# Performance Management Plan Narrative

# Sequoia Redwood

## *Historical Background*

Sequoia Redwood is a small school housing kindergarten through eighth grade. The charter school is currently located in Peoria, Arizona. Sequoia Redwood is a member of Edkey, Inc., managed by Sequoia Charter Schools. Redwood was originally founded in 2000 on a site near 75th Avenue and Peoria Road. In an effort to improve site and building conditions, Redwood made the move to its current location near the corner of 67th Avenue and Thunderbird Road in March 2009.

Redwood employs a kindergarten teacher, a 1st/2nd grade combination teacher, a math/science instructor for 3rd-8th grade, a language arts/social studies instructor for the 3rd-8th grades, and a highly qualified Title 1 paraprofessional  A part time music teacher works with all grade levels once a week. Physical education is taught by the classroom teacher twice weekly. Non-certified staff include: an office manager and a bus driver. Special Education services are provided by certified SPED staff from the Sequoia Schools Horne Campus in Mesa.

Ron Palmer has been the site principal since March of 2000. During the 2008-09 school year, Mr. Palmer also took on the position of full time teacher.

Redwood students attend school Monday through Thursday from 8:00 am-3:00 pm and Friday 8:00 am- 12:00 pm. Friday afternoons provide time for staff development activities.

Sequoia Redwood has an active site council that meets on the Redwood site once a month. Parent volunteers are encouraged and welcomed within all classrooms.

It is important to point out that once a student is enrolled at Sequoia Redwood, they don't leave. Parents often comment that their children are safe, happy and comfortable with the family atmosphere that defines the Redwood environment. The student population is small but stable as the families do not tend to be transitory.

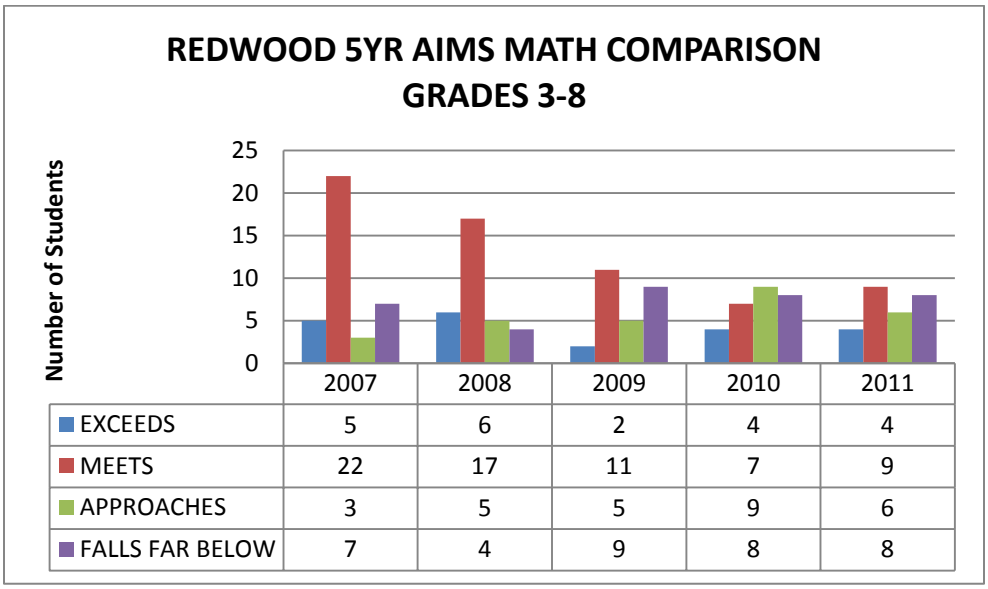
Based on the past five years 100th day numbers, Redwood's attendance reflects a high of 82 students during the 2007-08 school year and a low of 58 students in 2010-11. The 2011-12 school year shows an increase of 18 students to 77. Please see chart on page 10 for complete attendance data for the 40th & 100th days from 2007-2012.

## *Historical Improvement Efforts*

### ***Curriculum and standards alignment to increase student achievement***

Over the past five years Redwood teachers have used a mixed bag of curricular materials that range from outdated text books to the internet. Due to the inconsistent nature of the varied curriculum use and lack of vertical alignment, state testing and district benchmark assessment results have been mixed.

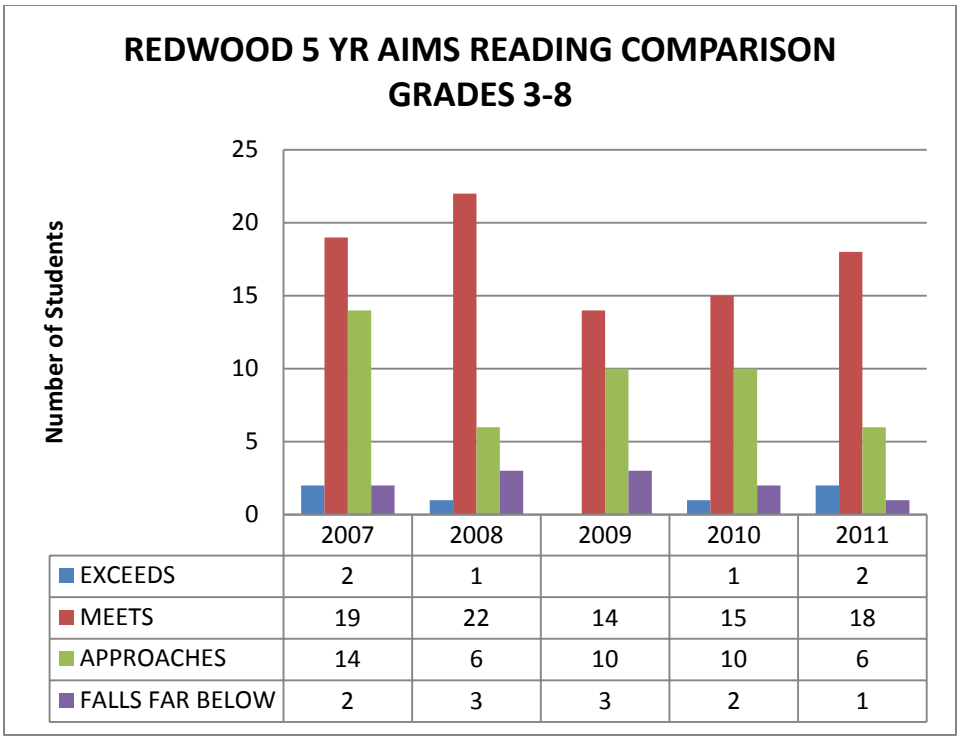
# Sequoia Redwood AIMS test data 2007-2011




| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EXCEEDS | 5 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| MEETS | 22 | 17 | 11 | 7 | 9 |
| APPROACHES | 3 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 6 |
| FALLS FAR BELOW | 7 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 8 |

MATHEMATICS

In 2007 and 2008, approximately 72% of the Redwood students met or exceeded their AIMS mathematics state exam. Although there has been a decline in the percentage of students passing in 2009 and 2010, test scores appear to be back on the rise in 2011. Regrettably, the decline in student performance evidenced in 2009 and ensuing years, can be contributed to a decrease in funding which required the school to establish multi-age classrooms. This classroom restructuring was even more significant in grades 3-8.




| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EXCEEDS | 2 | 1 | | 1 | 2 |
| MEETS | 19 | 22 | 14 | 15 | 18 |
| APPROACHES | 14 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 6 |
| FALLS FAR BELOW | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

READING

As shown on the graph to the left, Redwood students have had success in their AIMS reading scores. 72% of the students in 2008 met or exceeded, but the future looks especially bright as 74% of the students in 2011 met or exceeded and only 1 student fell far below. The implementation of a common curriculum resource will continue to assist in student achievement gains.

Despite the lack of consistency, the organization has implemented a number of processes and procedures to enhance the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and alignment to state standards. In 2008, the organization outlined a policy requiring all teachers to construct curriculum maps aligned with state standards. Training and support was given to provide guidance and direction for this initiative. This policy was implemented in the 2009-2010 school year. Continuous review and revision is conducted to refine the curriculum maps and the effectiveness of instruction. Significant progress has been made during the 2011-2012 school year with regard to curriculum mapping and alignment. The organization, in response to Common Core, began an initiative to work collaboratively with all teachers at each grade level to unwrap standards in order to create a district wide curriculum guide. This initiative is in the infancy stages and completion is expected at the conclusion of the 2012-2013 school year, prior to the state mandated implementation of the Common Core standards. This collaborative approach to unwrapping the standards has empowered staff and allowed small staff at Redwood an opportunity to enhance their working knowledge of the standards.

## ***Development and implementation of a monitoring system focused on the integration of Arizona Academic Standards and instruction***

Up until a year and half ago, Sequoia Schools did not have a consistent district-wide teacher evaluation system. Sequoia schools for the most part relied on site-based evaluation tools. Sequoia Redwood made use of the Teach for Success (RT4S) evaluation tool to monitor teacher effectiveness. Regrettably this evaluation protocol was used in an inconsistent manner due to a lack of accountability. This is no longer the situation at Sequoia Schools, as a charter-wide evaluation system is now in place.

The evaluation system has been upgraded to support teachers with curriculum and instruction. In addition, the new Arizona Department of Education teacher accountability guidelines have required all schools to make the Classroom Site Fund 33% of the teacher's evaluation. This piece has been added to the current Sequoia Schools evaluation process.

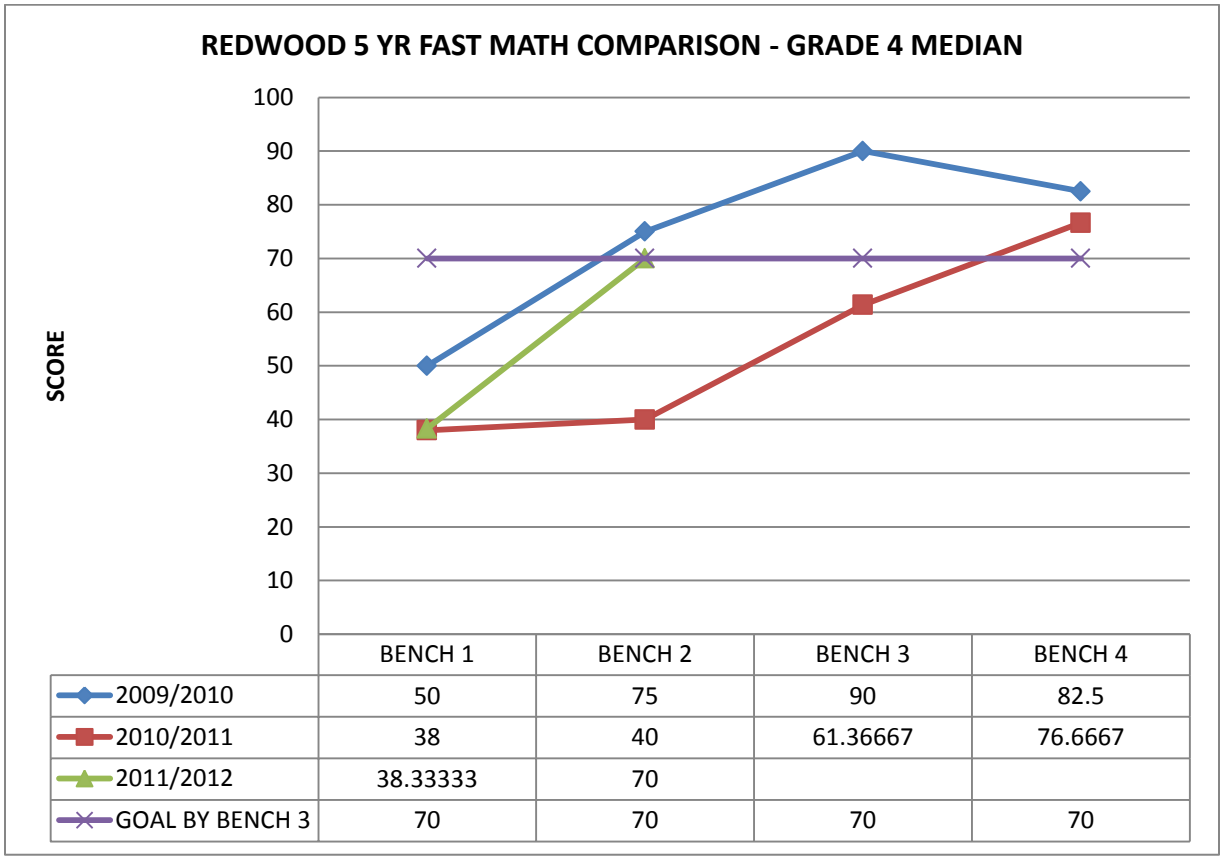
In addition to preparing SMART Goals for the 301 Plan process, the Redwood teaching staff will include curriculum and instruction, community, and professional development components within their plans. See document "Sequoia Schools Supervision and Evaluation for Teaching Effectiveness" addendum exhibits evaluation segment 2A-D for more specifics.

## ***Development and implementation of a monitoring system focused on the student proficiency***

Prior to the implementation of charter wide assessments, Redwood utilized curriculum based assessment to monitor student progress. Sequoia Schools initiatives focusing on student achievement in mathematics was evidenced by the creation and implementation of the FAST Math assessment program. This program provides common formative assessments as well as benchmark assessments. This program is directly aligned to 2008 Arizona Mathematics Standards. The Sequoia

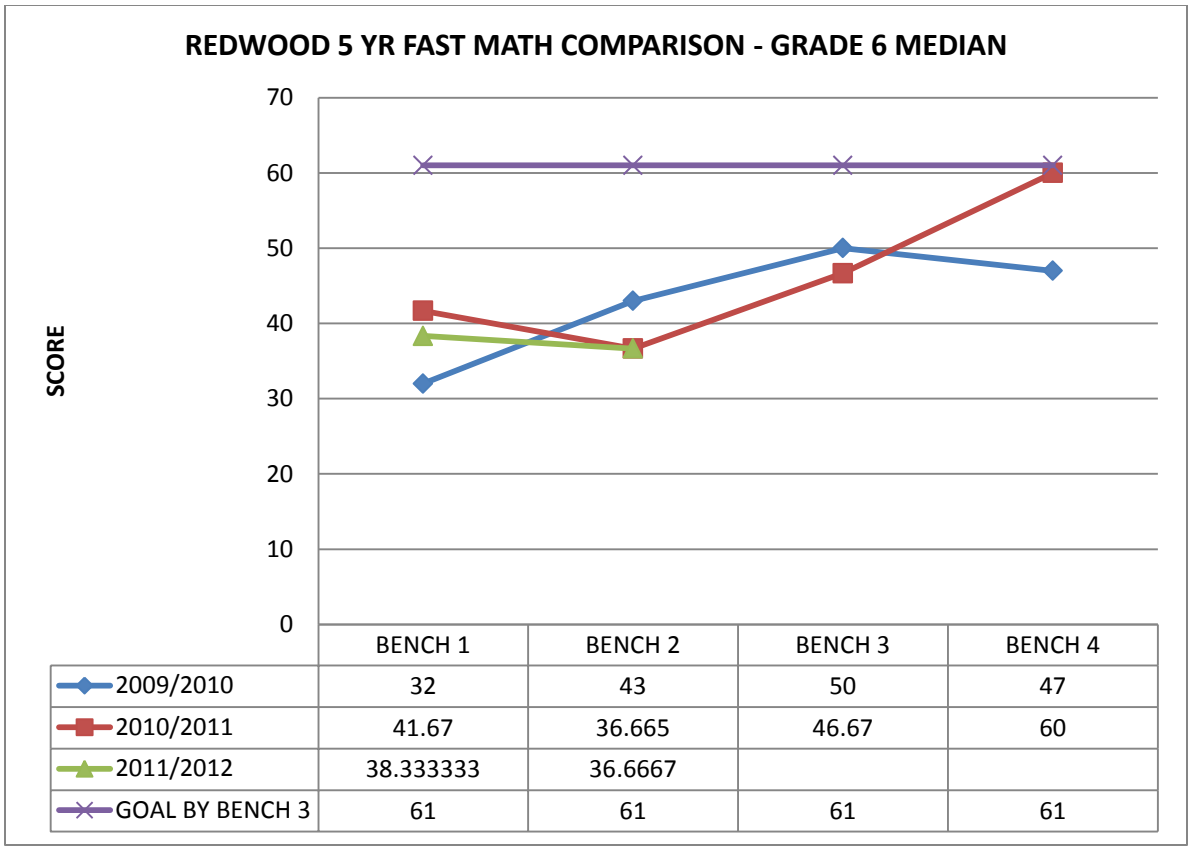
Schools instructional team is currently in the process of working collaboratively with the teaching staff to align the new Common Core standards and FAST Math.

The data below shows student achievement on the FAST math assessment system for the last 3 years, despite the fact that FAST math has been in use for the last 5 years. Prior to 2009, there was not a formalized assessment timeline in place. The creation of this expectation and timeline has allowed us to effectively track student performance in recent years.




| | BENCH 1 | BENCH 2 | BENCH 3 | BENCH 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2009/2010 | 50 | 75 | 90 | 82.5 |
| 2010/2011 | 38 | 40 | 61.36667 | 76.6667 |
| 2011/2012 | 38.33333 | 70 | | |
| GOAL BY BENCH 3 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 |

This data indicates that despite the lack of curriculum resources, we are effectively instructing our students with mathematic concepts. The FAST Math program illustrates a strong correlation between FAST Math performance and AIMS performance.

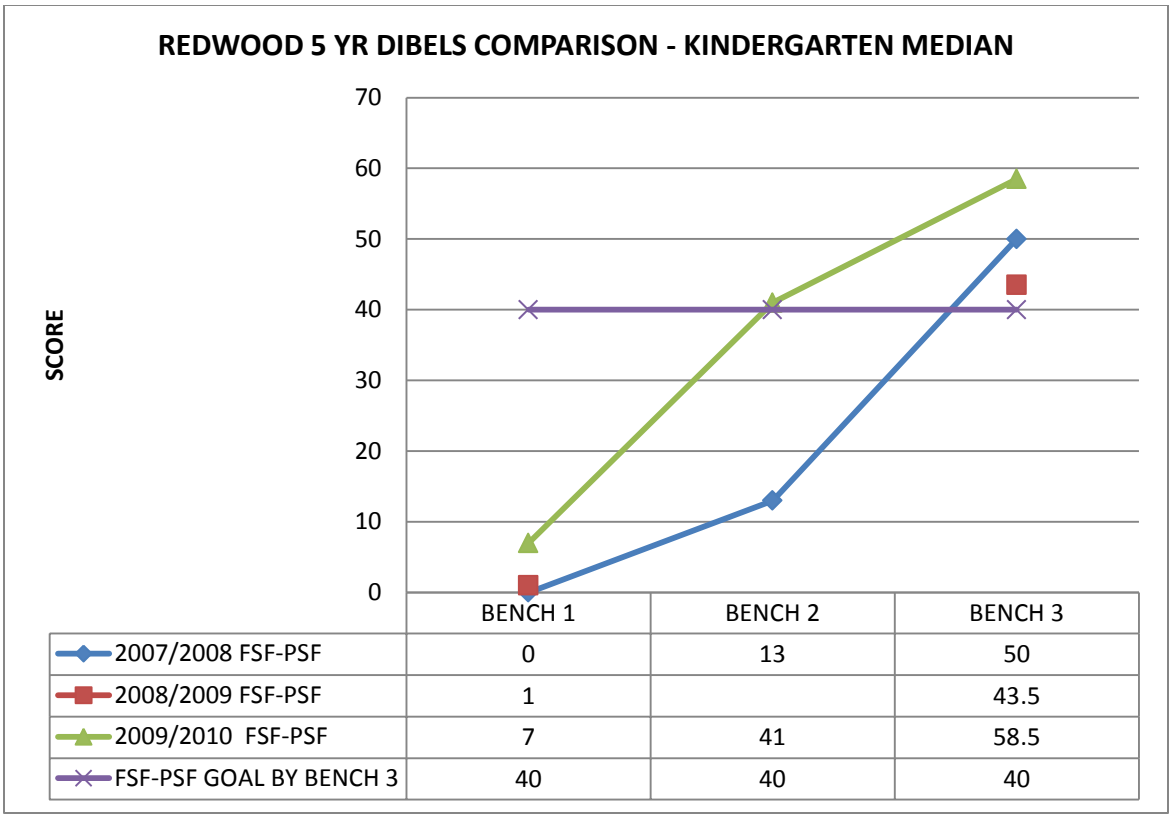



| | BENCH 1 | BENCH 2 | BENCH 3 | BENCH 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2009/2010 | 32 | 43 | 50 | 47 |
| 2010/2011 | 41.67 | 36.665 | 46.67 | 60 |
| 2011/2012 | 38.333333 | 36.6667 | | |
| GOAL BY BENCH 3 | 61 | 61 | 61 | 61 |

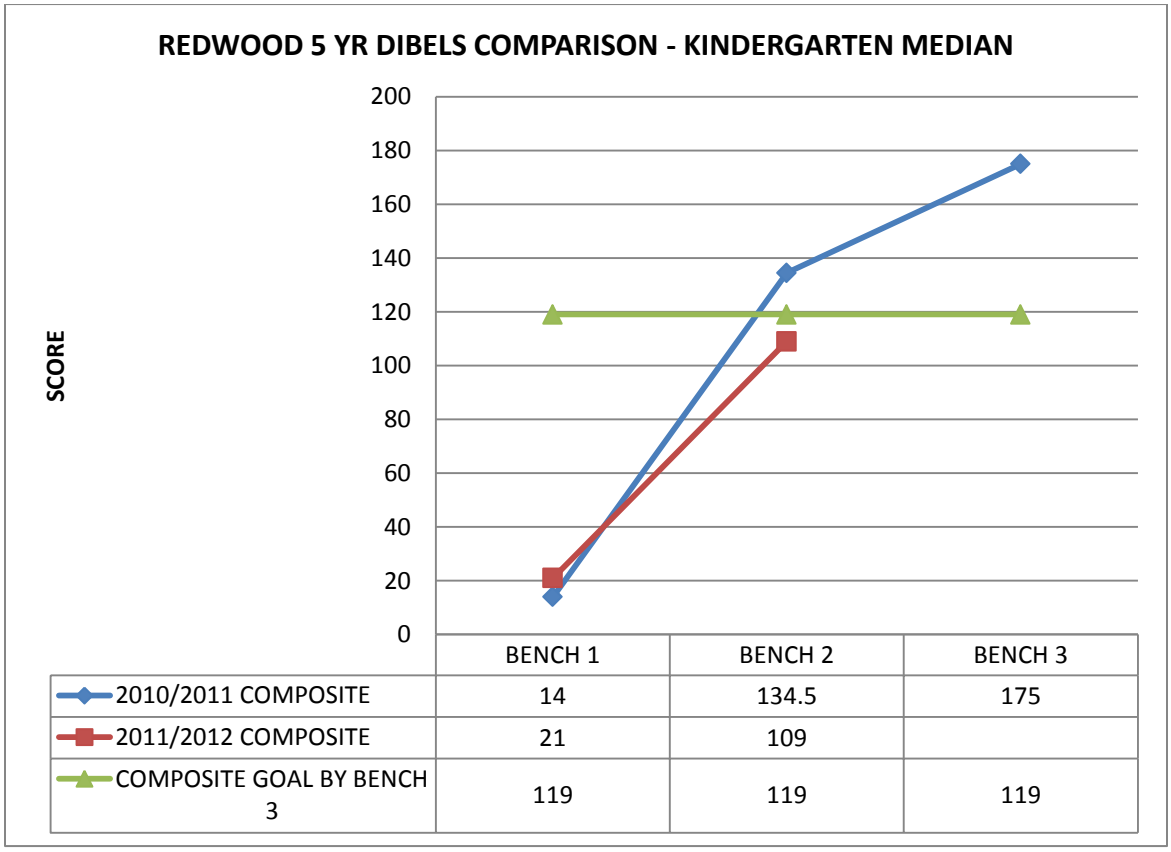
This data indicates progress, yet it is insufficient to ensure student success on AIMS. By implementing common curricular resources, it is our belief that student achievement will be in line with the correlated goal for FAST Math.

For assessment and monitoring of ELA skills, a myriad of programs were utilized prior to 2009. Data is invalid and not available for comparable analysis. In 2010, the organization utilized a computer based common assessment (DORA) to monitor and evaluate student progress (page 9). In addition, DIBELS data helps to support effective instruction. With DIBELS data, the state made changes in how data was reported and therefore there are multiple graphs to represent DIBELS data (as shown on pages 7 and 8).

The use of common formative and summative assessments has allowed for deeper, more meaningful conversations about student progress and achievement, across schools and grade levels.

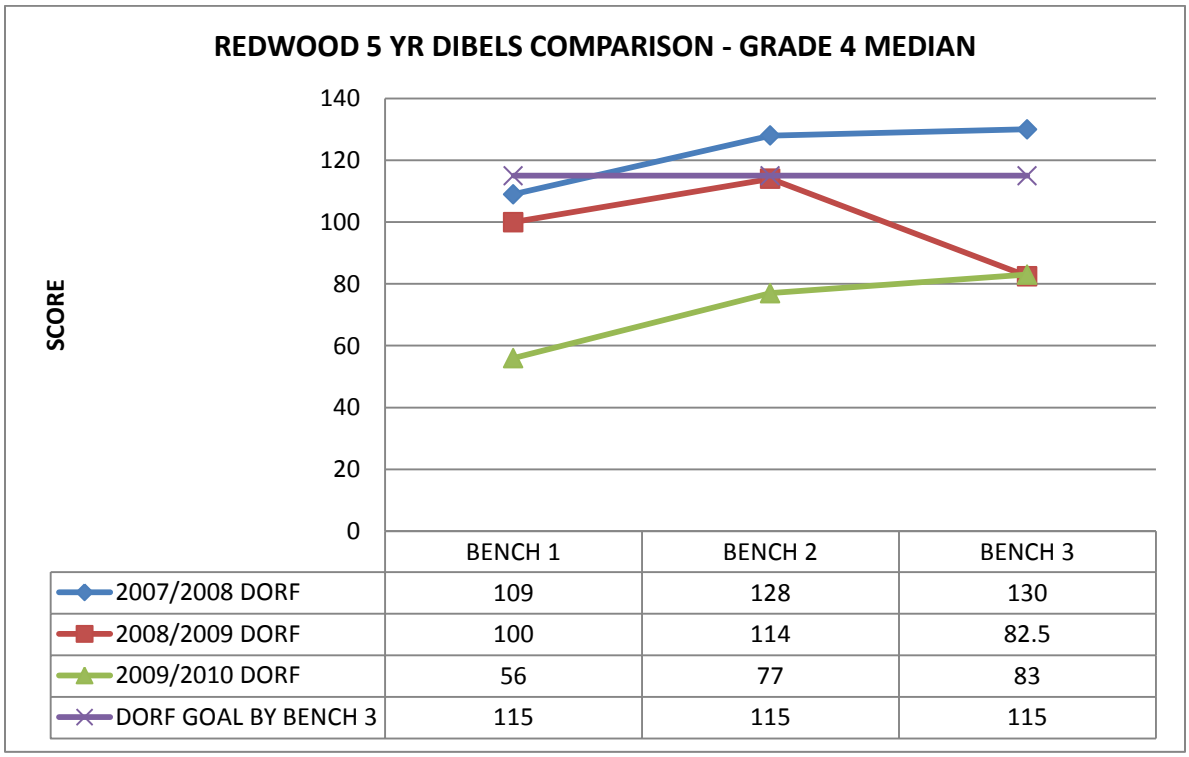



| | BENCH 1 | BENCH 2 | BENCH 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2007/2008 FSF-PSF | 0 | 13 | 50 |
| 2008/2009 FSF-PSF | 1 | | 43.5 |
| 2009/2010 FSF-PSF | 7 | 41 | 58.5 |
| FSF-PSF GOAL BY BENCH 3 | 40 | 40 | 40 |

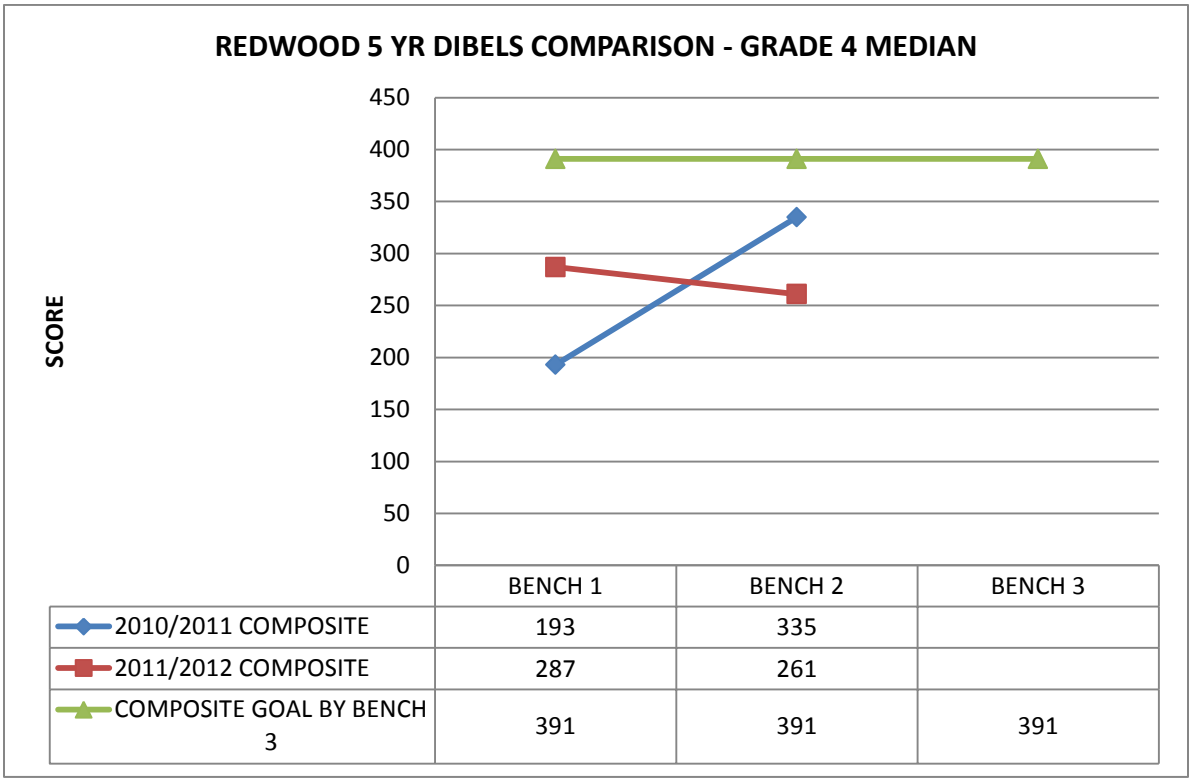



| | BENCH 1 | BENCH 2 | BENCH 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2010/2011 COMPOSITE | 14 | 134.5 | 175 |
| 2011/2012 COMPOSITE | 21 | 109 | |
| COMPOSITE GOAL BY BENCH 3 | 119 | 119 | 119 |

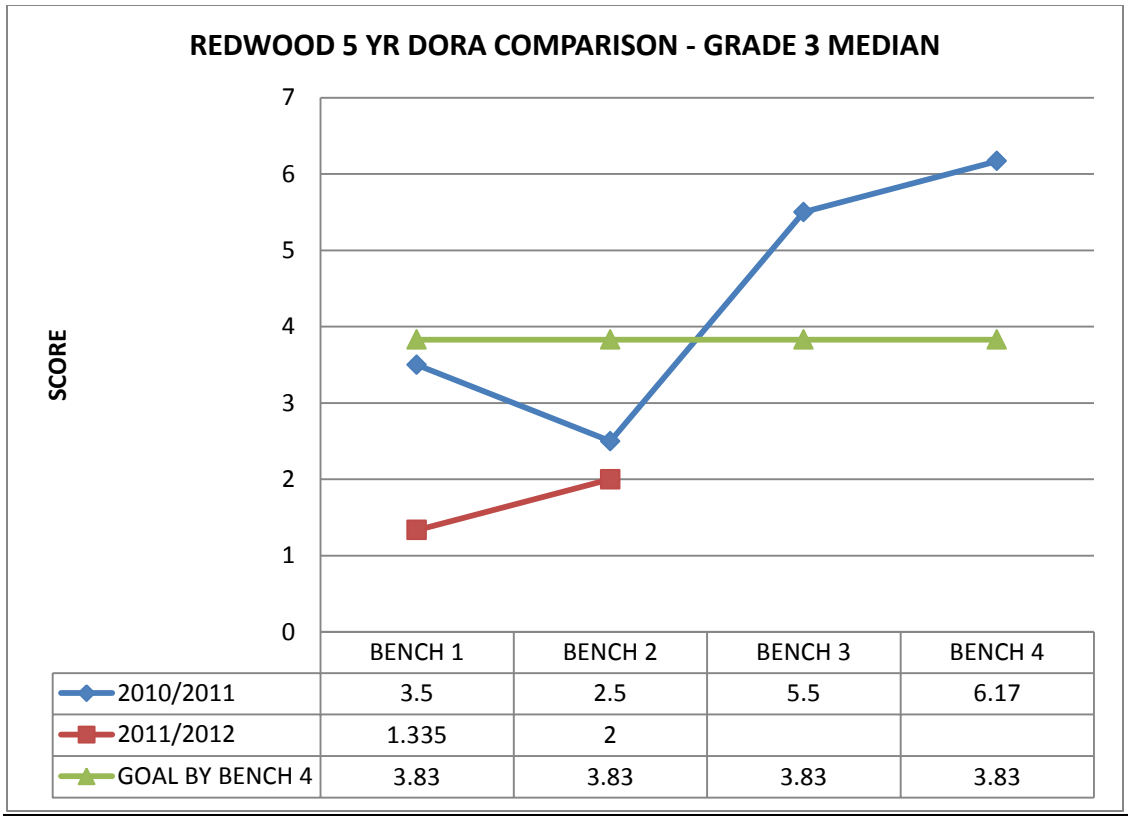
This data indicates that instruction has been effective for the lower grade levels with regard to the DIBELS assessment. The issues again become evident in the upper grade levels where performance is well below the expected goal.



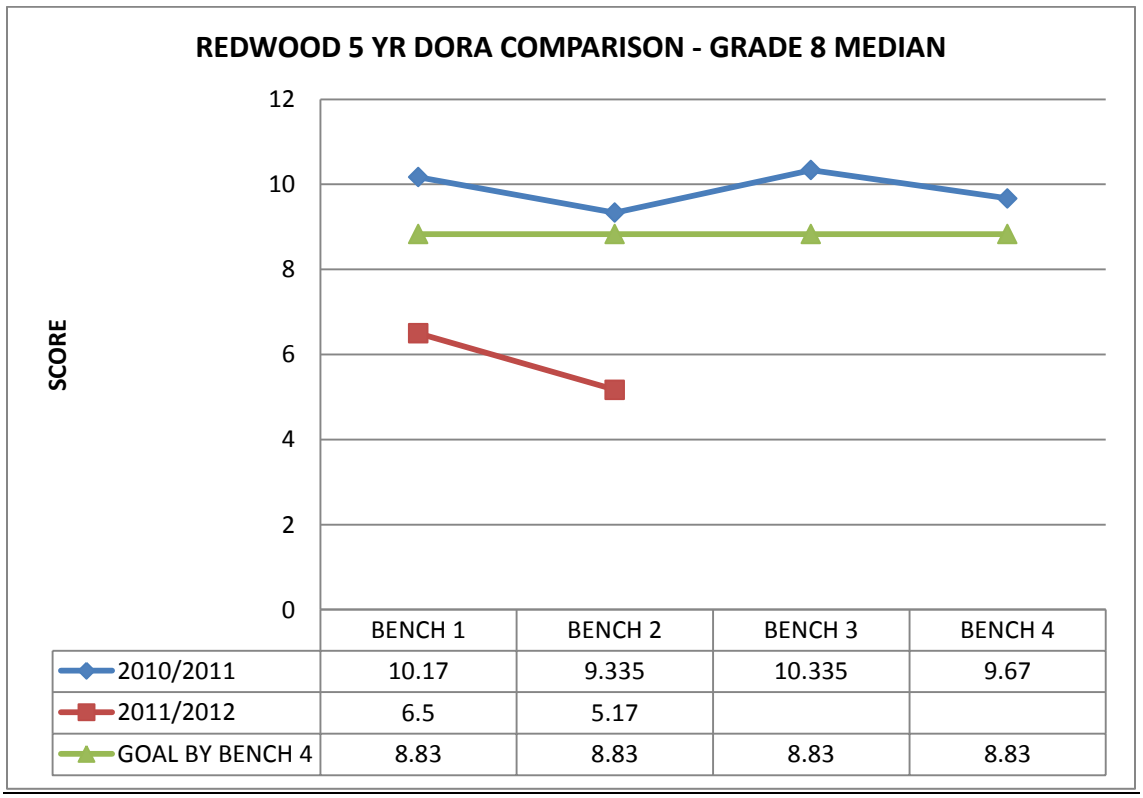

| | BENCH 1 | BENCH 2 | BENCH 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2007/2008 DORF | 109 | 128 | 130 |
| 2008/2009 DORF | 100 | 114 | 82.5 |
| 2009/2010 DORF | 56 | 77 | 83 |
| DORF GOAL BY BENCH 3 | 115 | 115 | 115 |




| | BENCH 1 | BENCH 2 | BENCH 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2010/2011 COMPOSITE | 193 | 335 | |
| 2011/2012 COMPOSITE | 287 | 261 | |
| COMPOSITE GOAL BY BENCH 3 | 391 | 391 | 391 |




| | BENCH 1 | BENCH 2 | BENCH 3 | BENCH 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2010/2011 | 3.5 | 2.5 | 5.5 | 6.17 |
| 2011/2012 | 1.335 | 2 | | |
| GOAL BY BENCH 4 | 3.83 | 3.83 | 3.83 | 3.83 |




| | BENCH 1 | BENCH 2 | BENCH 3 | BENCH 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2010/2011 | 10.17 | 9.335 | 10.335 | 9.67 |
| 2011/2012 | 6.5 | 5.17 | | |
| GOAL BY BENCH 4 | 8.83 | 8.83 | 8.83 | 8.83 |

Student attendance also plays a key role in the analysis of the data sets. It is important to note that when Redwood has isolated grade levels (attendance was high) student performance was better. As multi-age classes were established, performance declined.

| **40th day** | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-2011 | 2011-12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ADM | 3134 | 2533.25 | 2398.5 | 2207.5 | 2780.5 |
| ADA | 2908 | 2333 | 2217.25 | 2107.75 | 2615 |
| Attendance % | 92.79% | 92.10% | 92.44% | 95.48% | 94.05% |
| Students | 78.35 | 63.33 | 59.96 | 55.19 | 69.51 |

| **100th day** | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-2011 | 2011-12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ADM | 4946 | 3831.5 | 3642.5 | 3504.5 | 3989 |
| ADA | 4421.5 | 3528.5 | 3328.5 | 3289.5 | 3627 |
| Attendance % | 89.40% | 92.10% | 91.38% | 93.86% | 90.92% |
| Students | 82.43 | 63.86 | 60.71 | 58.41 | 76.71 |

## ***Development and implementation of a professional development plan***

Prior to the 2011-2012 school year, professional development was the responsibility of the site administrator. This presented a unique problem for Redwood staff as most teachers were responsible for multiple grade levels of instruction. Little focused direction or purpose was evidenced in the professional development opportunities during this time.

Sequoia Schools implemented six professional development non-student (charter wide) days during the 2011-12 school year. The purpose of these days was to develop collegiality among staff, and encourage collaboration between schools. This was and continues to be highly effective as it allows Redwood staff to discuss curriculum, instructional strategies, assessments and data with grade level peers.

The PD days will continue for the 2012-13 school year; however the topics will be more focused primarily concentrating on staff training for the implementation of professional learning communities.

## *2012-13 School Year General Plan of Action*

Sequoia Redwood will be moving yet again for the 2012-13 school year. This move is quite different from that experienced in 2009. A great amount of time has been spent researching an environment that will allow Redwood to fulfill its potential to be a highly successful school.

Sequoia Redwood's new home will stand across the street from its sister excelling school, Arizona Conservatory for Arts and Academics (ACAA). Redwood will become a feeder school for ACAA (which is a grade 6-12 middle/high school). The new Sequoia Redwood building will be a much larger building (26,500 sq. ft.) than its current location. The building interior will be brand new consisting of:

- 15 classrooms
- auditorium
- computer lab/media center
- kitchen
- 3 offices with a conference room
- teacher prep area and lunch room
- inviting and attractive entrance/lobby
- ample storage

In addition, students attending the new Redwood campus will enjoy a large grassy playground and a covered play set.

Academically, Redwood will institute the following dynamics mirroring practices that are already in place at ACAA:

- There will be curriculum alignment between the elementary school (Redwood) and the secondary school (ACAA)
- Integrate visual and performing arts within the elementary master schedule.
- Implement teacher professional learning communities focused on increasing student achievement
- Build a student intervention time model to address varied levels of student performance to ensure increased academic achievement

These bulleted points are just a handful of the positive "student centered" academic initiatives that the staff at Sequoia Redwood is preparing to establish for the 2012-13 school year.

## *Explanation of Sequoia Redwoods Performance Management Plan*

### STRATEGY I: *Provide and implement a curriculum that improves student achievement.*

- **Action Step 1:** Purchase and implement Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) mathematics & language Arts curriculum.

With the advent of the common core standards, the need for a stable curriculum from a respected, results oriented publisher was an absolute necessity. Empowering Redwood's staff with HMH curriculum in both mathematics and language arts ensures all instructors will be in academic alignment.

As evidenced in the AIMS data analysis, it is our belief that implementing a common resource will allow for increased collaboration and allow for vertical alignment between grade levels to ensure increased student achievement.

Evidence of the effectiveness of this implementation will be seen in increased district benchmarking scores as well as state standardized assessments. It is important to note, that the projected student achievement increase will be evidenced over the course of the next 3-5 years. As with any instructional change, staff training is vital to this being a successful endeavor.

Resources for the purchase of these curriculum materials have been built into the 2012-2013 budget as evidenced in the Performance Management Plan Template.

- **Action Step 2:** Review and revise current mathematics and language arts curriculum maps to reflect integration of the common core standards.

The staff at Redwood has relied on a "patchwork" set of curriculum maps that is not always indicative of what instructors are actually teaching. Due to charter wide professional development days, Redwood's CMAPs improved via collegial input and support, but still reflected a curriculum direction that was haphazard at best. The Redwood staff is committed to aligning the common core standards as reflected in the new HMH curriculum *(see strategy 1, action step 1)*. As noted within The Sequoia Schools teacher evaluation process, all teachers employed by Sequoia Schools must have an accurate and up-to-date curriculum map on file with the site administration before the new school year begins *(see strategy 2)*.

- **Action Step 3:** Review and revise current Response to Intervention (RTI) Program.

Redwood has struggled in the area of student academic intervention. Although the staff at Redwood does meet periodically to discuss struggling students identified via the child find/45 day screening, the actual task of carrying out response to intervention (RTI) has fallen on the shoulder of the schools lone Title 1 paraprofessional. The staff is cognizant that RTI must be addressed by the classroom teachers and integrated within their daily lessons.

With the support of Sequoia Schools Directors of Special Education and Professional Development, a curriculum (HMH) with RTI imbedded within, daily student intervention built into the master schedule, and on site professional learning communities, the staff will be afforded the necessary tools and time necessary to implement a meaningful and successful RTI program.

- **Action Step 4:** On site academic tutoring and academic enrichment available for all students every Friday morning from 8:00 am- 12:00 pm (note: Next year, Redwood students will attend school Monday through Thursday).

One of the problems faced by the staff at Sequoia Redwood is limited time for student academic intervention, enrichment and creativity. Adding to this problem is the lack of manpower (i.e. 4 teachers juggling 9 grades levels).

With the move to its new larger location (resulting in a significantly larger staff), Redwood will adopt the Monday through Thursday (144 day) instructional day model. By replicating ACAA's highly successful 4 day instructional format, students enrolled at Redwood will benefit (as ACAA students have for several years) from time allocated on Friday for academic intervention and enrichment programs.

## STRATEGY 2: *Develop and implement a plan for monitoring the integration of the Arizona Academic Standards into instruction*.

- **Action Step 1:** Utilize Sequoia Schools Teacher Evaluation System.

This action step is discussed in detail on page 4 under the heading, *Development and implementation of a monitoring system focused on the integration of Arizona Academic Standards and instruction*.

- **Action Step 2:** Implementation of pre-observation conference checklist

Currently no pre-observation conferences take place with the Redwood staff. Expectations are shared through staff meetings, but very little one-on-one conference time actually takes place.

The pre-observation conference will be facilitated within the first month of school and before the first classroom observation takes place. The purpose of the pre-observation conference checklist is to set teacher expectations and ensure that classroom practices are aligned with the school's expectations. See document "Sequoia Schools Supervision and Evaluation for Teaching Effectiveness" addendum exhibits evaluation segment 1B for more specifics.

- **Action Step 3:** Integration of Sequoia Schools Teacher Observation Model

This is one of Redwood's strengths. However, Redwood will be upgrading the current model by integrating more theories from Madeline Hunter's model.

The model uses the basic foundations of Madeline Hunter's observation tools. Each teacher will receive professional development on the model. The model will be used every time a teacher is observed. See document "Sequoia Schools Supervision and Evaluation for Teaching Effectiveness" addendum exhibits evaluation segment 1A & E for more specifics.

- **Action Step 4:** Implementation of structured teacher lesson plans

Currently Redwood's teaching staff is using an inconsistent structured teacher lesson plan format. In addition, the current principal, who is also a full time instructor, has not asked to review lesson plans or have lesson plans presented to him prior to formal observations.

Teacher expectations for the 2012-13 school year will be dramatically different. Each teacher will create structured lesson plans based on specific components of "delivery effective instruction". The lesson template is currently available via Sequoia Schools professional development website resources. See document "Sequoia Schools Supervision and Evaluation for Teaching Effectiveness" addendum exhibits evaluation segment 1C-E for more specifics.

### Strategy 3: *Develop and implement a plan for monitoring and documenting student proficiency.*

- ***Action Step 1:*** FAST Math quarterly student benchmark assessments will be given quarterly. (Mathematics)
- ***Action Step 1:*** Diagnostic On-line Reading Assessment (DORA) to assess student progress will be given quarterly. (Reading)

Redwood is currently monitoring student benchmark assessments via FAST Math Scope & Sequence (created by Sequoia Schools) and DORA (a computer based assessment). However, due to the lack of time and personnel for meaningful intervention, in addition to a weak professional

learning community (PLC), the data is not driving academic instruction. With the adoption of the new curriculum (HMH), the move to the new facility, a longer school day, and a stronger PLC teachers will have time to evaluate the data and time to provide daily intervention.

- ***Action Step 2:*** Student academic progress will be monitored using FAST Math scope and sequence micro-assessments. (Mathematics)

Redwood currently assesses with FAST Math micro-assessments. It is the only tool which currently drives instruction for math. There has been a lack of time for meaningful intervention and a weak curriculum in use. Currently, one teacher instructs the entire student body from grades 3 to 8 in math. The teacher has had no prep-time to prepare for each of the grade's instruction. With the adoption of the new curriculum (HMH), a longer school day, a time assigned to provide students with daily intervention/enrichment, a Friday morning opportunity for students to receive tutoring/enrichment, and an active PLC, teachers will now have ample opportunity to properly prepare their students in all facets of learning.

- ***Action Step 2:*** Student academic progress will be monitored using Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) at least three times per year. (Reading)

Redwood currently assesses with Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) in reading. There has been a lack of time for meaningful intervention and a weak curriculum in use. There are a very few teachers which means that multi-grades are being taught in one classroom. Teachers have had no prep-time to prepare for each of the grade's instruction. With the adoption of the new curriculum (HMH), a longer school day, a time assigned to provide students with daily intervention/enrichment, a Friday morning opportunity for students to receive tutoring/enrichment, and an active PLC teachers will have opportunity to prepare students to be proficient in reading.

- ***Action Step 3:*** Teachers, students and parents will be able to monitor student academic progress through the means of Powerschool management database system.

Currently, the staff at Sequoia Redwood only utilizes the Powerschool program for attendance and administrative records. Teachers have not adopted PowerTeacher (located within the Powerschool platform) for their grade book, which would empower the teacher to post real-time academic performance records.

Access to monitor student performance has not been provided to parents and students. Teachers will begin to keep their grades in the PowerTeacher. Redwood will open the student/parent porthole in Powerschool. This access will allow students/parents to monitor grades in real time. In August 2012, the school will issue usernames and passwords to students/parents to utilize their porthole to monitor academic progress. The school's parent activity group will be encouraged to

actively promote, train, and encourage parents to constantly check for student academic progress through Powerschool.

- ***Action Step 4:*** The Student Intervention Team (SIT) process to monitor student placement will be reorganized to address all facets of student academic, behavior and socialization skills.

Sequoia Redwood does not have a Student Intervention Team (SIT) process currently in place. Staff meetings were held to discuss student academic progress generally on Friday (half day schedule), but the process was very informal. Parents were involved on a limited basis.

Redwood will implement the SIT program and will use the following procedures to guide the process.

1. New students will have a 45-day screening form completed by a team of teachers within the allotted time. The form will be evaluated by an administrator and sent to the Student Intervention Team chairperson. Any student who has academic, behavioral, and/or social concerns may be re-evaluated using the 45-day screening.
2. The school will hold meetings as needed to discuss students who have been identified with concerns. The SIT Chairperson, an administrator, the classroom teacher(s), and if necessary the special education teacher will constitute the team. Parents will be invited to be included on the team. The discussion will include academic performance (all previous scores will be included AIMS, benchmark tests, teacher assessments, etc.), behavior concerns, and/or social concerns. Each student referred to the SIT will be placed in either level 2 or level 3 in the RTI process (depending on level of concern). Modifications will be outlined by the team for the classroom teacher(s) to implement. A follow-up meeting for each specific student will be held within 30 days of the initial meeting to evaluate the success of the modification. This will be repeated until all efforts have been exhausted or adequate improvement is seen. At this point, if necessary, the student will be referred to the special education department for evaluation.

## STRATEGY IV: Develop and implement a professional development plan that supports effective implementation of the curriculum.

- **Action Step 1:** Training on new mathematics and language arts curriculum via Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

All present and new Redwood staff will receive in depth training during June and July of 2012 to prepare for the implementation of the new curriculum.

- **Action Step 2:** Sequoia Charter Wide Professional Development Days

Sequoia Schools implemented six professional development non-student (charter wide) days during the 2011-12 school year. The PD days will continue for the 2012-13 school year; however the topics

will be more focused primarily concentrating on staff training for the implementation of professional learning communities.

The staff at Sequoia Redwood greatly benefitted from the collegial sharing of ideas, data interpretation, and classroom management topics that drove the 2011-12 PD days. However, due to the fact that three of the four instructors at Redwood teach multiple elementary levels, staff felt that they did not benefit as much as they could have had they been able to focus on only one specific grade level. Next year, teachers will more than likely be able to teach one grade level.

- **Action Step 3:** Implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLC's)

A common complaint voiced by the Redwood staff is they do not have preparation time during the school day. This will no longer be a problem due to a larger staff and a school master schedule that will allow for teacher collaboration while school is in session.

Redwood will form two or three teacher led PLC's prior to the start of the 2012-13 school year. These teachers will meet a minimum of twice weekly sharing the same preparation time (as dictated by the elementary master schedule). These same teachers will share students during an intervention/enrichment time set aside every day (Monday through Thursday).

- **Action Step 4:** Implementation of a Peer mentoring Program

The task of implementing the strategies/action steps as described above is an enormous job for site administrators alone to undertake. Add in the fact that Redwood's staff will more than triple (with first year teachers and/or teachers new to Sequoia School) and Redwood's mission could be overwhelming. It is essential that there is a sharing of responsibility within the teaching staff to form a collaborative team of mentors.

# District Level Instructional Support Team

Sequoia provides a district level team to support all of the academic programs at Redwood. Listed below are the team members and their responsibilities.

| Name | Title | Responsibilities |
|---|---|---|
| **Ms Tamara Becker MSEd** | **Director of Professional Development** | • Oversees all aspects of professional development training, activities and implementation.<br>• Provides researches and training on professional learning communities (PLC's) for implementation at all Sequoia Schools during 2012-13 school year.<br>• Works with principals and teachers on BEST practices training at their school site.<br>• Sequoia has invested heavily in training at the administrative and teacher level in the Dufour Model of Professional Learning Communities we have utilized Title II monies for this purpose. |
| **Ms Becky Wong MSEd** | **Instructional Support Team** | • Works with principals and teachers on BEST practices training within the school site.<br>• Facilities unwrapping of Common Core standards in Mathematics and English.<br>• Develops and prepares teaching aids to implement Common Core standards.<br>• Supports new teachers to Sequoia and to the profession.<br>• Provides support for the FAST Math program.<br>• Writing Committee Facilitator (Six Traits and Beyond) |
| **Ms Jodi Fults MSEd** | **FAST Math Coordinator** | • Creates and maintains the FAST Math assessment program aligned to state/common core standards. (See data charts in assessment area of this report)<br>• Grades and prepares Fast Math benchmark data for interpretation at the school site.<br>• Facilitates Unwrapping Common Core Mathematics Standards.<br>• Modify and revise FAST Math Assessment Program (Sequoia Proprietary Mathematics Benchmark) to accommodate Common Core change.<br>• Trains teachers/principals to administer Fast Math Assessment Program. |

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| **Ms Kemberlyn Cotter** | **DORA/Writing Coordinator** | • Trains teachers/principals on how to administer/interpret DORA & writing benchmarks.<br>• Writing Committee Facilitator (Six Traits and Beyond) |
| **Ms Rachelle Hanson** | **ELL Director** | • Oversees Sequoia Schools ELL program.<br>• Writes and manages ELL grants.<br>• Supports site administration with ELL compliance. |
| **Ms Melinda Poit 2 MAs** | **Data Analyst** | • Organizes all benchmark/AIMS/etc… data for interpretation at all levels within the Sequoia School Organization.<br>• Hired in 2011 as part of our comprehensive move to Data Driven Decision Making |
| **Ms Tammy Richardson MS** | **Librarian and Archivist** | • Librarian for Horne Campus Schools<br>• District AIMS Coordinator<br>• Professional Development Coach |
| **Ms Maxie Patel MSEd** | **Title 1 Coordinator** | • Works with Grants Coordinator<br>• Assists with Title 1 compliance at all sites<br>• Works with principals and teachers on BEST practices training.<br>• Professional Development Coach<br>• Trains teachers/principals how to administer/interpret DIBELS. |

In addition to this team, a technology team consisting of Systems Management Professionals, Technicians, Programmers, and a Director of Technology ensure that Sequoia Schools are all technologically prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

District level support for Special Education includes a full special education team and a Sequoia run special education placement for ED students.

Title I and II services are supported by two dedicated staff at the central office added in the 2009 school year. As of the 2011-2012 school year, all Title IIA funding is dedicated to the implementation of professional learning communities system wide.

Our interest in the whole child led Sequoia to hire a Director (in 2010) of Health and Wellness who also oversees the School Safety Programs.

Sequoia Schools' personalized learning approach keeps the student at the center of the education model and is designed to empower the student to envision and achieve lifelong success. Each employee is dedicated and responsible for their student's success. These values are reflected in the following District Visions and Goals.

**Sequoia District-Wide Initiatives that Promote Best Practices**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Supervision and Evaluation Program** | Professional Grade Model (see attached documentation) for the supervision and evaluation of teachers and principals. |
| **Data Driven Decision Making** | Professionally developed and monitored benchmarks in mathematics, reading, and writing with extensive district level support including dedicated data professionals and area specialists. |
| **Policies and Procedures** | Web based, linked support for staff on Sequoia policies and procedures, including academic, social curriculum, professional and disciplinary supports. |
| **Curriculum Maps and Curriculum Alignment to State and Common Core Standards** | Policy, procedures and requirements for curriculum maps from each teacher.<br>District wide participation of staff in the unwrapping of common core standards and their impact on curriculum.<br>Common Formative Assessments in Mathematics for all grade levels aligned to state and common core standards. |
| **Professional Learning Communities** | District wide and school level PLC's supported by a district administration.<br>Common Professional Development Days and expectations for school level PLC's.<br>Professional Development Coaches at each grade level and in each Jr. High and High School subject area.<br>Profession Development for principals with paid scholarships to AZ Principals' Academy and regular professional development at the district for principals. |
| **Academic Language Support** | Training, and implementation of Marzano's et all, Building Academic Vocabulary. |

**Addendum**

The following narrative:

- ✓ Describes the initiatives outlined on the prior page.
- ✓ Provides a context of how they were developed
- ✓ Describes the implementation process
- ✓ Describes the monitoring process
- ✓ Includes policies and procedures related to the initiative
- ✓ Describes the integration with Arizona and National Academic Standards
- ✓ Discusses professional development associated with the initiatives
- ✓ Analyzes tools used to review the data and the data's relationship to improving student achievement
- ✓ Relates this through supervision and evaluation with teacher effectiveness
- ✓ Describes the data presentation used in the school's narrative, and how it is related to our management plan

**Sequoia Supervision and Evaluation Process**

Fully implemented in 2010 – 2011 the Sequoia Supervision and Evaluation process is documented and fully reproduced in the documentation provided to the Charter School Board for each school's renewal. (See: Sequoia Supervision and Evaluation Model for Teacher (and Principal) Effectiveness). Work on this implementation began in 2009 (prior to any State mandate). Mr. Neil and the board had used several tools prior to committing to asking the staff to develop the attached model.

The Sequoia supervision and evaluation program is based on the premise that supervision and evaluation of the instructional program is essential to the efficacy and professional growth of the teacher and principal. Any performance management plan for a school must have a supporting system for supervision and evaluation that is designed to increase teaching effectiveness.

We believe it is imperative that the supervisor and teacher identify, analyze, and act on the results of supervision and evaluation activities and use the data gathered in this process in a meaningful, constructive, and timely way.

The tools we have created provide this data in useful, easy to understand, and meaningful ways to the organization and to the practitioners in the field.

We believe that learners benefit from teachers who are effective in the classroom. Teacher effectiveness improves when thoughts, practices and information are shared. Effective professional conversations improve teacher's effectiveness and school performance.

At Sequoia our Supervision and Evaluation protocols were established in 2009 – 2010, and have been setting the benchmark for Supervision and Evaluation in Arizona Charter Schools. We have presented this model at the Arizona State Charter Schools Conference (2011) and to the Arizona Charter Association evaluation staff.

Monitoring is done on a DAILY basis with principals in the classroom frequently for informal observations, semi-formal observations and protocols (see model) and formal observational tools for substantive follow up for ineffective teachers. Assistant Superintendents provide this monitoring for principals utilizing a similar format and structure.

The Supervision and Evaluation process captures all of the data on each person being supervised and provides us with a way to monitor the professional growth and efficacy of each staff member. Graphic data including student feedback on performance is provided during the evaluation process.

Supervision and evaluation protocols are published and dates for monitoring the process are mandated in policy. Training in the method is continuously upgraded with special attention being given to inter-rater reliability at six annual principals' professional development days.

## DATA DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

As noted, Sequoia provides several central office level staff members to provide the schools with data analysis services. Each principal is required to submit and review State testing, Sequoia Benchmark Testing, and any survey tool that Sequoia provides. This policy is institutionalized in Policy and Procedures.

FAST MATH - Sequoia Schools uses FAST Math, an assessment program aligned to the Arizona Mathematics Standards. FAST is an acronym which stands for Focusing on Arizona Standards through Technology. FAST Math includes a Scope and Sequence for each grade level, micro-assessments aligned to each objective on the Scope and Sequence, benchmarks aligned to the essential objectives on the Scope and Sequence, and a skills test that assesses a student's knowledge of the basic math skills at each grade level. Monitoring is done at the local, district dedicated staff (see chart pages 18 and 19), and reviewed at the assistant superintendent and superintendent level.

Each quarter, Sequoia Schools Instructional Support personnel hand delivers math benchmark testing materials to grades 3 – 10. The benchmarks are then collected, scored, and the results provided to the teachers and principals. The K-2 teachers are given math benchmark testing materials at the beginning of the school year (initiated in 2011 at this level). They are responsible for administering, scoring, and recording the results of their math benchmarks. The principal monitors the results and provides feedback to the teacher regarding interventions and activities. Teachers are highly aware of the math benchmark data and use it to inform their instructional decisions. Students and parents are informed about the math benchmark results.

The development of FAST Math (Sequoia's Proprietary Program for Benchmarking Mathematics) began in 2002.

Analysis reveals a 0.88 correlation between the results on FAST MATH and success on the AZ Standards. Data for FAST MATH is presented in the Charter and School Level Narrative.

DIBELS and DORA - Sequoia Schools uses DIBELS to assist in assessment of reading performance. The principal monitors DIBELS results and provides feedback to the teacher regarding interventions and activities. Teachers need to be highly aware of the DIBELS assessment data and use it to form their instructional decisions and help struggling students get up to grade level. Students and their parents are also highly aware of the student's DIBELS assessment scores and progress. It is expected (in policy and procedures) that this discussion take place during parent conferences.

DIBELS testing is done at least once a quarter. However, for struggling students, progress monitoring with greater frequency is required by Sequoia Schools according to the following schedule:

- Weekly for at risk students
- At least every other week for students with some risk

Sequoia does not require progress monitoring of students that are at grade level on DIBELS.

DIBELS graphic results for the Charter are presented at the end of the Charter – School Level Narrative.

DORA is a norm-referenced reading comprehension assessment for grades K-12 that is administered four times each year. In addition, DORA provides a disaggregation of each student's assessment. The protocols used for DORA testing are similar to DIBLES.

AZ AIMS Testing - Annual AIMS testing is an integral part of each school's AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) and AZ LEARNS (Measurements taken by ADE to determine if each school is meeting "No Child Left Behind" and other state mandated requirements). All AIMS information can be accessed at the following site: http://www.azed.gov/standards-practices/

Special education students taking AIMS are granted various accommodations that must be followed as the test is planned and administered. Teachers should review each student's IEP prior to administering the test so that they are prepared to provide the stated accommodations as written with no exceptions.

Each year ADE provides fall and spring AIMS workshops which outline test guidelines, the ordering process and materials security and return instructions. Principals and/or a designee are

required to attend this training and will be provided with hard copies of all the materials covered at the workshop. Upon completion of the workshop, each site should determine a plan of action to insure a smooth testing period. The principal and each staff member are responsible for all AIMS administration and record keeping. Graphs regarding AIMS and Stanford results are provided in the Charter-School Level Narratives.

A Five Year Testing Calendar provided by ADE helps each school plan their calendars to insure that adequate instruction and preparation has been given before the test.

Stanford 10 Testing - Stanford 10 Testing is required by state law and is conducted every spring for 2nd and 9th grade students over a one or two day testing period. The Stanford 10 Test provides each student's national percentile rankings in core subjects. The results of the Stanford 10 test can be used to determine student strengths and weaknesses and help them better prepare for AIMS testing. Sequoia Schools provide tutoring and after school programs at many sites to reinforce and encourage students' skills. Mandatory remediation may be provided and is noted in school level narratives.

Data is gathered and analyzed at the central office level and at the school level. AIMS and Stanford Testing results are widely distributed to staff.

Our evaluation rubrics (see rubric 18-21 (Sequoia Teacher Effectiveness Rubric) specifically address the use and reporting of data from AIMS, Stanford, and Benchmark testing.

Formative, Summative and Performance Assessments - Teachers are expected to use formative, summative and performance assessments in their teaching. Monitoring and expectations for these assessments is provided for in the Teacher Effectiveness Rubrics. Sequoia tracks all teacher assessments through supervision and the Power School database. There must be a correlation between these assessments and the school's curriculum as stated in Curriculum Maps and Lesson Plans.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All Sequoia Charters are required to use Sequoia's Policies and Procedures to guide their day to day activities. As part of the supervision and evaluation system, all staff is rated on their understanding and implementation of Sequoia's Policies and Procedures.

Web based, linked support for staff on Sequoia policies and procedures. These resources include academic, social curriculum, professional and disciplinary supports. Expectations for interventions, special education, and student – staff interactions are all part of these procedures. Please visit our website for the entire document.

## CURRICULUM MAPS AND CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT TO STATE AND COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Curriculum Maps - Sequoia implemented a policy regarding the construction and utilization of Curriculum Maps in 2008 with mandatory participation in 2009.

Any teacher employed by Sequoia Choice Education and Development, and Edkey, Inc. is required to create and utilize a curriculum map in their core subject(s).

For the subject of reading the curriculum map needs to, at a minimum, address the following:

- Explicit vocabulary instruction
- Direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction
- Opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation
- Instruction in reading foundational skills (e.g., decoding and fluency) for students who need to be taught these skills

2009 Curriculum Maps Requirements

Elementary School Teachers

- Teachers at the Elementary level shall be required to complete a DRAFT of their curriculum map for English Language Arts by July 30, 2009 and submit it electronically to their principal and the Instructional Support Department.

Secondary School Teachers

- Teachers at the Secondary level shall be required to complete a DRAFT of at least one core subject/grade by July 30, 2009 and submit it electronically to their principal and the Instructional Support Department.
- All Teachers Employed After June 1, 2009
- Teachers employed after June 1, 2009 shall complete the first DRAFT of their curriculum map by January 21, 2010 and submit it electronically to their principal and the Instructional Support Department

2010 and Beyond Implementation (All Teachers Employed After 2009)

All teachers hired after 2009 shall be required to complete a DRAFT of their curriculum map according to the Elementary and Secondary guidelines above and submit it electronically to their principal and the Instructional Support Department within the first 3 months of their employment.

Failure to create and submit the required curriculum maps will be viewed as a serious breach of Arizona's Professional Teaching Standards and may result in dismissal.

Curriculum Maps guide instruction throughout the year and are amended, enhanced and discussed frequently.

Sequoia Staff has been provided Professional Development Days during the past five years to work on and learn about curriculum maps. New teachers are oriented to these protocols during a separate week of orientation for new teachers each year.

Unwrapping the New Core Standards - Sequoia currently has district wide (all schools) participation of staff in the unwrapping of common core standards and their impact on curriculum at all of our schools. This process is monitored by members of the District Level Instructional Support Team as outlined previously. Principals, staff and the assistant superintendents also monitor curriculum and decisions are made based on data whether to change practice based on these discussions.

(See also Sequoia Supervision for Teaching Effectiveness for rubrics related to staff implementation and monitoring of curriculum and staff expectations for curriculum maps.)

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research in order to achieve better results for the students they serve. PLC's operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators.

- DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, 2006

Professional Learning Communities are

- A collaborative process
- Focused on student work and student learning
- Focused on Instructional Practice
- An empowering infrastructure of support
- Effective professional development
- Connected to the context of teachers' classrooms
- Action and results oriented
- Continuous school improvement

Professional Learning Communities at Sequoia:

- Professional
  - "Every teacher is a leader; every leader is a teacher."
- Learning
  - In a PLC School, learning applies as much to teachers, administrators, and parents as to students.
  - Focus on instruction, curriculum and assessment.
- Community
  - Support
  - Cooperation vs. competition

- Focus intensely on the mission, vision, goals, and values.
- Improvement of the whole vs. striving to get ahead individually.

Professional Learning Communities change the focus from "teaching" to "learning', and establishes a strong student centered environment.

Support for the organization wide and school level Professional Learning Communities is provided by the Instructional Support team identified earlier. Individual charters will discuss school level PLC's in their narratives for renewal.

(See also Sequoia Supervision for Teaching Effectiveness for rubrics related to Professional Learning Communities and staff expectations for this vital part of our program.)

## ACADEMIC LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Sequoia lists this as a separate component rather than linking it to Curriculum Mapping, Curriculum, and Unpacking the Core Standards because Academic Background knowledge consists of segments of information which have words and phrases associated with them. Numerous studies have found a positive correlation between academic background knowledge and achievement in school.

Students who have a large amount of academic background knowledge about a topic learn new information on the same subject easier and quicker than those who do not. Moreover, studies have revealed a significant relationship between knowledge of academic information and achievement later in life.

In Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement: Research on What Works in Schools, Robert Marzano first outlines a program of wide reading to compensate for the lack of academic experiences. Its purpose is to provide a variety of virtual experiences. Then, he details a research based process for teaching academic terms, people, and events to build academic vocabulary.

Marzano details this process in his six step process for teaching new terms. Sequoia currently has brought all staff up to speed on this method training and paying for workshops for staff since 2008. We provide staff with access to Marzano's materials via our web page. All classrooms are expected to work on academic vocabulary during all of their lessons. Word walls are expected in each room. Monitoring is provided in our supervision and evaluation model, through checks on lesson plans and with daily visits. Several of our supervision and evaluation rubrics address this issue. At Sequoia Secodary teachers are expected to keep word walls and to actively teach vocabulary. This effort is starting to pay off in our reading and language data. We are concentrating on increasing our students' mathematics vocabulary as we have identified that deficit as a problem area.

**Working with Students**

Our students are the most important people at Sequoia Schools. *Sequoia Schools offers all students including those who have not been successful in other academic environments* a chance to succeed. Sequoia Schools strives to give its teachers the tools they need to work effectively with all students.

Each teacher, instructional aide and other staff member is responsible and evaluated (see Teacher Evaluation Artifact) for the following:

Assuring the safety and well-being of each student in their class and each student at the site on a daily basis;

Creating an environment of academic progress for each student in their class as outlined below:

1. Knowing each child in their class at a level sufficient to promote best teaching practices;
2. Supervising each of their students' personalized learning plans, attendance and behavior. This includes making learning goals, setting expectations for student performance and modifying their teaching and those goals and expectations as directed by the data;
3. Assessing, monitoring and acting on assessment data ***and*** information gleaned from dealing with the student as an individual;
4. Initiating consistent and pertinent contact with each student and their parents to communicate student performance and insure achievement of academic and individualized learning goals;
5. Maintaining accurate and timely records of student progress toward achievement of academic goals in Power School.
6. Maintaining accurate and timely records of student attendance and discipline in Power School
7. Designing and implementing the site's instructional program as outlined in the school's curriculum guides and curriculum maps;
8. Being an active member of the site's curriculum team;
9. Providing assistance to site staff and students in their particular area of certification and beyond as needed.
10. Supporting, implementing and enforcing all of Sequoia Schools' Policies and Procedures including student attendance, dress and behaviors.

**Staff Expectations Regarding Student Achievement**

In "What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action", Marzano et al present a comprehensive survey of the research on best practices and rank the factors that impact student achievement. The chart on the next page consolidates the information and presents the factors, their rank and the descriptor used by the research.

| School Level Factor | k | Descriptor used by Researchers of the Factor |
|---|---|---|
| Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum | | Opportunity to Learn<br><br>Time, Content Coverage, Concentration of Teaching and Learning, Focus on Central Learning Skills, Emphasis on Basic Skill Acquisition |
| Challenging Goals and Effective Feedback | 2 | Monitoring of Student Progress<br><br>High Expectations and Requirements<br><br>Pressure to Achieve |
| Parental and Community Involvement | 3 | Parental Involvement<br><br>Home – School Partnerships |
| Safe and Orderly Environment | 4 | School Climate / Safe and Orderly Atmosphere<br><br>A LEARNING Environment<br><br>Pupils have Rights and Expectations<br><br>Positive Reinforcement |
| Collegiality and Professionalism | 5 | Leadership, Shared Vision and Goals<br><br>Process Oriented Staff Development<br><br>Cooperation |

| | | A Learning Organization |
|---|---|---|

**Chart 1.0** **Modification of Marzano et al 2003**

**Student Achievement**

Sequoia Schools' intention is to provide its staff with the tools needed to take "what works in schools" and apply it at each site. While the above factors are self-descriptive some deserve further explanation as outlined below:

Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum - A guaranteed and viable curriculum is not an accident. To be guaranteed and viable each teacher must create a meaningful annual curriculum map along with effective weekly and daily teaching plans that provide each student the opportunity to learn, that allow adequate time to cover all content satisfactorily, that focus on central learning skills and that emphasize basic skill acquisition

Children must be actively taught vocabulary to succeed in reading and other academic endeavors (See a complete list of necessary academic vocabulary for success in school and AIMS testing in Marzano's Word Lists a PDF file available.)

Challenging Goals and Effective Feedback - Each child will have a greater opportunity to achieve academic success if they are appropriately guided, challenged and monitored. As teachers help their students set realistic and attainable educational goals and then consistently work to fulfill, refine and report on those goals academic achievement will increase. We will outline the steps we have taken to manage the challenges we face at each site in the Performance Management Segment of this renewal application.

Parental and Community Involvement - Student achievement will rise in proportion to the level of parental or other interested parties' involvement in the child's learning. To this end, effective, consistent and regular communication between the school the teachers and the parents is imperative and must be an ever improving attribute at each site. This involvement is detailed in the specific school (charter) report that follows.

Effectively managed site councils are not only encouraged but required at each site. Each site administrator is encouraged to develop relationships with individuals and organizations that desire to assist in the educational process.

Safe and Orderly Environment - Students must feel safe while attending or in transit to or from their school. Classes must maintain a level of order that permits teaching and learning to occur. Students must understand and be empowered to claim their right to learn. We specifically teach the Social Curriculum at our sites and maintain a highly trained group of teachers that help monitor and train staff on this method.

**Collegiality and Professionalism**

| Sequoia Schools seek to become the standard for student success. As part of that vision each school is committed to creating an environment of collegial and professional relationships. |
|---|

Collegiality - Sequoia Schools defines collegial behavior in terms of teachers and staff in a supportive role with one another. The ultimate goal is the academic success of each student. Open and civil interactions that are respectful of each professional's role in the education of students are expected.

Because of the correlation between professionalism and student achievement Sequoia Schools has placed a premium on attracting and keeping highly qualified and effective instructors. Each staff member is encouraged to constantly augment and monitor their professional growth. All principals are expected to attend the Arizona Principals' Academy as part of their professional growth.

Pedagogical Knowledge - Sequoia Schools seek pedagogical methods that lead to success in the educational environment. Research shows that when schools do the following action steps there is a high rate of academic success:

- Establish norms of conduct and behavior amongst staff that engender collegiality and professionalism.
- Establish methods of structures that allow professional staff input into decisions and policies for the organization.
- Engage teachers and staff in meaningful staff development activities.

Evaluating Pedagogical Success of a Principal - Principals are evaluated using the Sequoia Principals' Effectiveness model developed by Sequoia and presented at the annual Charter School Conference this October (2011). See artifacts section of this application). Principals are evaluated on their ability to effectively apply the following pedagogical skill sets in their schools:

- Be the academic leader of their school
- Resolve conflicts between themselves and their staff or district office
- Address and solve professional problems
- Share information about students and employees
- Communicate to third parties about their interactions with one another
- Conduct themselves professionally

**Staff Competencies**

Sequoia Schools' principals are the site supervisors at their site. Sequoia Schools' staffs are supervised based on expectations in the following components:

- Teachers' Professional Hierarchy
    - Teachers receive a copy of the Teachers' Professional Hierarchy (see Artifacts on Evaluation) and are supervised and evaluated based on their progress on this hierarchy.
    - In addition to this hierarchy teachers are expected to display the following:
        - Computer Resources Mastery
            - Sequoia Schools' staff members are expected to be proficient users of the computer systems and programs. To assist employees in this requirement Sequoia Schools Information Technology Department (IT) provides training on the computer systems when a new employee is hired or as requested.
            - Access to Sequoia Schools' computers is limited to students and/or employees of Sequoia Schools. Assignment of computer rights occurs after the employee is hired. All staff members are trained and sign off on Sequoia's Policies and Procedures regarding computer use and electronic communications. Our systems are highly monitored for internet safety.
        - Student Management Systems
            - All teachers are expected to be able to keep their student records up to date and accurate. Training on the school management system is conducted each August.

Control of the Learning Environment - The first task of the teacher is to establish the tone of the room as that of a classroom with expectations for students relating to talking in the room, entering and exiting the room, requesting assistance and other rules and procedures that promote an engaged learning environment. As noted earlier the Social Curriculum is actively taught in each of Sequoia's Schools.