

Spencer Loomis
School Improvement Plan
2004-05

School Improvement Plan
Cover Sheet
School and District Information

1. REGION-COUNTY-DISTRICT-TYPE CODE: Lake County
2. DISTRICT NAME / NUMBER: LAKE ZURICH UNIT DISTRICT #95
3. SCHOOL NAME: SPENCER LOOMIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
4. SCHOOL ADDRESS: 1 HUBBARD LN.
HAWTHORN WOODS, IL 60047
5. GRADE LEVELS OF THE SCHOOL: K-5
6. YEARS COVERED BY THE PLAN: 2004-07
7. CONTACT PERSON: GRANT SEAHOLM - PRINCIPAL
8. PHONE NUMBER: (847) 719-3300
9. EMAIL ADDRESS: GRANT.SEAHOLM@LZ95.ORG
10. Title I Non-Title I X
11. COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM: x No Yes Model _____
CSR Implementation: Year 1 Year 2 Year 3
12. CURRENT SCHOOL STATUS: (Check one box.)

Year	Non-Title		Title I	
1		Academic Early Warning		Choice
2		Academic Early Warning		Choice/Supplemental Educational Services
3		Academic Watch		Corrective Action
4		Restructuring Plan		Restructuring
5		Restructuring Implementation		

Performance Targets

AYP INFORMATION FROM THE SCHOOL REPORT CARD

As a “first year” school in 2003-04, we did not have the data to create a School Report Card. As of September 29, 2004, we are still missing some important data required to create our school report card for 2004-05. However, based on preliminary AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) data, Spencer Loomis School had 100% participation on the percent of students tested on the spring 2004 ISAT data.

Regarding the AYP performance target of 40% and the 2004 ISAT scores, Spencer Loomis School had 81.7% of our 3rd grade students “meet and/or exceed” in the area of reading. We had 92.8% of our 3rd grade students “meet and/or exceed” in the area of math. We also had 80.7% of our 3rd grade students “meet and/or exceed” in the area of writing. In 5th grade we had 70.2% of our students “meet and/or exceed” in the area of reading. In 5th grade math we had 84.2% of our students “meet and/or exceed” state standards. The 5th grade writing, the Spencer Loomis students had 75.4% “meet and/or exceed” state standards. These figures far exceed the AYP performance target. We did not have enough students in any subgroup to be considered as a subgroup. In the AYP area of student attendance rate, our attendance rate for 2003-04 was approximately 95% compared with the state’s AYP standard of 89%.

Based on the 2004 ISAT data, we have set our own performance targets in the areas of 3rd and 5th grade reading and math. Our performance targets are listed below:

3 rd grade Reading	2004 ISAT score	81.7%	Performance Target	85%
3 rd grade Math	2004 ISAT score	92.8%	Performance Target	95%
3 rd grade Writing	2004 ISAT score	80.7%	Performance Target	85%
5 th grade Reading	2004 ISAT score	70.2%	Performance Target	75%
5 th grade Math	2004 ISAT score	84.2%	Performance Target	90%
5 th grade Writing	2004 ISAT score	75.4%	Performance Target	80%

The primary emphasis at the state level is in the areas of reading and math since they have eliminated the writing component on the annual ISAT. Math was the strongest area on our ISAT results. Therefore, our primary academic areas of concern pertain to reading and writing.

Improvement in the areas of reading and writing are not limited to 3rd and 5th grade. We are working on improving instruction across the grade levels to improve instruction and learning in these areas from kindergarten through 5th grade.

School Information

Basic Information	School Year 2000-2001	School Year 2001-2002	School Year 2002-2003	School Year 2003-2004
Attendance rate (%)				96%
Truancy rate (%)				0%
Mobility rate (%)				1%
Expulsion rate (%)				0%
Retention rate, if applicable (%)				0%
HS graduation rate, if applicable (%)				N/A
HS dropout rate, if applicable (%)				N/A
Teachers working out-of-field (#)*				N/A
Paraprofessionals in Title I funded programs and/or schools designated as school-wide with less than 2 years of training and/or education degree (#)				N/A
School Population (#)				420
Economically disadvantaged (%)				0.014
Limited English proficient (LEP) (%)				0.007
Students with disabilities (%)				N/A
White, non-Hispanic (%)				92.3
Black, non-Hispanic (%)				0%
Hispanic (%)				.007
Native American or Alaskan Native (%)				0%
Asian/Pacific Islander (%)				6%

* "Out-of-field" means that a teacher is teaching a class for which he or she has no certification, academic major, or endorsement with sufficient credit hours in the content area taught.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Spencer Loomis Elementary School is located in Hawthorn Woods, Illinois. It houses children in kindergarten through 5th grade. It also has an early childhood program through SEDOL (Special Education District of Lake County).

Special services offered at Spencer Loomis School include speech and language, social work, school psychologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, and a full-time health nurse. Instructional support includes a kindergarten aide four hours per day in our Extended Day program, two full-time aides in our special needs classroom, and one full-time library/media specialist aide. Additional certified instructional support is provided for ELL/bilingual education, a full-time gifted teacher, and one and one-half reading specialists.

The demographic trends include slow but steady growth with a very low mobility rate. The physical plant is a new \$28,000,000 state of the art facility connected to a 6th, 7th, and 8th grade middle school with shared facilities which include a cafeteria, kitchen, presentation room, library, parking lot, and office space.

Staffing trends include two full-time kindergarten teachers, three 1st grade teachers, three 2nd grade teachers, four 3rd grade teachers, four 4th grade teachers, and four 5th grade teachers for a total of 20 full-time classroom teachers and 7.5 additional FTE staff for a total of 27.5FTE certified staff. The staff has a good balance of experienced and new staff members. Twelve of the 27.5 staff members have less than four years of teaching experience in the district. There is a gender inequity with only 7% of the staff being male. There are no minorities currently on the staff.

Listed below are the average class sizes for the 2003-04 and 2004-05 school year:

- Class size:
 - 2003-04
 - Kindergarten 15.33
 - 1st grade 18.67
 - 2nd grade 21.00
 - 3rd grade 20.50
 - 4th grade 20.75
 - 5th grade 26.33

- Class size:
 - 2003-04
 - Kindergarten 17.00
 - 1st grade 21.66
 - 2nd grade 20.00
 - 3rd grade 21.25
 - 4th grade 21.50
 - 5th grade 20.50

Some of the unique challenges/opportunities at Spencer Loomis School include the shared facilities with the middle school, a blending of staff from different schools within the district when the school was opened in 2003-04, and ancillary materials that will need to be accumulated over a period of time.

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Hawthorn Woods is a stable and affluent community located in central Lake County. The population of Hawthorn Woods is 6,015 as of June, 2004. The average home value is \$300,000-\$399,000. 87.1% of the homes are valued at over \$300,000. The average annual income is \$132,720. However, 23.7% of the households have an average annual income over \$200,000.

The ethnicity of the community is 94.6% Caucasian. Immigration patterns for Hawthorn Woods include 92.6% of the population born in the United States. The largest ancestry groups include 31.3% German and 16.1% Irish. The primary language spoken in homes is English with 91.2%. Less than 3% of the community is at the poverty level. There is little business in the Hawthorn Woods community as most of the area is residential. Support organizations include the Hawthorn Woods Women's Club, the Foglia YMCA, Hawthorn Woods Police Department, Lake Zurich Fire Department, and the Spencer Loomis PTO.

The greater Lake Zurich community consists of 23 public parks, two beaches, nine public tennis courts, and 276 sports teams. Twenty Protestant churches, three Catholic churches and two synagogues serve the community.

Data Collection and Information

STATE ASSESSMENT DATA: ISAT

	READING 00 MEETS/EXCEEDS			READING 01 MEETS/EXCEEDS			READING 02 MEETS/EXCEEDS			READING 03 MEETS/EXCEEDS			READING 04 MEETS/EXCEEDS		
Groups	Gr 3	Gr 5	Gr 8	Gr 3	Gr 5	Gr 8	Gr 3	Gr 5	Gr 8	Gr 3	Gr 5	Gr 8	Gr 3	Gr 5	Gr 8
Total													81.7%	70.2%	
Economically disadvantaged													N/A	N/A	
LEP													N/A	N/A	
Students w/disabilities													N/A	N/A	
White, Non-Hispanic													81.6%	72.2%	
Black, Non-Hispanic													N/A	N/A	
American Indian or Alaskan Native													N/A	N/A	
Asian or Pacific Islander													N/A	N/A	
Hispanic													N/A	N/A	

All of the subgroups have less than 10 students therefore, scores are not reported.

	MATHEMATICS 00 MEETS/EXCEEDS			MATHEMATICS 01 MEETS/EXCEEDS			MATHEMATICS 02 MEETS/EXCEEDS			MATHEMATICS 03 MEETS/EXCEEDS			MATHEMATICS 04 MEETS/EXCEEDS		
Groups	Gr 3	Gr 5	Gr 8	Gr 3	Gr 5	Gr 8	Gr 3	Gr 5	Gr 8	Gr 3	Gr 5	Gr 8	Gr 3	Gr 5	Gr 8
Total													92.7%	84.2%	
Economically disadvantaged													N/A	N/A	
LEP													N/A	N/A	
Students w/disabilities													N/A	N/A	
White, Non-Hispanic													92.2%	83.4%	
Black, Non-Hispanic													N/A	N/A	
American Indian or Alaskan Native													N/A	N/A	
Asian or Pacific Islander													N/A	N/A	
Hispanic													N/A	N/A	

All of the subgroups have less than 10 students therefore, scores are not reported.

LOCAL ASSESSMENT DATA

The Terra Nova test is used throughout the district at the 2nd-8th grade level. The test is given in October each school year. Kindergarten students are pre and post tested using the Tera 3 test. Students that score below the 24th percentile qualify for an extended-day program. A reading matrix is used to test students to determine if they qualify for any additional support services. The gifted matrix for qualification into the gifted math pull-out program includes a score of 120 or higher on the Terra Nova CSI and 92% national percentile on the Terra Nova math, and teacher recommendations. Listed below are the specific percentages for the students that qualified to participate in the gifted pull-out program:

13 of 84 (15.4%) of the third grade students qualified for the Gifted Program.

16 of 86 (18.6%) of the fourth grade students qualified for the Gifted Program.

22 of 82 (26.8%) of the 5th grade students qualified for the Gifted Program.

EDUCATOR DATA

Educator Characteristics and Qualifications

	School	District	State
Total Full Time Employees (FTE)	27.5		
Average Teacher Experience (in years)	12.8		
Bachelor's Degree (%)	44%		
Master's degree or higher (%)	56%		
White, non-Hispanic Teachers (FTE)	27.5		
Black, non-Hispanic Teachers (FTE)	0		
American Indian / Alaskan Native Teachers (FTE)	0		
Asian or Pacific Islander Teachers (FTE)	0		
Hispanic Teachers (FTE)	0		
Male Teachers (FTE)	2.5		
Female Teachers (FTE)	25		

Total teachers (FTE)	1-5 years experience	6-10 years experience	11-15 years experience	16+ years experience
27.5	8	8	5	6.5
% attendance rate for teachers		# requesting workshop attendance		# pursuing advanced degrees
91%		20		1
Total # paraprofessionals	# paraprofessionals with associate's degrees	# paraprofessionals with at least 2 years of post-secondary study	# paraprofessionals certified through other assessment options	
2	0	1	0	

Paraprofessional Qualifications (Required by NCLB for any paraprofessional personnel who serves in an instructional assistance capacity and is paid by Title 1 funds or any paraprofessional in a Title 1 school-wide program; paraprofessional personnel hired prior to January 8, 2002 must be certified by January 8, 2006.)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DATA

Listed below are the dates and times for district-wide Institute and early-release days:

Monday, August 23 rd	District-wide Institute Day
Wednesday, September 22 nd	District-wide Institute Day
Friday, October 8 th	District-wide Early-release Day
Thursday, October 14 th	Building-level Staff Meeting
Tuesday, November 2 nd	District-wide Institute day
Thursday, November 4 th	Building-level Staff Meeting
Tuesday, November 23 rd	District-wide Early-release Day
Wednesday, December 8 th	District-wide Early-release Day
Thursday, December 9 th	Building-level Staff Meeting
Friday, January 14 th	District-wide Early-release Day
Thursday, January 20 th	Building-level Staff Meeting
Thursday, February 10 th	District-wide Early-release Day
Thursday, February 17 th	Building-level Staff Meeting
Friday, March 4 th	District-wide Institute Day
Thursday, March 17 th	Building-level Staff Meeting
Tuesday, April 5 th	District-wide Institute Day
Thursday, April 14 th	Building-level Staff Meeting
Friday, May 6 th	District-wide Early-release Day
Thursday, May 12 th	Building-level Staff Meeting

Listed below are some of the professional development offerings that staff will be attending during the 2004-05 school year:

❖ Illinois Differentiated Instruction Conference	November 29 th -30 th
❖ Lake County Educational Services ISAT Reading Grades 2/3	November 19 th
❖ Lake County Educational Services ISAT Reading Grades 4/5	December 10 th
❖ Raising Student Achievement Conference	December 6, 7, 8 th
❖ IPA Improving Student Achievement on ISAT Reading	November 9 th
❖ IPA Improving Student Achievement on ISAT Writing	October 25 th
❖ Lake County Educational Services Guided Reading Grade K-2	October 19 th
❖ Lake County Educational Services Guided Reading Grade 3-6	October 20 th
❖ Midwest Principals' Center "Creating Conditions that Promote Student Achievement"	May 2 nd
❖ Midwest Principals' Center "Dealing with Data	November 2 nd
❖ The Academy for Professional Development "Raising Readers at School"	November 16 th
❖ The Academy for Professional Development "Super Strategies Before, During, and After Reading"	October 19 th
❖ The Academy for Professional Development "Fluency-The Neglected Goal	October 12 th

All institute and early-release days, staff meetings, and professional development opportunities will focus on the three primary goals established by the Spencer Loomis school improvement team in conjunction with the entire Spencer Loomis staff. Those three goals include:

- ❖ Reading: Expand current modes of reading instruction in all grades to adequately improve performance in reading comprehension scores in grades K-5.
- ❖ Writing: Improve writing by providing support that is consistent horizontally through each grade level, while promoting continuity and momentum for vertical grade level progression.
- ❖ Bridge Building: Utilize school and community resources to establish a collaborative educational environment that will facilitate authentic learning. Our emphasis will include curriculum integration, character development, and community service.

PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT DATA

At the beginning of the school year, all homeroom teachers make contact with every parent in their classroom. That contact may be made by phone, e-mail, or postcard. The kindergarten teachers are creating a parent survey to gain feedback on curricular issues along with any other academic or social/emotional issues or concerns. A Reading Fluency Program is used in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades. Parents are involved in implementing the program. These parents work directly with students as they read passages. The 2nd grade teachers' "Reading under the Stars" evening program involves all of the 2nd grade students and their parents. The Mustang Publishing Company is a parent-led program that encourages and facilitates writing and publishing. All of the 3rd grade students participated in publishing their own book in 2003-04. The monthly Art Parent program enables students to learn about artists and their respective historic periods, as well as to try their hands at a related project.

ADDITIONAL TYPES OF DATA

Since Spencer Loomis School has been in existence for only one year, we have one year of data on faculty turn-over. Faculty turn-over was very low from 2003-04 to 2004-05. Three certified staff did not return for the 2004-05 school. Two of those three teachers left the building voluntarily. That figure equates to a 7% turn-over rate.

Under "program monitoring" Spencer Loomis School had 56 students receive services in our remedial reading program. Those 56 students represent 13% of our total student population. Twenty students were identified with learning disabilities and had an individualized educational plan. Those 20 students represent almost 5% of our overall population. Regarding student behavior, approximately thirty students had to be disciplined through the principal's office. That figure is less than 7% of the overall student enrollment. Two students were suspended out of school. That is less than 1% of the entire student body.

DATA QUALITY

Data quality is included in the previous criterion.

DATA ANALYSIS

SUMMARIES OF DATA FOR DEPENDENT VARIABLES

State AYP targets: Reading and Math ISAT scores: 40%
State AYP targets: Test participation rate 95%
State AYP targets: Attendance for 03-04 88%

Vs

Building Performance Targets:

Reading: Meets/Exceeds = 85% (Currently 81.7% for 3rd grade)
Meets/Exceeds = 75% (Currently 70.2% for 5th grade)

Writing: Meets/Exceeds = 85% (Currently at 80.7% for 3rd grade)
Meets/Exceeds = 85% (Currently 75.4% for 5th grade)

Participation: (Currently at 100% participation for 3rd and 5th grade)

Attendance: (Currently at a 96% attendance)

DIAGNOSIS OF PERFORMANCE TARGETS

Performance targets

State AYP targets: Reading and Math ISAT scores: 40%
State AYP targets: Test participation rate 95%
State AYP targets: Attendance for 03-04 88%

Vs

Building Performance Targets:

Reading: Meets/Exceeds = 85% (We are at 81.7% for 3rd grade)
Meets/Exceeds = 75% (We are at 70.2% for 5th grade)

Writing: Meets/Exceeds = 85% (We are at 80.7% for 3rd grade)
Meets/Exceeds = 85% (We are at 75.4% for 5th grade)

Participation: (We are at 100% participation for 3rd and 5th grade)

Attendance: (We are at 96% attendance rate)

One of the specific target areas will be 5th grade males and math. According to the 2004 ISAT data, there was a significant decrease from 3rd grade to 5th grade “Level 4” performance. The math ISAT data shows that 67.4% of the 3rd grade boys scored in Level 4, whereas, in 5th grade only 15.6% of the boys scored in Level 4.

HYPOTHESES TO EXPLAIN DEPENDENT VARIABLES

As a new school, 2003-04 was our first year in existence. We have used the ISAT data from the spring of 2004 to establish our baseline data for 2004-05. We are looking closely at some inconsistencies between our 3rd grade ISAT scores and our 5th grade ISAT scores. With respect to the state’s AYP criteria, Spencer Loomis School far exceeded the performance targets. We are looking closely at specific areas within the curriculum that may explain variances between the 3rd and 5th grade scores in math, reading, and writing.

Summaries of Data for Independent Variables

This is one area of focus for the school improvement team and its staff. We are in the process of quantifying information so we can verify whether we have identified the areas of concern. One of the unique challenges at Spencer Loomis School is the lack of longitudinal data. This will be our second year in existence, therefore we only have one year of trend data. One year of data makes it very difficult to hypothesize patterns or trends.

IDENTIFICATION OF PRIMARY CAUSAL FACTORS BASED ON DATA ANALYSIS

As a second year school we are in the process of identifying casual factors that may contribute to some discrepancies in scores from 3rd to 5th grade. Relatively speaking we have ISAT scores that far exceed the state standards. Any areas of concern are only relative areas of concern within our own building. Our area of greatest relative concern would be in the 5th grade ISAT scores as they performed at 70.2% Meet or exceed level vs the 3rd grade students that performed at the 81.7% meet or exceed level for an 11.5% gap.

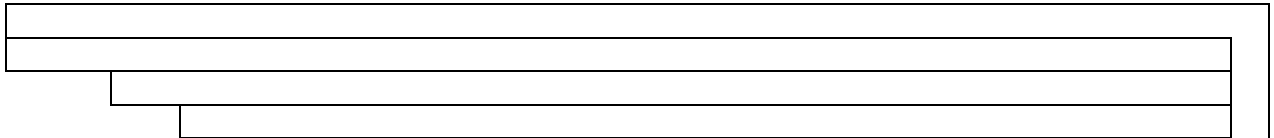
SELECTION OF STRATEGIES

One specific causal factor would be identified in the area of reading. The reading goal is as follows:

“Expand current modes of reading instruction in all grades to improve performance in reading comprehension in grades K-5.”

Three specific reading strategies have been identified to directly address this goal:

1. “Apply specific reading strategies with an emphasis on vocabulary and expository materials to improve comprehension in grades K-5.”
2. “Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to improve performance in reading comprehension in grades K-5.”
3. “Teach a broad range of reading genres to improve comprehension in grades K-5”



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Bridge Building Goal
Strategy #1

Providing opportunities for authentic learning through community service

will adequately improve performance in

Character development

ACTIVITY (5.2)	TIMELINE (5.3)	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES (5.7)	MEASURES FOR THE ACTIVITY (5.8)	RESOURCES FOR ACTIVITY (5.4)
Activity # <i>Participate in community service activities.</i>	<i>quarterly</i>	<i>Homeroom teachers Students Principal PTO committees</i>	<i>Surveys Documentation of participation Service learning journals</i>	<u><i>BUS</i></u>
Activity # Create a venue for student initiated service projects	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Student Council Students SIP subcommittee Principal Performance Groups</i>	<i>Surveys Documentation of submitted ideas</i>	
Activity # Seek and identify new service learning opportunities	quarterly	Principal Teachers PTO Committees	Record and review number of new service learning partners	

Bridge Building Goal
Strategy #2

Creating and utilizing opportunities for collaboration

will adequately improve performance in

all subject areas

Activity # Share ideas and plan lessons within a grade level	<i>weekly</i>	<i>Grade level teachers Specials teachers Scheduling Committee</i>	<i>Record the schedule and minutes from weekly minutes.</i>	
Activity # Collaborate horizontally, vertically, and across curricular areas to ensure a seamless flow of learning	<i>quarterly</i>	<i>Grade level teachers Specials teachers Scheduling Committee</i>	<i>Record the schedule, agenda, and minutes from quarterly minutes.</i>	
Activity # Sponsor assemblies/events that compliment curriculum	quarterly	PTO	Record of assemblies & relevant critical content	\$7, 500

Bridge Building Goal
Strategy #3

Establishing and/or supporting a consistent school-wide character development program

will adequately improve performance in

the demonstration of respect for the value of each individual

ACTIVITY (5.2)	TIMELINE (5.3)	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES (5.7)	MEASURES FOR THE ACTIVITY (5.8)	RESOURCES FOR ACTIVITY (5.4)
Activity # <i>Create, display and review school-wide behavior expectations that support the code of conduct</i>	<i>annually</i>	<i>All teachers Students Principal Lunchroom supervisors</i>	<i>Confirm that behavior expectations are identified, posted and enforced by documentation</i>	Signs, paper
Activity # Create and maintain an anti-bullying committee to support character development program	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>Committee members</i>	<i>Record meeting schedule, minutes and agenda</i>	

Bridge Building Goal
Strategy #4

Integrating units of instruction

will adequately improve
performance in

All subject areas in all grade levels

ACTIVITY (5.2)	TIMELINE (5.3)	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES (5.7)	MEASURES FOR THE ACTIVITY (5.8)	RESOURCES FOR ACTIVITY (5.4)
Activity # <i>In-service staff on interdisciplinary units of instruction</i>	<i>Semi-annually</i>	<i>All teachers Principal</i>	<i>Record in-service topics</i>	
Activity # Create and teach a thematic unit of instruction in all grade levels	<i>annually</i>	<i>Grade level teams Specials' teachers Principal</i>	<i>Documentation of lesson plans</i>	
Activity # Mutual collaborative efforts among grade level and specials curricula	<i>annually</i>	<i>Grade level teams Specials' teachers Principal</i>	Agenda and notes from team meetings	

Writing Goal
Strategy #1

Enhance current writing resources to promote horizontal consistency and vertical momentum

will adequately improve performance in

Across grade levels and through grade levels.

ACTIVITY (5.2)	TIMELINE (5.3)	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES (5.7)	MEASURES FOR THE ACTIVITY (5.8)	RESOURCES FOR ACTIVITY (5.4)
Activity # 1 Survey staff needs	Ongoing development	Teachers Administration Curriculum coordinators	<i>Analyze and address survey results</i> <i>Resources are documented</i> <i>Create a list of resource needs</i> <i>Curriculum file has been established based on needs</i>	Current resources External writing consultants and resources (Gretchen Courtney & Assoc., etc.) Writing methods and organizers (Four Square, etc.) ISAT results
Activity # 2 Identify current resources	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>
Activity # 3 Analyze gap between resources and what is needed	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>
Activity # 4 Create content organizer (file) and writing rubics	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>

Writing Goal
Strategy #2

Increase staff knowledge of writing instruction

will adequately improve
performance in

The method and delivery of instruction to students

ACTIVITY (5.2)	TIMELINE (5.3)	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES (5.7)	MEASURES FOR THE ACTIVITY (5.8)	RESOURCES FOR ACTIVITY (5.4)
Activity # 1 Provide writing support for teachers	Bi-annually Monthly Quarterly	Teachers Curriculum coordinators	<i>Training sessions scheduled with full staff participation</i> <i>Peer observation; teacher dialogue; periodically survey teachers for updates and improvements</i> <i>Periodically review writing samples</i>	External writing consultants and resources (Gretchen Courtney & Assoc., etc.) Peer mentoring Teachers Curriculum coordinators
Activity # 2 Monitor writing instruction for consistency	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>
Activity # 3 Review and update of writing samples	(same as above)	(same as above)	(same as above)	(same as above)
Activity # 4				

Writing Goal
Strategy #3

STRATEGY (5.1)

Provide students with consistent writing tools

will adequately improve performance in

TARGET (4.2)

The thought and composition process

<p>Activity # 1 Instruct students in writing guidelines, vocabulary, and rubrics</p>	<p>Weekly lesson and daily reinforcement</p>	<p>Teachers Administration Curriculum coordinators</p>	<p><i>Assessment of student assignments and knowledge of ISAT vocabulary</i></p>	<p>External writing consultants and resources (Gretchen Courtney & Assoc., etc.) Writing rubrics Curriculum coordinators Illinois Assessment Framework</p>
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Writing Goal
Strategy #4

STRATEGY (5.1)

Provide parents with writing expectations

will adequately improve performance in

TARGET (4.2)

Communicating with adults in the home environment responsible for overseeing student work

<p>Activity # 1 Educate parents on writing guidelines, vocabulary, and rubrics.</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Teachers Parents Administration Illinois Assessment Framework Curriculum coordinators</p>	<p>Survey parents' understanding of writing program, ongoing parental feedback</p>	<p>External writing consultants and resources (Gretchen Courtney & Assoc., etc.) Writing Rubrics Curriculum coordinators</p>
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Writing Goal
Strategy #5

STRATEGY (5.1)

Communicate with middle school to ensure a seamless vertical progression of writing expectations and performance

will adequately improve performance in

TARGET (4.2)

Transitioning of students from elementary throughout middle school

ACTIVITY (5.2)	TIMELINE (5.3)	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES (5.7)	MEASURES FOR THE ACTIVITY (5.8)	RESOURCES FOR ACTIVITY (5.4)
Activity # 1 Establish dialogue between elementary and middle schools	Bi-annually Ongoing	Teachers Administration Curriculum coordinators	Documented meetings (minutes) Use a Venn diagram to identify shared writing practices, as well as, unique strengths that may be mutually beneficial in lining elementary and middle school programs	External writing consultants and resources (Gretchen Courtney & Assoc., etc.) Writing rubrics Curriculum coordinators
Activity # 2 Bridge gap between 5 th and 6 th grades by conceptually lining writing programs	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>	<i>(same as above)</i>

Reading Goal
Strategy #1

STRATEGY (5.1)

TARGET (4.2)

Applying specific reading strategies with an emphasis on vocabulary and expository materials

will adequately improve performance in

Comprehension scores in grades K-5.

ACTIVITY (5.2)	TIMELINE (5.3)	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES (5.7)	MEASURES FOR THE ACTIVITY (5.8)	RESOURCES FOR ACTIVITY (5.4)
Activity # Use word walls and vocabulary building kits	quarterly	K-5 teachers Reading Specialists ESL teachers Special Ed. Teacher Media Specialist	<i>Teacher made test</i> <i>Evaluation of written work</i> <i>Oral screening</i>	Four Blocks curriculum Vocabulary kits and resource manual
Activity # Apply reading strategies to non-fiction text	<i>Read 1 non-fiction book per quarter</i>	K-5 teachers Reading Specialists ESL teachers Special Ed. Teacher Media Specialist	<i>Observations</i> <i>Book reports</i> <i>Tests</i> <i>Student work</i>	<i>Non-fiction trade books</i> <i>Listening centers</i>
Activity # Respond to text in writing using supportive details	quarterly	K-5 teachers Reading Specialists ESL teachers Special Ed. Teacher Media Specialist	<i>Teacher made test</i> <i>Evaluation of written work</i> <i>Standardized testing</i>	Sets of fiction and non-fiction books Graphic organizers
Activity # <hr/>				

Reading Goal
Strategy #2

Teaching a broad range of reading genres

will adequately improve performance in

Comprehension scores in grades K-5.

ACTIVITY (5.2)	TIMELINE (5.3)	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES (5.7)	MEASURES FOR THE ACTIVITY (5.8)	RESOURCES FOR ACTIVITY (5.4)
Activity # Analyze poetry and figurative language	quarterly	K-5 teachers Reading Specialists ESL teachers Special Ed. Teacher Media Specialist	<i>Teacher made test</i> <i>Evaluation of written work</i> Standardized tests	Poetry books and media
Activity # Read independently or be read to a variety of genres biographies, fantasies, historical fiction, science fiction, etc...	<i>quarterly</i>	K-5 teachers Reading Specialists ESL teachers Special Ed. Teacher Media Specialist	<i>Observations</i> <i>Book reports</i> <i>Tests</i> <i>Student work</i>	<i>Class sets of trade books</i>
Activity # Read periodicals and newspapers	quarterly	K-5 teachers Reading Specialists ESL teachers Special Ed. Teacher Media Specialist	<i>Observations</i> <i>Book reports</i> <i>Tests</i> <i>Student work</i>	Periodicals Daily newspapers
Activity # _____				

Reading Goal
Strategy #3

Applying word analysis and vocabulary skills

will adequately improve performance in

Comprehension scores in grades K-5.

ACTIVITY (5.2)	TIMELINE (5.3)	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES (5.7)	MEASURES FOR THE ACTIVITY (5.8)	RESOURCES FOR ACTIVITY (5.4)
Activity # Apply word building activities	<i>quarterly</i>	K-5 teachers Reading Specialists ESL teachers Special Ed. Teacher Media Specialist	<i>Teacher made test</i> <i>Evaluation of written work</i> Standardized tests	Word wall Word Sort materials Cloze Sentences Journals
Activity # Use guided reading program	<i>quarterly</i>	K-5 teachers Reading Specialists ESL teachers Special Ed. Teacher Media Specialist	<i>Observations</i> <i>Book reports</i> <i>Tests</i> <i>Student work</i>	<i>Class sets of trade books</i> <i>Breakthrough to Literacy</i>
Activity #				
Activity # <hr/>				

Sources of Revenue

All activities outlined in the Spencer Loomis School Improvement Plan will be supported by the building budget. A total of \$2500 has been allocated through the district to support conferences, workshops, and speakers for the sole purpose of addressing the three main goals and the twelve strategies pertaining to the school improvement plan. Staff are in the process of registering for various conferences and workshops.

Activity	Title I	Title II	Title IV	Title VI	Tech	CTE	Reading First	CSR	21 st CCLC	REAP	Gen Rev	Sum Brdgs	Other	Other
		Staff development grants						Comprehensive school reform						
TOTAL														

Professional Development

DATA USE

Data is collected through surveys completed by staff after each in-service and institute day. That data is then used to plan for any upcoming in-service and institute days. Results of the surveys are also shared with the staff. Staff feedback is a critical component in planning short and long term activities to address the school improvement plan.

QUALIFIED AND EFFECTIVE EDUCATORS

Staff has become qualified and effective in their learning and teaching assignments by attending outside staff development conferences and workshops. Peer mentoring and collaboration are critical components to improving teaching and learning. Common planning time was a priority for the scheduling committee for the sole purpose of creating blocks of time for teachers to share ideas, plan activities, and work together enhance and improve teaching techniques. The district supports and encourages teachers to further their teaching skills by taking course work within the district and at the university level. Reimbursement is provided for the teachers that allows them to financially afford additional professional learning.

RELATION TO STRATEGIES

All professional development activities will focus on the three main goals identified in the school improvement plan and the twelve specific school improvement strategies. A chart will be maintained for the purpose of monitoring teacher attendance at specific conferences and workshops with the goal and or strategies supported by that conference/workshop. Included in this document is a list of the conferences, workshops, and classes offered to teachers throughout the 2004-05 school year that support the goals and strategies identified in the school improvement plan.

We need to specifically chart who goes to what to ensure that staff attend workshops directly related to our SIP. We could list all the offerings but specifically track the workshops attended and their relationship to our SIP.

Strategy	Professional Development

NOTE: Use a narrative, a calendar, or the optional table on the next page for criteria 6.4 through 6.6.

SCHEDULING

Monday, August 23rd

District-wide Institute Day

An overview of the school improvement plan was shared with the staff. Expectations regarding the plan and priorities pertaining to implementing specific aspects of the plan were also shared.

Wednesday, September 22nd

District-wide Institute Day

The focus of the entire institute will be on specific components of the school improvement plan. Teachers will begin specific lessons to incorporate strategies that relate to each of the goals. Timelines will also be established for implementation.

Friday, October 8th

District-wide Early-release Day

Time will be provided for teachers to continue working on the objectives discussed at the prior institute day.

Thursday, October 14th

Building-level Staff Meeting

Teachers will be sharing their progress towards creating and implementing a thematic and integrated unit of instruction later in the school year.

Tuesday, November 2nd

District-wide Institute Day

Specific grade level teams will be assessing and prioritizing the twelve strategies listed under the three broad goals. They will also be sharing with grade levels above and below them for the purpose of improving the vertical as well as horizontal articulation of curriculum.

Thursday, November 4th

Building-level Staff Meeting

This staff meeting will be an opportunity to share progress made towards the SIP goals and strategies. Feedback from peers will also be an important component of this meeting.

Tuesday, November 23rd

District-wide Early-release Day

Per the teacher contract, this early-release day is set aside for parent-teacher conferences.

Wednesday, December 8th

District-wide Early-release Day

Staff will be focusing on setting goals for the remainder of the year with respect to the goals and strategies outlined in the school improvement plan. Staff will prioritize what strategies should be addressed during the upcoming months.

Thursday, December 9th

Building-level Staff Meeting

The focus of this meeting will be celebrating our successes for the first part of the school year.

Friday, January 14th

District-wide Early-release Day

This meeting will be used to share progress made towards the goals and strategies. It will also be used to share specific activities and lessons used in the classroom that incorporated specific aspects of the school improvement strategies.

Thursday, January 20th

Building-level Staff Meeting

Staff will be working on collaborating with other grade levels for the purpose of articulating grade level objectives and enhancing instruction throughout the school.

Thursday, February 10th

District-wide Early-release Day

Per the district contract, this meeting is reserved for teachers to work on grades for their report cards.

Thursday, February 17th

Building-level Staff Meeting

The staff will be reviewing any academic areas yet to be covered in preparation for the upcoming ISAT's. Staff will be reviewing any areas associated with the school improvement plan that pertain directly to knowledge and information that should be addressed prior to the ISAT's.

Friday, March 4th

District-wide Institute Day

The focus of this entire day will be reflection on progress made on the school improvement plan and begin planning on areas to be addressed for the 2005-06 school year.

Thursday, March 17th

Building-level Staff Meeting

We will use this time to celebrate our successes with respect to the school improvement plan. Staff will have the opportunity to share individual and grade level successes.

Tuesday, April 5th

District-wide Institute Day

More planning will be done with respect to prioritizing areas of focus for the 2005-05 school year to address any areas of deficiencies with specific strategies of the school improvement plan.

Thursday, April 14th

Building-level Staff Meeting

The focus of this meeting will be to articulate within grade levels and also with the grade levels directly above them to share and discuss any areas of concern regarding overlapping of curriculum.

Friday, May 6th

District-wide Early-release Day

This will be the final opportunity to share areas of concern that need to be addressed for the 2005-06 school year. Time will also be set aside to celebrate achievements of the staff pertaining to the goals and strategies of the school improvement plan.

Thursday, May 12th

Building-level Staff Meeting

The staff will be creating a timeline of activities for the 2005-06 school that will specifically address any remaining areas of concern previously identified in the school improvement plan.

RESOURCES

Specific resources of time, people, and money were previously identified in section 5.1 under “Resources for Activity”. The district has allocated approximately \$2500 for Spencer Loomis School to support professional development as it relates to our school improvement plan.

SCIENTIFICALLY BASED RESEARCH (SBR)

Indicate the scientific research base of the professional development. Provide SBR here or make a cross-reference to it in the action plan (5.0). The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) is one source for research-based professional development. www.nsd.org

We are in the process of identifying and aligning our current professional development practices with research-based professional development. This is an area of growth for the staff.

OPTIONAL TABLE FORMAT

NOTE: Criteria 6.4, 6.5, and 6.6 may be combined into the following table and/or cross referenced to the action plan (5.0).

This part is optional. We can use the charts or do it as a narrative.

6.4 Scheduling		6.5 Resources	6.6 SBR
Month/Date/Year	Content of Professional Development	Supporting Resources	Scientific Research Base for the Content

INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY

A set of 24 wireless laptop computers on portable carts have been purchased for Spencer Loomis School. Teachers sign the carts out so they can be used directly in their classrooms to enhance the teaching and learning process. They have internet capability so teachers can access any information on the web. Technology training is provided by the district in many areas of technology including webpage design, power point presentations and accessing information. Digital cameras and LCD projectors are also used in the classroom to enhance instruction.

EVALUATION / CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

A district-made survey is completed by every staff member after they have participated in an institute day or early-release day. Those surveys are reviewed and then shared with the staff. Feedback from the surveys and staff are then incorporated into the upcoming in-service and institute day planning.

MENTORING

A formal mentoring plan exists at the district level. The program is overseen by the district's curriculum coordinators and the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. They meet with the new staff on a regular basis throughout the year with specific agendas for each meeting. This is a two year program for all new certified staff to the district.

Illinois Learning Standards (ILS) Implementation

ALIGNMENT OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

The district has purchased a Curriculum Designer program that enables the district to align curriculum to state and national standards. The curriculum review cycle rotates from subject area to subject area each year. The complete process is on a six-year cycle. The LARE (language arts/reading) committee will be reviewing and making a recommendation to the board for a K-12 language arts and reading adoption for the 2005-06 school year. One of the school improvement goal strategies pertains to the alignment of curriculum on a vertical level so grade levels are not duplicating curriculum.

STANDARDS-ALIGNED CLASSROOMS

The new elementary report cards were created using the Illinois Learning Standards. The specific objectives for each grade level are aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards. Some of the staff attended multiple workshops on "Standards Aligned Classroom". These teachers shared the information with their peers. The Illinois Learning Standards are posted on the internet and district website. Teachers align their lesson plans with the ILS.

ILS PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Professional development offerings are aligned with ILS. Included as an attachment to this document are many of the professional development offerings that pertain directly to the school improvement plan. Scheduling was completed this year to accommodate grade level teachers. Each grade has a common planning each week for the purpose of planning curriculum and instruction. Allocation of financial

resources will be allocated for the sole purpose of addressing specific areas of the school improvement plan.

REVIEW OF ILS PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

The curriculum and review cycle is a six year process. Each year, a different subject is reviewed with a committee formed to evaluate the current texts and materials. Then a recommendation is made for a new adoption. The language arts/reading committee is in the final stages of choosing a textbook company, piloting several series, and then making a recommendation to the board of education for final approval. The committee makes a concerted effort too ensure the newly adopted series and supplemental materials support and align with the Illinois Learning Standards.

Family and Community Involvement

DATA USE

Parent/family involvement is used to provide feedback to the administration and staff relevant to the school improvement plan, the goals and specific strategies. PTO meetings are one forum to provide feedback and input into specific aspects of the school improvement plan. Parents also communicate any specific areas of concern pertaining to the school improvement plan directly to the classroom teacher via e-mail, notes, and phone calls.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN SIP PROCESS

27% of the Spencer Loomis School Improvement Team consisted of community members. They will continue to be a part of the implementation of the plan. The parent community is given updates on the school improvement plan via the principal's weekly newsletter. Parents are encouraged to provide feedback regarding specific suggestions as they relate to the school improvement plan.

COMMUNICATION OF SIP PROGRESS

As we begin our second year at Spencer Loomis School, we can only talk about what we plan to do with respect to our school improvement plan. The three specific goals have been shared with the parent community and also at a district board meeting. Updates and progress will be shared on a quarterly basis with the parent community. Information is also shared through the local media and newspapers. Classroom teachers also share updates through their own newsletters.

ROLE OF FAMILY/COMMUNITY IN THE ACTION PLAN

Families have more of an informal role in communicating their issues/concerns regarding the school improvement plan. They provide direct and indirect feedback to staff regarding any curricular concerns. This is an area needs to be addressed during the 2004-05 school year. We will be focusing on other ways to quantify family involvement in the school improvement plan.

ROLE OF FAMILY/COMMUNITY IN SUPPORT OF STUDENT LEARNING

The parent community and building level PTO are involved a wide range of opportunities in supporting learning. The PTO has a cultural arts committee that looks for activities to support the K-5 curriculum. The PTO Art Parent Program provides opportunities for parent volunteers to go in the classroom and present a formal art lesson on the different aspects of art as well as specific artists. The fluency program involves working one-on-one with students to improve their reading fluency. Reading under the Stars is a program organized by the second grade teachers to encourage reading. Parents are active participants in this program. Parents play a vital role during the parent-teacher conferences. These conferences take place in the fall and provide an opportunity for teachers and parents to share information about their child.

8.6 PROCEDURES/PRACTICES/COMPACTS

Provide evidence that parents/families have extensive roles in the development and review of school parental procedures, practices, and compacts.

The District Code of Conduct manual is distributed to all parents with children in the district. The Code of Conduct explains parents' rights and responsibilities. It also provides information about defined guidelines pertaining to student dress code, discipline procedures and consequences, transportation policies, and students' rights and responsibilities. Weekly newsletters are distributed to all parents with updates information about programs, activities, and any changes in policies and/or procedures at the building level.

9.0 Support Systems

9.1 INTERNAL DISTRICT SUPPORT

Explain how specific district services and resources support the strategies/activities.

Human resources are provided through the district in the form of two curriculum coordinators. One of their specific job descriptions relates directly with the support and implementation of of the building's school

improvement plans. They provide data analysis, materials, and suggestions for finding information relevant to the school improvement plan. A Curriculum Council exists to further enhance the teaching and learning process as it relates to the school improvement plan at each school. The technology department also provides seamless integration of technology into all curricular areas. Financial support is also provided through the district to support staff development and conference attendance.

9.2 EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Explain in detail specific external services and resources that support implementation of strategies/activities.

External support is provided by a wide variety of services and agencies. The Lake County Educational Service Center offers courses and workshops on an on-going basis. The Illinois Principals' Association provides workshops in Lake County for principals and teachers in specific curriculum, leadership, and instruction. The Lake Forest Professional Development offers courses and classes throughout the year to address different aspects of teaching and instruction. The Lake County Regional Office of Education also provides conferences and workshops for teachers and administrators.

10.0 Review, Monitoring, and Revision Processes

10.1 DISTRICT PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Describe the district peer review and approval process.

The six elementary school principals will be sharing the progress of their school improvement plan with each other. Opportunities will be available for principals to provide feedback at the district elementary principals' meetings regarding specific components of each other's plans.

10.2 MONITORING PROGRESS OF THE PLAN

Describe how and when school personnel and leaders will collect data to monitor the effectiveness of strategies.

The school improvement team and the entire staff will monitor the progress made on the school improvement goals and twelve specific strategies at every institute and early release days along with all monthly staff meetings. Data will be collected in November from the Terra Nova test scores taken in October. Data will also be collected when the spring 2005 ISAT comes back from the state. Internal data will be collected on an ongoing basis.

10.3 REVISION OF THE PLAN

Describe the systematic revision and implementation of the plan based on information from the monitoring process (10.2).

The Spencer Loomis School improvement plan will be monitored on a monthly basis. Any major revisions that need to be made will be done in the spring of each school year for the purpose of making adjustments and modifications for the following school year.

Appendix A

ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP) INFORMATION

Is this School making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)?	No
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Has this school been identified for School Improvement according to the AYP specifications of the federal No Child Left Behind Act?	No
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	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		40.0			40.0			88.0		65.0	
All	91.7	No	91.5	No	32.6		No	16.7		No			71.0	Yes
White	92.5	No	92.5	No										
Black	86.7	No	86.4	No	28.3		No	11.1	18.0	No				
Hispanic	92.6	No	92.6	No	41.1		Yes	22.0		No				
Asian/Pacific Islander														
Native American														
LEP														
Students with Disabilities	82.1	No	80.6	No	8.2		No	6.0		No				
Economically Disadvantaged	90.4	No	90.1	No	33.7		No	18.1	24.3	No			69.3	

Three Conditions Are Required For Making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

1. At least 95.0% Tested for Reading and Mathematics for the All Group and Subgroups
2. At least 40.0% Meeting/Exceeding Standards for Reading and Mathematics for the All Group, and at least 37.0% for all Subgroups to compensate for error in measurement for smaller subgroup sizes, or meet Safe Harbor requirements***
3. At least 88.0% Attendance Rate for Non-High Schools or at least 65.0% Graduation Rate for High Schools

* Includes only students enrolled as of 9/30/02

** Safe Harbor Targets of 37% or above are not printed.

*** Subgroups with fewer than 40 students are not reported. Safe harbor only applies to subgroups. 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. Safe harbor allows schools an alternate method to meet subgroup minimum targets on achievement.

Appendix B

An Illustration of Rubric Component 4.0

Every school improvement plan is a social science experiment. Selection of optimal strategies for improving school performance entails a series of logical steps, each of which is part of the process of experimental design.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES (effects, targets, problems, results)

4.1 School personnel summarize data for dependent variables from a variety of sources as gaps, comparisons, and trends. These dependent variables are usually academic data—now, by law, reading and mathematics scores. Due to NCLB, percent of students tested, attendance rate at grade schools, and graduation rate at high schools are also dependent variables.

COMMENT The dependent variables for which the school did not make adequate yearly progress are defined as targets. An example of an AYP target is "40 percent of students scores meet or exceed state standards in mathematics in 2004." Unfortunately, NCLB accountability measures use only *schoolwide* data to calculate and report composite and subgroup scores. Diagnostically, these schoolwide data are not very useful. Fortunately, ISAT and PSAE provide each school the same data disaggregated by grade, gender, ILS sets, among others. For example, mathematics scores are further broken down by estimation/number sense/computation, algebraic patterns/variables, algebraic relationships/representations, geometric concepts, geometric relationships, measurement, data organization/analysis, and probability. Data for these and other ILS sets are reported for each student. In addition, results from local assessments, including classroom tests, augment and verify these disaggregated scores.

4.2 A school uses its achievement results diagnostically to narrow and refine the source of its problem. For example, an analysis of data shows that the problem is not low mathematics achievement in all grades, but low scores among students in grades 3 and 5 only. Further analysis shows that it is primarily boys, not girls. Further analysis shows that this gender difference holds across all ethnic, racial, and income groups. Furthermore, this gap has been a trend over the last three years. Data from local assessments and teacher observations reinforce this focus.

COMMENT Diagnosing the problem and clarifying the target in this way will determine the breadth of the strategy eventually selected to address it, hence, the cost to the school in terms of people, time, money, materials, and disruption. Of course, had the data shown a school-wide reading problem, a school-wide solution would be required. In short, the adage in science applies, "Clarifying the problem is half the solution."

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES (causes, factors, hypotheses, strategies, activities)

4.3 Ask, "Why?" again and again. What is causing boys in grades 3 and 5 to score low in math? Planners should brainstorm as many hypotheses—possible causal factors—as seem plausible. These are the independent variables. Is it developmental? Do boys have lower aspirations or motivation than girls? Is the instructional practice poorly suited to them? Do they lack resources at home? Do they do less homework? Are they tired because they play more sports? And why are the scores always lowest at grades 3 and 5, not 8? Is the curriculum misaligned? Is it teacher turnover? Is it teacher absenteeism?

COMMENT Many more plausible hypotheses could be added to this list. Note that this list does not spring from the achievement data, rather from the knowledge and expertise of experienced practitioners.

4.4 The school collects and summarizes as much data on as many potential causal factors as possible.

COMMENT These data inform the next step. The most informative data come from before-and-after measures of a single group or from comparisons between groups.

4.5 Many of the above hypotheses can be logically eliminated. For example, curriculum misalignment, teacher turnover, teacher absenteeism, and resources at home can be eliminated because they should equally affect girls. Other hypotheses can be eliminated based on local data. For example, school surveys show that girls play sports as often as boys, that boys' academic aspirations are higher than girls, and that boys do as much homework (just not as well).

COMMENT By logically and empirically winnowing the hypotheses, only two primary causal factors remain viable: Developmental differences and a difference in response to instructional practices.

4.6 The school adopts strategies that change causal factors under its control. Of the two remaining hypotheses, the school cannot control developmental differences between boys and girls. Changing developmental differences therefore cannot be a strategy. But the school can change instructional practices. Thus, the strategy will be to change the mode of math instruction for boys at grades 3, 4, and 5.

COMMENT Many important causal factors are beyond the power of the school to change or control. The school must treat all such factors as "givens" and focus its efforts on the factors it can control.

STATEMENT OF STRATEGY

5.1 Changing the mode of mathematics instruction for boys at grades 3, 4, and 5 will adequately improve their academic achievement in mathematics.

COMMENT It is not useful to add to this statement such phrases as "...by 5 percent each year for the next two years." The target for success has been set by law. The school should aim at nothing less than doing its best to exceed the adequate yearly progress target. Substituting some lesser standard of its own will likely prove counterproductive, especially as performance targets mandated by law rise in coming years.

5.2

Activity 1: Numerous hands-on mathematics manipulatives and kits will augment traditional instruction.

Activity 2: Boys and girls will tutor one another, as appropriate.

Activity 3: The use of mathematics will be integrated into science instruction.

Activity 4: The use of mathematics will be integrated into gym class.

Activity 5: Both school and homework will require explicit connections to everyday events.

Activity 6: Help in mathematics before school will be made available to all students.

COMMENT The results of this experiment—one that tests the hypothesis that changing from traditional math instruction to hands-on instruction will improve mathematics scores for boys in grades 3 and 5 in this school—will not be known for several months. In many cases, the final results may require a year or more.

