	85	64	55	41
Number of students tested	22	20	36	22	22
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 5 Test: Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment
Edition/Publication Year: N/A Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	100	95	78	91	86
Exceeds Proficiency	74	50	39	55	50
Number of students tested	22	20	36	22	22
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 6 Test: Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment
Edition/Publication Year: N/A Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	88	90	81	86	65
Exceeds Proficiency	19	47	19	41	35
Number of students tested	16	30	22	22	23
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	95	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: 6 Test: Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment
Edition/Publication Year: N/A Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	94	80	91	91	83
Exceeds Proficiency	44	53	64	64	39
Number of students tested	16	30	22	22	23
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	95	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency					
Exceeds Proficiency					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	96	93	89	90	81
Exceeds Proficiency	50	66	46	46	44
Number of students tested	81	91	106	105	99
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
NOTES:					

12MN4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	94	84	85	89	87
Exceeds Proficiency	62	56	53	63	54
Number of students tested	81	90	106	106	99
Percent of total students tested	100	98	100	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
2. African American Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
Meets/Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Proficiency	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
NOTES:					

12MN4