

Why Restructure?

Toppenish School District has made great strides in teaching and learning since the inception of HB 1209 in 1994 and the official beginning of education reform in the State of Washington. Even though Toppenish School District has made significant improvement in WASL scores at all levels, we find ourselves in step four of school improvement in our middle school and high school. Also, we are in year two of district improvement. Restructuring will provide us with an opportunity for continued instructional improvement through professional development, professional learning communities, extended time for teaching and learning, external expertise, and additional resources. The result of the restructure plan will be to meet AYP at both the middle and high school, as well as in our elementary schools and our alternative school. Our ultimate goal is to close the achievement gap for all students in reading, mathematics, science, and writing through this process. As you will see, we have already established a sense of urgency toward our goals, and the restructure plan will keep our culture of continuous improvement and momentum alive.

Who are we?

We are a community of diverse learners who are committed to maximizing every student's potential. The following data depicts the demographics of Toppenish School District:

- 89% low socioeconomic status
- 78% Hispanic
- 18% Native American
- 4% White
- 59% ELL students (highest percentage in Washington State for districts with over 1,000 students)
- 32% Migrant students
- 16% recent immigrants (students in country less than 3 years)
- 11% Special Education students

The following data depicts the demographics of the Toppenish community:

- 56% of parents have not graduated from high school; 38% have less than a ninth grade education
- Agricultural based economy with predominantly low paying jobs; average income in Toppenish is \$14,000 per year
- 64% of our homes speak a language other than English
- 13% mobility rate
- 70% of our parents are immigrants
- 48% of families in our district are single parent households

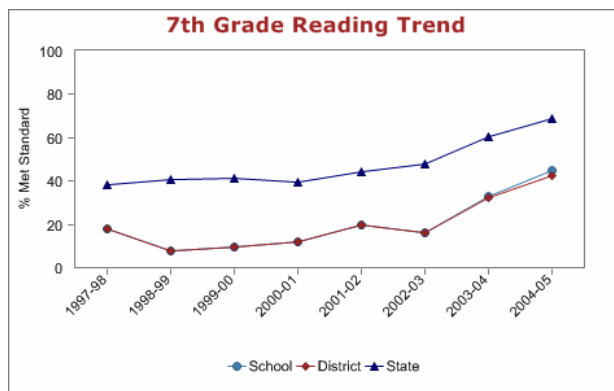
Where we are now?

Teachers, students, parents, volunteers and administrators are working diligently and collaboratively to improve teaching and learning in Toppenish School District. We are actively engaged in systemic change that is based on the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools and that will result in sustainable, large scale improvement. We have focused professional development in the content areas using primarily outside consultants and internal coaches and mentors. Over the past two years we have provided additional mentors in the secondary schools. The teaching and learning gap is closing. As evidenced in our assessments, the success that has occurred through the Reading First Grant has laid the foundation for success in our secondary schools. Specifically, our 4th grade reading scores have improved from 20.5% meeting the standard to 62.3%. 4th grade math has increased from 8.5% meeting standard to 30.1%. Since 1999, 7th grade reading scores increased from 8.0% passing to 44.7%. Math scores in the 7th grade also increased from 1.8% to 20.2%. During the same time period the High School reading scores increased from 20.3% to 62.8% meeting standard, and the math scores increased from 8.3% to 33.7% meeting standard.

Below is trend data shown in digital and line graph format:

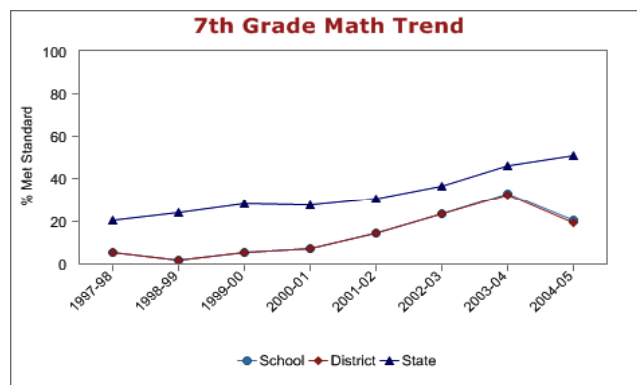
7th Grade Reading

| Year | School | District | State |
|----------------|--------|----------|-------|
| <u>1997-98</u> | 17.7% | 17.7% | 38.4% |
| <u>1998-99</u> | 8.0% | 8.0% | 40.8% |
| <u>1999-00</u> | 9.4% | 9.3% | 41.5% |
| <u>2000-01</u> | 12.0% | 12.0% | 39.8% |
| <u>2001-02</u> | 19.6% | 19.6% | 44.5% |
| <u>2002-03</u> | 16.2% | 16.2% | 47.9% |
| <u>2003-04</u> | 32.7% | 32.4% | 60.5% |
| <u>2004-05</u> | 44.7% | 42.5% | 69.0% |



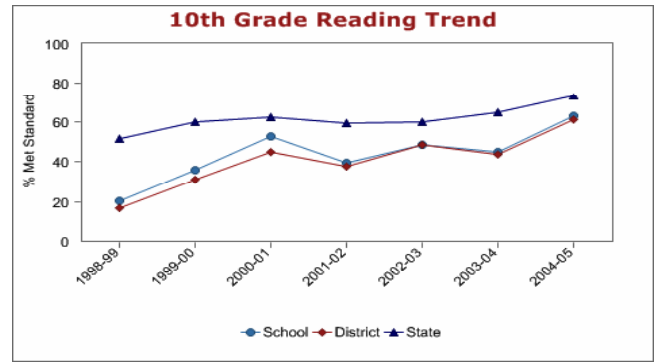
7th Grade Math

| Year | School | District | State |
|----------------|--------|----------|-------|
| <u>1997-98</u> | 5.2% | 5.2% | 20.1% |
| <u>1998-99</u> | 1.8% | 1.8% | 24.2% |
| <u>1999-00</u> | 5.6% | 5.6% | 28.2% |
| <u>2000-01</u> | 7.1% | 7.1% | 27.4% |
| <u>2001-02</u> | 14.3% | 14.3% | 30.4% |
| <u>2002-03</u> | 23.5% | 23.5% | 36.8% |
| <u>2003-04</u> | 32.8% | 32.6% | 46.4% |
| <u>2004-05</u> | 20.2% | 19.1% | 50.8% |



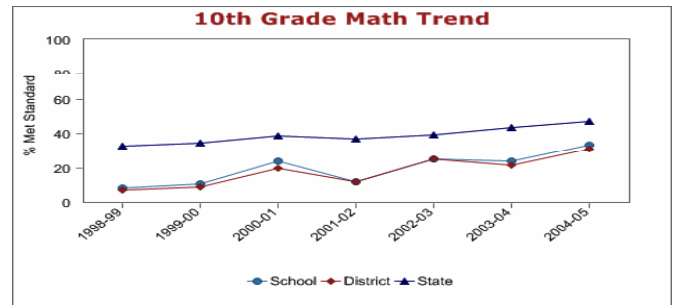
10th Grade Reading

| Year | School | District | State |
|---------|--------|----------|-------|
| 1998-99 | 20.3% | 16.7% | 51.4% |
| 1999-00 | 36.1% | 30.9% | 59.8% |
| 2000-01 | 52.8% | 45.2% | 62.4% |
| 2001-02 | 39.5% | 37.5% | 59.2% |
| 2002-03 | 48.3% | 48.8% | 60.0% |
| 2003-04 | 44.7% | 43.6% | 64.6% |
| 2004-05 | 62.8% | 61.1% | 72.9% |



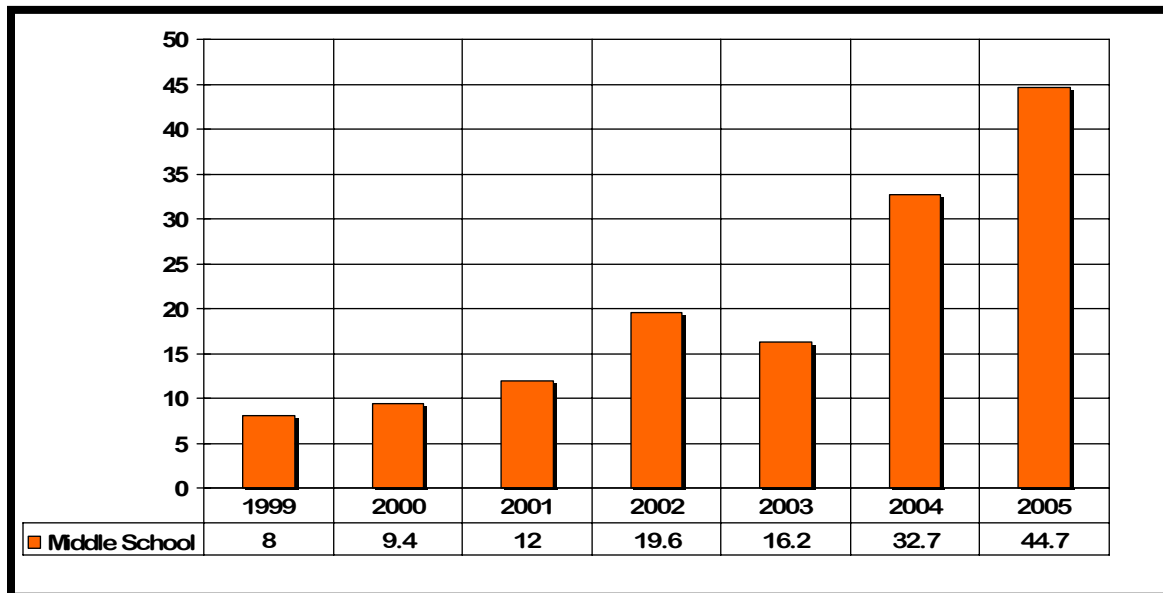
10th Grade Math

| Year | School | District | State |
|---------|--------|----------|-------|
| 1998-99 | 8.3% | 6.9% | 33.0% |
| 1999-00 | 10.9% | 9.0% | 35.0% |
| 2000-01 | 23.8% | 19.6% | 38.9% |
| 2001-02 | 12.2% | 11.9% | 37.3% |
| 2002-03 | 25.1% | 25.2% | 39.4% |
| 2003-04 | 23.8% | 21.7% | 44.0% |
| 2004-05 | 33.7% | 31.1% | 47.5% |



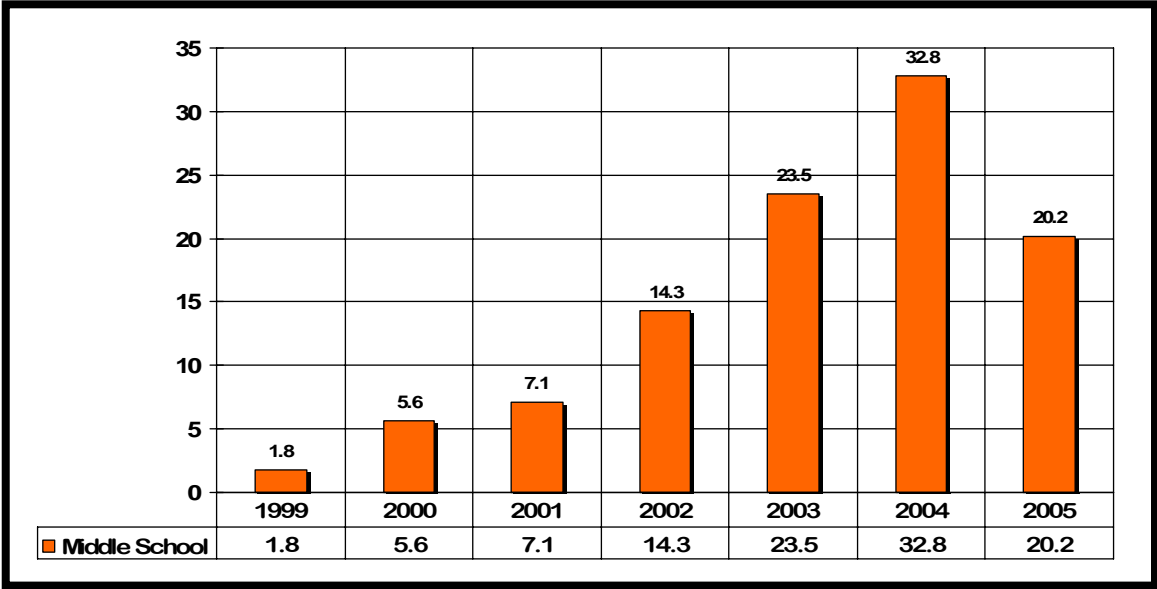
Below is trend data in bar graph format:

Toppenish Middle School Reading - 7th grade



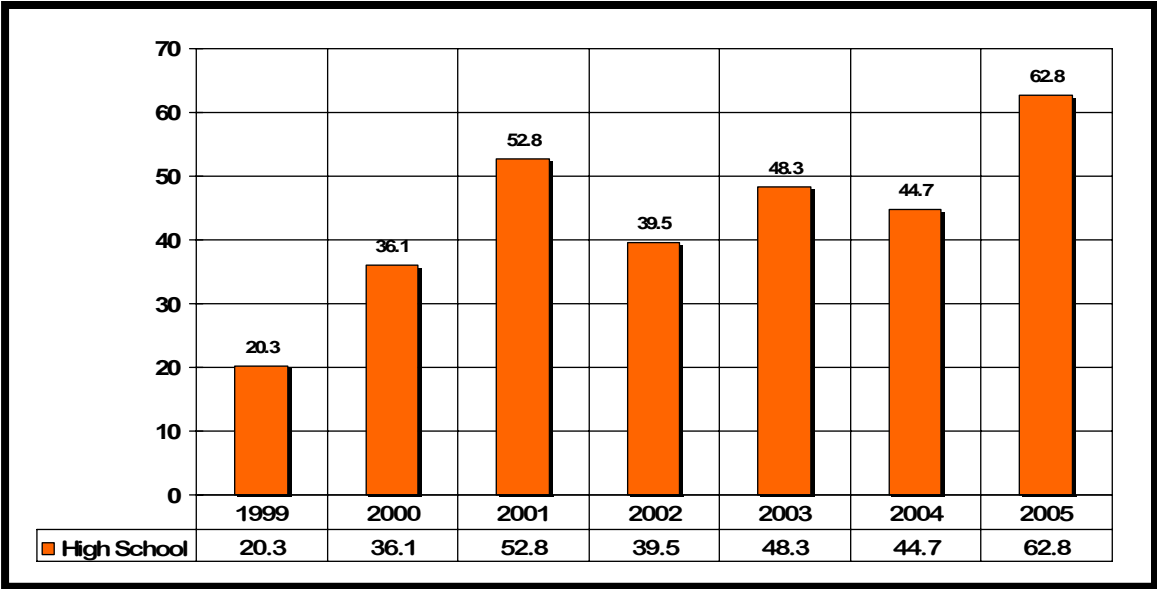
Toppenish Middle School

Math - 7th grade



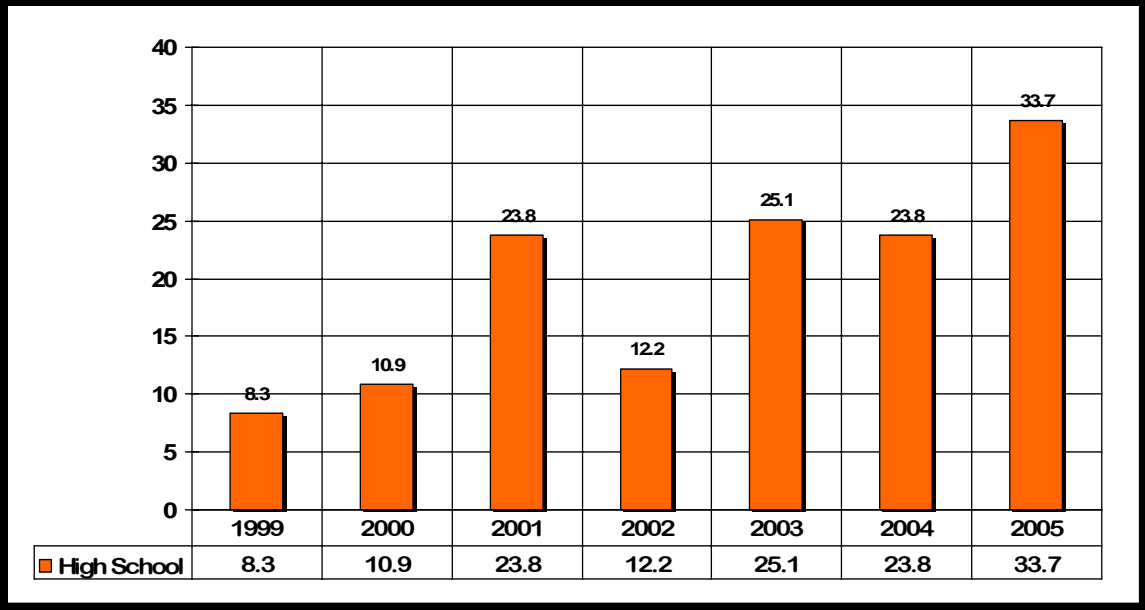
Toppenish High School

Reading- 10th grade



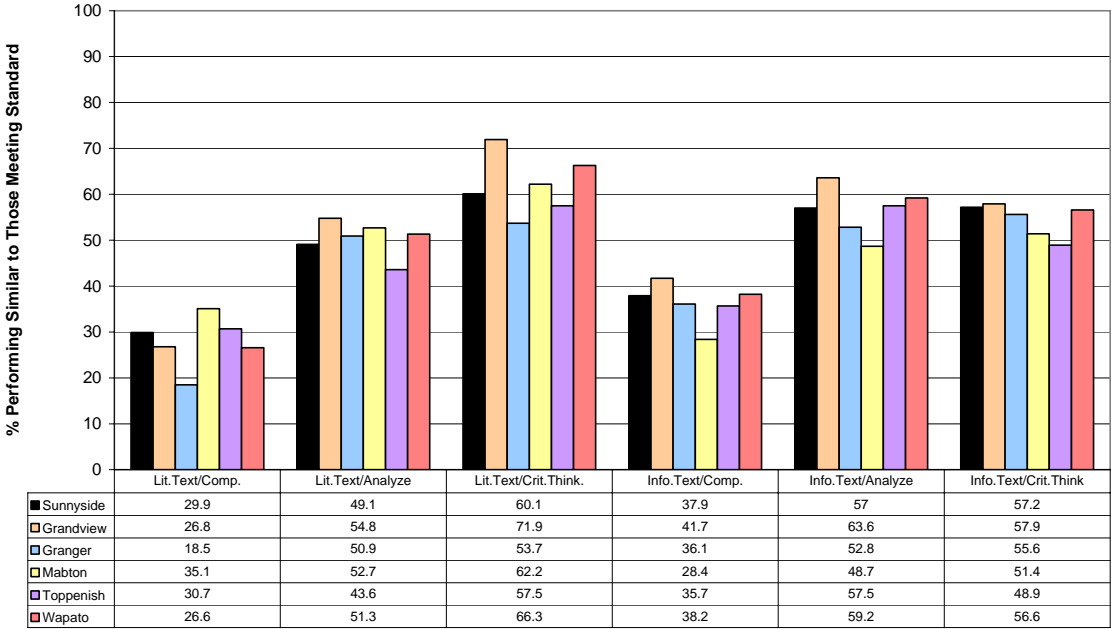
Toppenish High School

Math- 10th grade

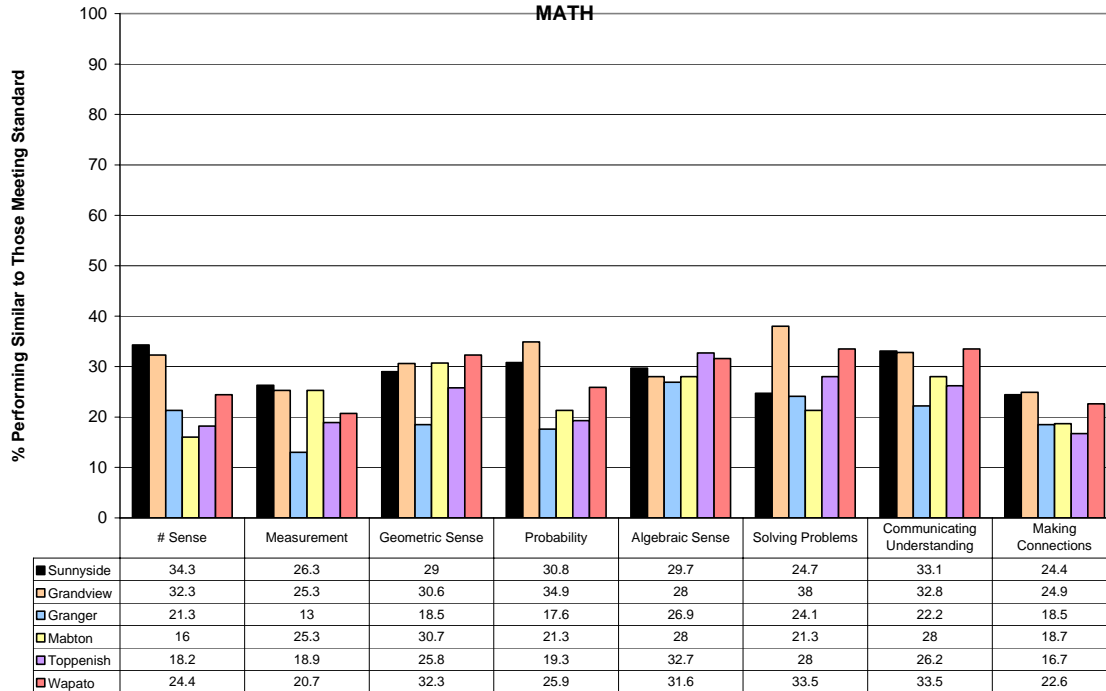


The following graphs provide a "snapshot" of the lower Yakima Valley's Reading and Math WASL strand data for 2005.

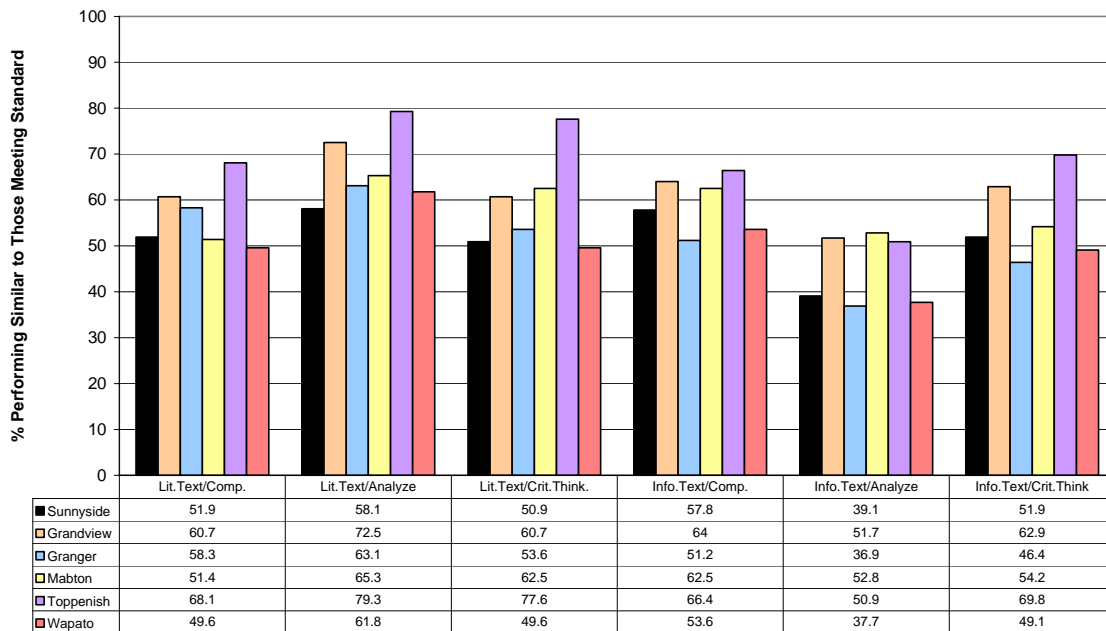
Yakima Valley 7th Grade
2005 WASL Strands
READING



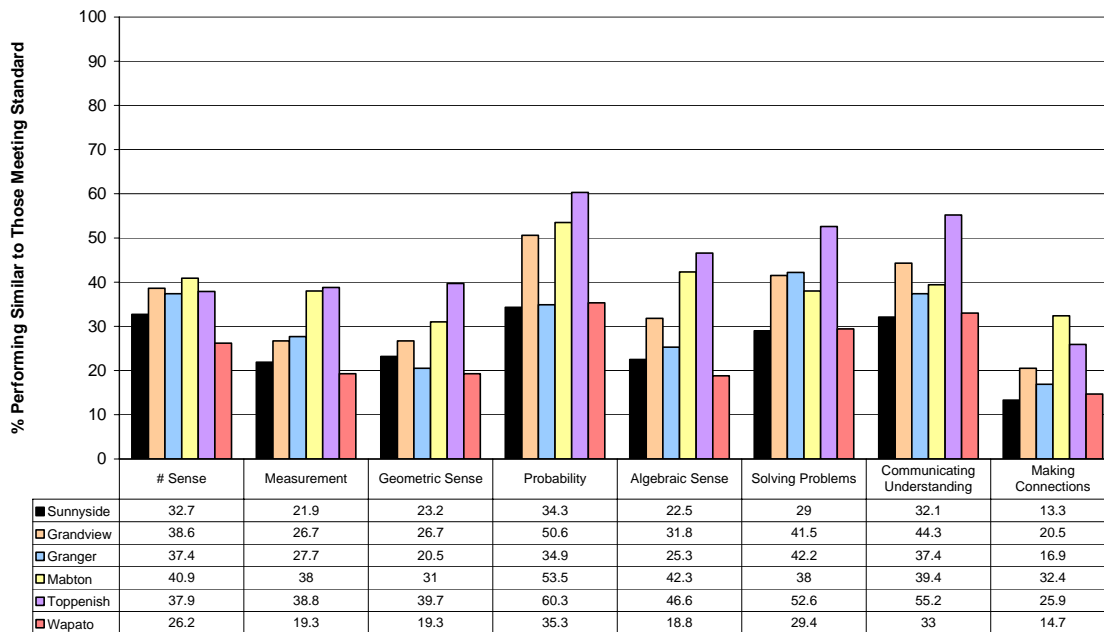
**Yakima Valley 7th Grade
2005 WASL Strands
MATH**



**Yakima Valley 10th Grade
2005 WASL Strands
READING**



**Yakima Valley 10th Grade
2005 WASL Strands
MATH**



Toppenish School District has embraced the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools. The Toppenish School Board has recently adopted policy reflecting these characteristics and the ISLLC Standards to ensure accountability for instructional leadership. Following are examples of our commitment to the implementation of the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools:

Clear and Shared Focus:

We are grateful for the springboard that OSPI provided us in our continuous improvement journey. The school improvement grants made us cognizant that data is an integral tool for developing and maintaining a clear and shared focus. The Center for Educational Effectiveness has been a continual resource for compiling and analyzing the multiple categories of Toppenish data. This authentic feedback has been fuel to the engine of systemic change. Data has helped to intensify our focus on the unique needs of Toppenish Middle and High Schools.

Our focus on continuous improvement has also been strengthened in other ways. District and community stakeholders developed shared beliefs, vision and mission; furthermore, each individual/group is learning their role in continuous improvement. The district and schools have implemented action plans that are frequently monitored and updated. Collaborative meetings are scheduled within the contracted day at all schools. These professional learning communities use disaggregated, formative and summative assessment data to make instructional

decisions to inform student learning. This collaborative process has strengthened the vision and mission of the secondary schools.

High Standards and Expectations:

We believe all students (regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability and/or primary language) can and will meet state standards through relevant and rigorous instruction. Adults in this system have accepted accountability for student learning as evidenced through accessing and using achievement data to adjust instruction.

Effective School Leadership:

Administrators are actively striving as a team to build capacity for distributed leadership through professional learning communities and ongoing collaboration with all stakeholders. Besides participating in building level learning communities, the administrative team is also studying and using action research for developing leadership and sustainability (Elmore, 2005; Fullan, 2005; Schmoker, 2003). A new governance system, based on distributive leadership, is emerging as we strengthen these professional learning communities. We are developing formal and informal instructional leaders to build capacity and provide sustainability of our ongoing improvement efforts. Resources are dedicated to specific teaching and learning priorities and support the goals of district/building improvement plans. Annually, over one million dollars has been budgeted to provide content area professional development (PreK-12). Hiring practices reflect student achievement goals, highly qualified teaching standards and the unique needs of our student population. Before being employed in Toppenish School District, all candidates must successfully teach and demonstrate an interactive, standards based lesson.

High Levels of Collaboration and Communication:

The literature indicates that secondary schools have historically been resistant to high levels of collaboration and change. Toppenish Middle School and Toppenish High School recognize the urgency to develop a collaborative culture across content areas. To this end, both schools are intentionally focusing on improving collaboration and effective communication. At the present time, the District has fourteen, two hour early release days focusing on school improvement activities and planning. We are building capacity for sustainability through focused professional development by content area coaches, mentors and teacher leaders. Teachers experience both vertical and horizontal collaborative teaming and planning. There is an intentional focus on transitional planning between the preschools, elementary schools, middle school and high schools. All school and community stakeholders are charged to identify problems and create solutions that impact learning. Building positive, professional and personal relationships is the foundation of our collaborative efforts. For example, the district is currently using the DuFour (2005) and Russo (2004) models of Professional Learning Communities.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Aligned with Standards:

Researched based curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices are aligned with the grade level expectations and are the focal point for all instructional decisions. Teacher instructional practice emphasizes authentic engagement of all students in their learning. Assessment plans are being created for diagnosis, placement, targeted intervention and measurement of progress toward learning goals. Interventions have been expanded at the middle and high school to include the three-tiered, K-12 Reading Model, as well as targeted instruction for the 40% of students at level 1 in mathematics. From a district perspective, in September we began intensified professional development in mathematics. We hired a PreK-12 Mathematics Coordinator and added secondary math coaches. Mathematics instructional time was increased at the middle school as recommended by research. This year K-12 math plans were developed to align math programs with state standards. Ongoing, grade level, math strand professional development has been provided by our new Math Coordinator. In addition, we now have trained math volunteers working in classrooms throughout the district.

Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning:

Our goal is for teaching and learning to be continually monitored and adjusted based on assessment data and collaborative analysis of student work. To this end, several strategies are being applied. The instructional leaders at each building (principals, coaches, mentors) are expected to visit classrooms a minimum of 10 hours per week. Both the middle and high school have documented short and long term data driven intervention plans that guide instruction to maximize student learning.

Reading coaches and consultants have collaborated to develop a reading assessment and intervention plan for the middle and high school. All students are screened with the DIBELS and additional diagnostic assessments, such as the Core Phonics Survey, are given to struggling students to identify specific skill deficits. This data is reviewed, along with the District's common formative assessments, on a regular basis to monitor student progress and move students to appropriate skills groups (e.g., Walk to Read) as they improve. At both schools, teams of teachers are collaboratively developing standards-based classroom formative assessments using OSPI WASL Reading sentence stems.

The K-12 Math Coordinator is in the process of developing a similar assessment and intervention plan with the math coaches. Research based intervention programs are being piloted. Early data from this process is showing marked improvement in student achievement.

Focused Professional Development:

Toppenish School District experienced a paradigm shift in professional development through implementing the initial Washington Reads Grants in the elementary schools. This professional development model provided job-embedded coaching and on-going training in research-based strategies and materials. Since that time, we have used similar protocols in the middle and high schools for content area professional development, as well as parent engagement and data driven instruction. At the elementary schools, it took three years for teachers' instructional practices to result in significant improvement in student achievement. The process of restructure will allow additional time for transition of instructional practices at our middle and high school.

Over the past three years, both the middle school and the high school staffs have participated in district-wide professional development in reading, math, writing, LASER Science, Family Friendly Schools, Special Education training, and Data Driven Instruction. The Middle School is currently involved in a three-year professional development collaboration with NASA.

The long-range goal of Toppenish School District is to focus professional development on content and pedagogy coaching within classrooms rather than pulling teachers out of their classrooms for district grade level training with consultants. The process of targeted observation of peers, with reflection, in grade level and vertical grade levels will strengthen collaborative planning and scoring student work. More time will give this protocol the opportunity to develop and flourish.

Supportive Learning Environment:

Toppenish secondary schools strongly believe the need to support the cognitive, emotional and behavioral development of all students; therefore, Resource Management Teams at both schools are dedicated to identifying and providing services to students who are at risk. Grade-level counselors, case managers, Native American and Migrant student advocates, and home liaisons collaborate with families, teachers and administrators to provide school and community resources to address students' needs. Extended day programs such as GEAR UP, 21st Century, PASS Program, and content area tutorials, are offered to provide increased opportunities for success. Connected and inclusive relationships with students and families are being developed through frequent one-on-one communications, advisory periods and personal interactive conversations focused on student achievement and success.

Support for middle and high school staff is fostered through collaborative professional learning communities. Participation in the Teacher Induction Grant has allowed the district to plan an effective mentoring process for new teachers and a means to retain/recruit highly qualified candidates.

High Level of Community and Parent Involvement:

Currently the high school has 65% of parents engaged in Student Led Conferences with a goal of 100% family participation. Student learning plans are being developed for all high school students to maintain and support parent involvement in students' educational programs. The middle school will begin implementation of student learning plans through student led conferences, deepening the collaborative partnership between students, parents and staff. All schools are in the process of developing positive and purposeful connections between and among the school board, staff, students, and parents. Toppenish Middle School has opened a Parent Resource Center on campus and has instituted parenting classes to address the needs of our diverse families. Furthermore, Toppenish School District has been identified as a focus district for Dr. Steven Constantino's research on Family Friendly Schools. Dr. Constantino has been providing ongoing professional development in parent engagement for the Toppenish School District since the fall of 2004 and has committed to continue these efforts through 2007.