LEADING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Inspiring Quality Education Worldwide

Jay Marino
Jan Polderman

SPECIAL EDITION FOR THE NQEC CONFERENCE 2011

"Inspiring Quality Education Worldwide"
Jay Marino and Jan Polderman were the opening key-note speakers on this conference.

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Education Worldwide

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FOREWORD

In this book you will find the experiences and learning processes of a number of schools that have implemented systemic continuous improvement practices. In itself this is not unique; every school works on quality improvement in some way or another. Who does not want to have an excellent education system?

It is unique that these are schools from the United States of America (USA) and from The Netherlands and that they have chosen a similar approach to improving their schools; the systemic approach of continuous improvement in education.

Of course there are many differences between the schools; however, all of the schools believe in the philosophical and practical approach of continuous improvement.

"CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IS THE HEART OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT"

Continuous improvement is the heart of quality management (or at least it should be!). Change will not happen if it is not clear to everyone involved what needs to be improved, why it has to be improved, how it will be improved, how actual improvement can be measured and how the improvement can be maintained.

The belief of continuous improvement is evident in this world and is evident all around us. For example, a product turns out not to work well in practice or could be improved, made simpler or made less expensive. Continuous improvement is about learning from mistakes and experiences in order to do better in the future. Knowledge is obtained by experiencing what works and what doesn't work. This is true not only in education, but in all sectors of life.

In education there are a lot of things that can be improved, including the process of continuous improvement. Educators can learn from the knowledge and the experiences that the schools in this publication have gained.

We hope that this book will motivate you to learn more about continuous improvement and that you would consider implementing it in your school system. The first step can be the hardest. Start simple with improvement projects in your class or school. It is not important where you start, but that you begin the process. Start small and share experiences with colleagues. You will see that a continuous improvement approach does not only increase the quality of your education system, but will also increase your job satisfaction.

Dr. Jay Marino, Dunlap (USA)
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November 2011

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Jay Marino is the superintendent of schools in Dunlap Community Unit School District 323 in Dunlap, IL. He received his bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Northern Iowa, master's degree in educational administration from Arizona State University, and educational specialist and doctorate degrees from Western Illinois University.

Marino also serves as an international consultant assisting American and European school organizations in their continuous improvement efforts. He has served regionally as the chair of the Iowa Quality Center's Advisory Council and nationally as the chair of the ASQ K-12 Educational Advisory Committee. He is currently the K-12 systems chair for ASQ's Education Division. Marino has been actively involved in state quality award programs as an applicant and an examiner and has assisted in obtaining state quality award recognition for school districts in which he has worked in both Iowa and Illinois.

Marino has served as an editor and author for several publications including Quality Across the Curriculum: Integrating Quality Tools and PDSA With Standards (Quality Press 2004). He was the lead content expert and authored ASQ's ImpaQT training™ for the School two-day training for teachers and administrators and was the first moderator of the ASQ Quality in Education blog, which is designed to promote continuous improvement in education.

DRS. JAN POLDERMAN
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Prior to this role, Polderman worked in the field of quality and innovation in education. He was a project manager and consultant for national innovation projects, trainer and consultant for schools and school boards. He wrote publications about managing educational special needs and quality in organizations and was a lead auditor for quality systems. He started his career as a schoolteacher in elementary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Consider this book as a first-hand look inside American and Dutch schools as they share their continuous improvement journey and seek to better their educational systems in the 21th century.
These schools have begun the continuous improvement journey and are willing to share their knowledge and experiences. The school teams in this book were working in different countries, in different cultures and under different circumstances. Collectively, they have chosen the philosophy, the approach, the process and the tools of continuous improvement as a way to work together to improve their school systems. They hope that their stories will inspire you to improve the quality of your education system. By working globally with continuous improvement in education, we are working to improve the future of education for our children. The improvement journey continues!

THE BEGINNING OF THE DUTCH-AMERICAN CONNECTION

Visiting the National Quality in Education Conference (NQEC[1]) in November 2008, Jan Polderman invited Dr. Jay Marino to come to the Netherlands to promote the approach of the quality and continuous improvement in education. Jan was impressed by the work and results of Jay and his colleagues in the Cedar Rapids Community Schools (Iowa) as shared at the conference and published on the school district website[2]. Jay demonstrated an integrated and aligned approach for engaging all stakeholders in the continuous improvement process including: the board of education, school district, schools, classroom teachers and students. The concept of continuous improvement finally made sense and came to life in a practical way!

In the meantime Jay became the superintendent of the Dunlap School District (Illinois) and also began the process of informing, training and supporting the staff in the implementation of continuous improvement processes and tools.

In March 2009 Jay visited The Kingdom of the Netherlands for the first time. He stayed for several days and presented foundational principles of quality and continuous improvement to various groups including: a day for school directors, a day for decision makers (government, administration, inspection, universities) and a day for the teachers and professors of Magistrum. After that week Jay returned several times to the Netherlands in 2010 and 2011 to train consultants and the staff of different schools. Dutch school administrators, consultants and master degree students of Magistrum visited the Dunlap School District in 2010 and 2011 to observe continuous improvement in action.

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Where things go from here is up to the reader. If you are interested in good educational practice and practical implication of continuous improvement, start reading from chapter 3. To learn more about the background and philosophy of continuous improvement, read chapter 1. To learn more about how to implement continuous improvement, read chapter 2. Resources and information are located in the appendix.

MASTERTRAINING LCI

MASTER TRAINING LCI IN HOEVELAKEN BY DR JAY MARINO (MAGISTRUM; 2010)

[1] NQEC:
National Quality Education Conference; http://nqec.asq.org

[2] Website:
http://quality.cr.k12.ia.us

CHAPTER 1:

PHILOSOPHY

1: PHILOSOPHY

This chapter begins with information about Continuous Improvement to help readers understand the concepts of continuous improvement and why it is so important for the future of 21st century learning.

1.1 WHAT IS CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?

Continuous Improvement is not something new. As long as there have been people on earth, they have constantly been focused on improving quality of life and improving tools and techniques. The nature of continuous improvement was based on their life experiences and their natural curiosity and creativity. Continuous Improvement will be around as long as change continues and the drive for continuous improvement and innovation will remain.

IMPROVEMENT OF LEARNING

People realize results when they are involved in improvement and innovation of their daily jobs. This concept applies also to teachers and their students. Focusing on the approach and tools of continuous improvement not only leads to better learning and better results, but also focuses on 21st century skills such as: analyzing data, working in cooperative teams, reflecting and exploring, understanding and creating, sharing and presenting. Learning continuous improvement in the classroom is student centered and promotes innovation and collaboration.

IMPROVEMENT OF COLLABORATION

Teamwork and collaboration are essential to continuous improvement. As learning standards increase and educators face never-ending challenges, it become even more important to work together to accomplish goals.

The work of educators keeps getting more complex. Educators invent and use management models and structures to find effective practices that deliver results. If educators aren't careful and aren't focused on continuous improvement, they may find themselves in a static, bureaucratic system that has lofty goals with minimal results.

Systems are not static and are always in motion. The process of continuous improvement is about determining if the system is still functioning effectively, delivering results and determining where improvements can be made.

DEFINITION OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

According to the Wikipedia Encyclopedia[3] Continuous Improvement (CI) is an ongoing effort to improve products, services, or processes. These efforts can seek "incremental" improvement over time or "breakthrough" improvement all at once. Delivery (customer valued) processes are constantly evaluated and improved in the light of their efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility.

Continuous Improvement is embedded in many management systems such as: Total Quality Management, the Baldrige Framework (USA) and the EFQM Model (Europe).
Both models are based on the cycle: input, throughtput, output and improve. *(see figure 1 and 2, next page).*
W. Edwards Deming (Out of the crisis; 1982) saw continuous improvement as part of the '(school) system' whereby feedback from the process and customer (team, parents and pupils, community) were evaluated against organizational goals (class, school, district).

[3] Source: http://asq.org/learn-about-quality/continuous-improvement/overview/overview.html

The fact that it can be called a management process does not mean that it needs to be executed by 'management', but merely that management makes decisions about the implementation of the delivery process and the design of the delivery process itself.

Another successful implementation of continuous improvement is the approach known as 'Kaizen'. The translation of kai ("change") zen ("good") is "improvement". This method became famous by the book of Masaaki Imai "Kaizen: The Key to Japan's Competitive Success." (1986).

1 The core principle of Continuous Improvement is the (self) reflection of processes. (Feedback)
2 The purpose of Continuous Improvement is the identification, reduction and elimination of suboptimal processes. (Efficiency)
3 The emphasis of Continuous Improvement is on incremental, continuous steps rather than giant leaps (Evolution).

RESPONSIBILITY AND INVOLVEMENT

The responsibility for quality and improvement lies collectively with the staff and management. A quality approach is useful for staff and management to maintain focus and identify where improvement is necessary.

"CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN EDUCATION IS MORE THAN A CHOICE OR A DECISION FOR A MANAGING CHANGE; STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IS IMPORTANT."

Stakeholder involvement is critical in the continuous improvement process. Continuous Improvement in Education is more than a choice or a decision for a managing change. Stakeholders (students, parents, staff and the community), that are involved in the improvement process are innovative and empowered.

FIGURE 1: THE BALDRIGE FRAMEWORK (USA)[4]

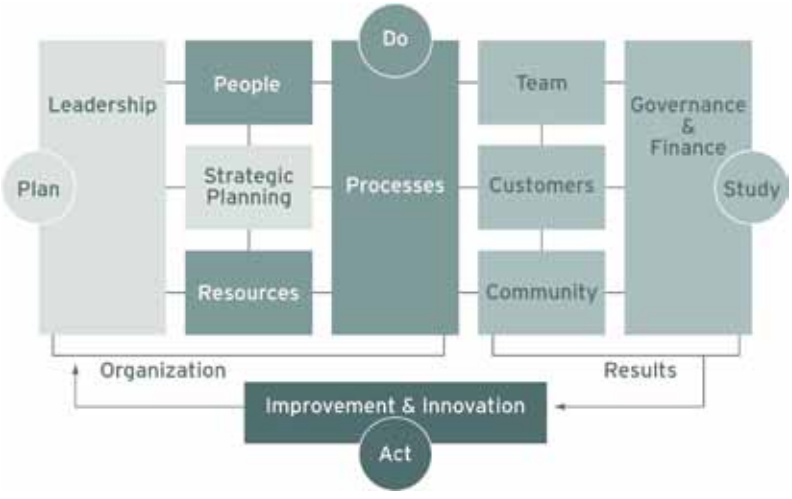

FIGURE 2: EFQM MODEL (EUROPE) OR INK-MANAGEMENTMODEL (NETHERLANDS)[5]

CHANGE AND OWNERSHIP

Changes occur because of people who want to create changes and who want to acquire new behavior, attitudes and values (Senge, 2002). People are free to determine what they want to commit to (intrinsic motivation) and they have a natural desire to perform well (Maslov, 1954). These are necessary conditions for change to last. Therefore it is important to include everyone in continuous improvement. Students often have excellent ideas and are motivated to work on improvement if their input is solicited, appreciated and respected. There are several techniques and tools that have been developed to support the process of classroom collaboration (see the appendix for an overview).

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Leaders set and communicate direction in the school. All stakeholders need to know and understand the vision, mission, values and goals of the system and what their contribution is to the improvement effort.
One can not keep doing things the same way but expect different results. Effective leaders help develop new values, new attitudes and new behavior through training and education). Subsequently, stakeholders have to be stimulated, recognized and rewarded to use newly acquired competencies required for results-driven change.

"ONE CAN NOT KEEP DOING THINGS THE SAME WAY BUT EXPECT DIFFERENT RESULTS."

This reward can be safety and security, a common goal, satisfying collaboration, and so on. Effective professional development can provide confidence in educators that are driving change and improvement.

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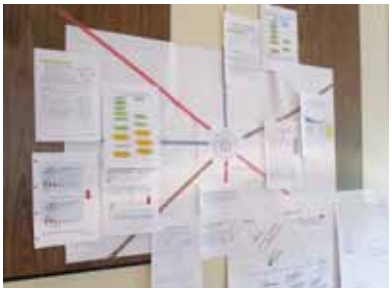
[4] More information: http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/enter/education.cfm

[5] More information: http://www.efqm.org/en/tabid/392/default.aspx or http://www.ink.nl/nl/p4bd80e5bc3a81/de-ink-filosofie.html



DUTCH PRINCIPALS IN TRAINING

DUTCH PRINCIPALS ON THE NQEC CONFERENCE 2010

1.2 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Continuous improvement in education is a powerful approach for leadership and learning in the 21st century. It is student centered and focussed on developing self-motivated learners. The next section will present three perspectives: personal development, team development and school system development.

A The search for quality; personal development
Continuous improvement is primarily a personal positive way of approaching and solving difficulties and problems in the school as well as outside the school.

B The necessity for cooperation; team development
Secondly, continuous improvement is a professional, research-driven approach for teams to demonstrably improve the process and results of education.

C The need for cohesion; school system development
Thirdly, continuous improvement is a systematic approach characterized by a continuous, cyclical improvement process that leads to the improvement of procedures, processes and results that are acceptable to everybody involved.

Let us examine these three points.

A – THE SEARCH FOR QUALITY; PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

"Continuous improvement primarily is a personal positive way of approaching and solving difficulties and problems inside the school as well as outside the school."

Continuous improvement is about self-reflection. Educators that have embraced continuous improvement are slow to blame and shame people about something that apparently does not work or goes wrong. Self-reflection promotes and stimulates the creative process of working collaboratively on more effective solutions.

When professional educators encounter problems within the system, they first reflect on the current process and data. This data is then analyzed and root causes are identified for possible improvement theories and solutions. The most feasible solution(s) are tried in practice to determine if improvements were made.

Continuous improvement requires a positive attitude and a mindset to seek better ways of doing things. Conzemius & O'Neill (2002) say:
"Continuous Improvement is a state of mind, the belief that no matter what I do well, there's a way to do it better next time. When we think this way, everything we do is fair game. Improvement becomes something that applies to both things our schools are currently doing poorly and things we think we are going well."

"CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT REQUIRES A POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND A MINDSET TO SEEK BETTER WAYS OF DOING THINGS."

B – THE NECESSITY FOR COOPERATION; TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Secondly, continuous improvement is a professional, research-driven approach for teams to demonstrably improve the process and results of education. According to Peter Senge, the team is *"the cornerstone of the learning organization. What really matters is how people make decisions and take action, how the team thinks and how the teams acts together."*

Effective teams use a research-driven approach through the 'PDSA Improvement Cycle'. This is a 7-step improvement process which leads to demonstrable and accountable improvement.

Effective teams use the PDSA Improvement Cycle[6] and its tools *(see figure 3, next page)* as a defined way of SMART[7] collaboration, collecting and analyzing data and trying out improvement theories. Teams that collaborate in this process learn to

listen, focus and reflect. Collaboration in this way results in stronger collective commitments that draws upon each person's unique skills and experiences that contribute to improvement.

C – THE NEED FOR COHESION; SCHOOL SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Thirdly, continuous improvement is a systematic approach characterized by a continuous, cyclical improvement process that leads to the improvement of procedures, processes and results that are acceptable to everybody involved. Cohesion is achieved through shared vision, mission, values, beliefs and goals. Organizations do not improve for the sake of improving, they are motivated by the collective commitments they've made to each other. Effective organizations systematically collect data and base their improvement projects on the greatest area in need of improvement. Effective organizations ask the following questions: How can we drive continuous improvement?; How can we make sure that there is alignment at every level of the organization?; How do we ensure that "no one escapes continuous improvement."

In The Netherlands we use the EFQM-model (also named the INK-management model[8]) as a structure to arrange and describe the approach to continuous improvement, processes and results. In the USA, we commonly refer to the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. Both models are very similar in their approach to continuous improvement.[9]

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND 21ST CENTURY LEARNING

Leading Continuous Improvement in education means leading 21st century learning. 21st century learning is a term often referenced in education. It refers to the skills, technologies and insights that school organizations are using to create learning systems that are better suited to the emerging challenges of the 21st century.

21st century learning, in all of its varied expressions: is integrated and interdisciplinary; recognizes increasing globalization; addresses specific skills needed for the 21st century; emphasizes the flexible mindset essential to lifelong learning; focuses on individual student needs; and incorporates the use of cutting-edge technology.

Because the need for global cooperation is becoming more evident with every succeeding passing year, the need for creating global classrooms to facilitate such collaboration is apparent as well. This global communication within the education system is considered by virtually all 21st century learning proponents to play an essential role in education.

21st century learning includes several skills: collaboration; systems thinking; empathy; communication; technological skills; civic engagement; creativity,

[6] More information: http://asq.org/learn-about-quality/project-planning-tools/overview/pdca-cycle.html

[7] SMART:
Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-based, Time-bound

[8] INK: Institute Nederlandse Kwaliteit (Dutch Quality Institute)

[9] See chapter 1.1

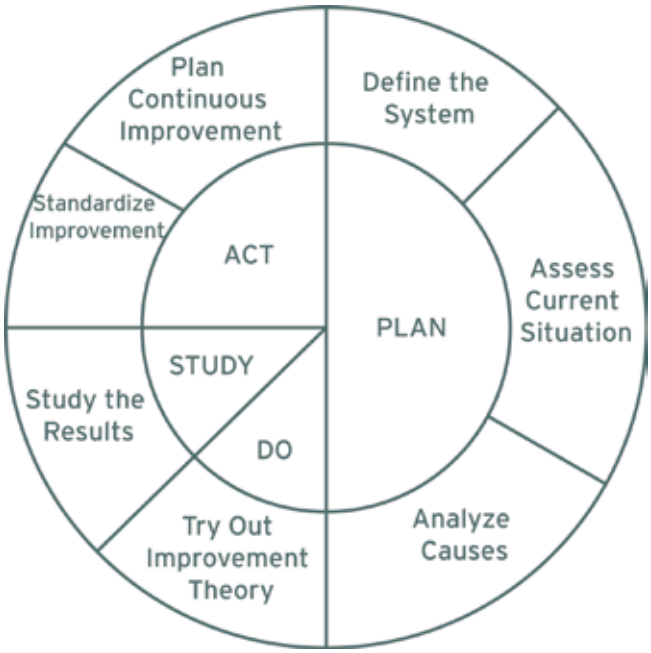
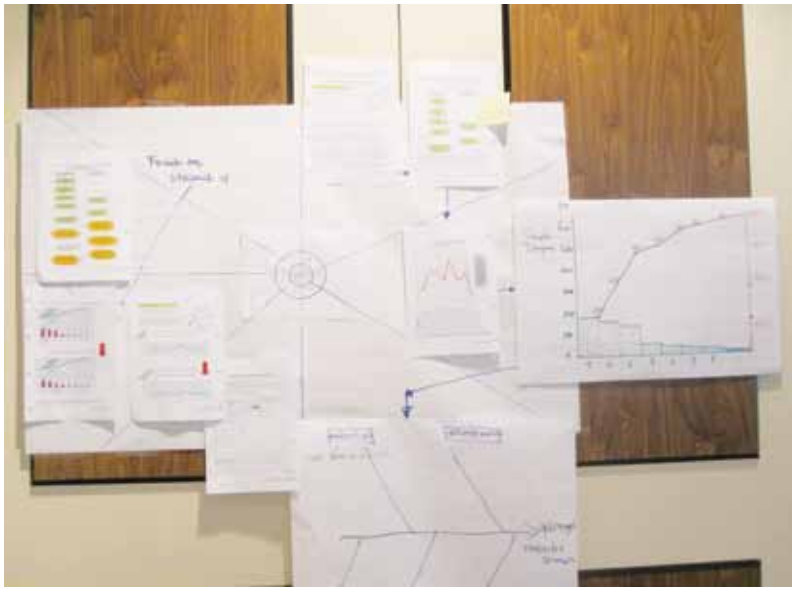


FIGURE 3: THE PDSA IMPROVEMENT CYCLE



AN EXAMPLE IN A MASTER TRAINING FOR STAFF MEMBERS IN THE NETHERLANDS BY DR JAY MARINO

innovation and intra-personal intelligence.
21st century learning utilizes an individualized, student-centered approach.

DESCRIPTION OF A 21ST CENTURY CLASSROOM

21st century classrooms are expanded to include an emphasis on greater community. Students are self-directed, and work both independently and interdependently. The curriculum and instruction are designed to challenge all students, and provides for differentiation.

The curriculum is not textbook-driven or fragmented, but is thematic, project-based and integrated. Skills and content are not taught as an end in themselves, but students learn them through their research and application in their projects. Textbooks, if they have them, are just one of many resources.

"CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN SCHOOLS IS BASED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF 21ST CENTURY SKILLS THROUGH ENGAGING THE LEARNER AND EMPOWERMENT"

Knowledge is not memorization of facts and figures, but is constructed through research and application, and connected to previous knowledge and personal experience. The skills and content become relevant and needed as students require this information to complete their projects. The content and basic skills are applied within the context of the curriculum, and are not ends in themselves.

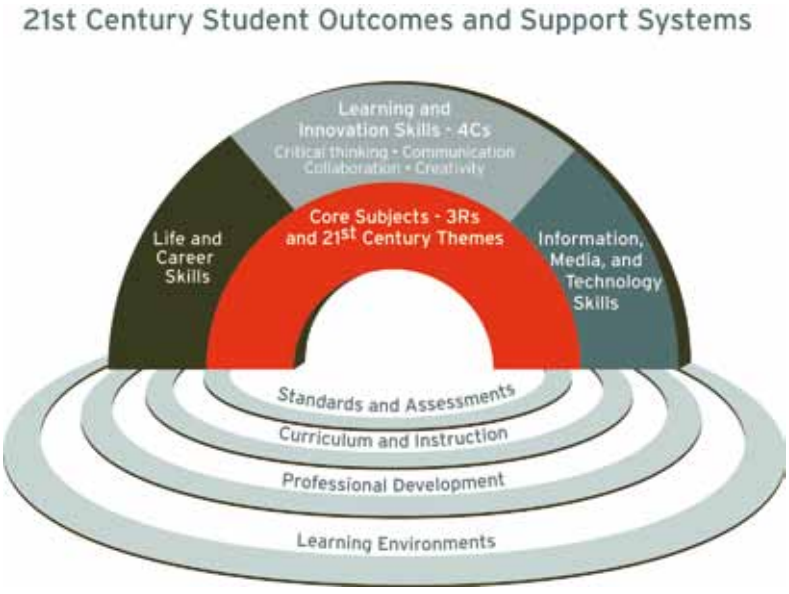
Assessment moves from regurgitation of memorized facts and disconnected processes to a demonstration of understanding through application in a variety of contexts. Real-world audiences are an important part of the assessment process, as is self-assessment.

Continuous improvement in schools is based on the development of 21st century skills through engaging the learner and empowerment.

FRAMEWORK FOR 21ST CENTURY LEARNING

More information about the relation between 21st Century Learning and system development? See the web page of the Partnership for 21st Century Learning: http://www.p21.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=254&Itemid=119

STUDENT LED CONFERENCE IN DUNLAP SCHOOLS



FRAMEWORK FOR 21ST CENTURY LEARNING

1.3 WHAT IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?

Effective organizations focus on quality and continuous improvement. In general, if the customer experiences a product or service as below standard, customers will leave and go elsewhere to get there needs met. In the end, a companies that does not meet the needs of their customers will go broke.

In education, the focus is on qualitatively good education that results in increased academic achievement. If the quality of the education is below standard, then the school has a problem, especially when no demonstrable improvements are made. In many cases, parents will remove their children from ineffective schools and over time, schools will be closed.

High quality school systems would be expected; however this is not always the case. But why? Three perspectives of continuous improvement will be presented: personal awareness, team learning and collaboration system thinking.

A The quest for quality; personal awareness

This primarily has to do with awareness and the realization that the responsibility of continuous improvement lies with you. Your upbringing, your education and your experiences shape your view, concepts and mental model of what quality is and also what improvement can be made. This concept applies to everyone; educators as well as students.

B The necessity for cooperation; PLC and collaboration

Secondly, continuous improvement has to do with the awareness that quality improvement can only be accomplished through the joint effort of many. Educators are members of a team. Educators working in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) are in position for success. That is why educators have to learn to know and understand each other in order to operate effectively together. Effective team players learn to listen, cooperate and gain knowledge about continuous improvement.

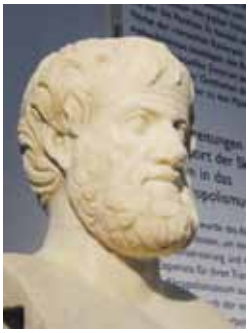
C The need for cohesion; system thinking

Thirdly, systems thinking provides a framework for continuous improvement. How do we look at the system as a whole? Can we see and relate problems as a part of the system? How can we promote this system thinking as a way to look at problems and solutions.

Let us further explore these three points.

A – THE QUEST FOR QUALITY; PERSONAL AWARENESS

Contrary to what a lot of people think, quality is not an objective opinion by experts that have determined what is 'good'. Nor is quality a 'corporate invention'; people determine for themselves what is good. The awareness of quality is as old as humankind itself.
The famous Greek philosopher Aristotle already said: *"Quality is what man perceives as better"*.
Quality is a personal, often unconscious and subjective value one accredits to something or someone. Because values and beliefs originate in the culture in which one has grown up and because personal knowledge and (life)experience play a role, everybody will (consciously or unconsciously) have their own definition of quality and concept of what is good. From that base they have an opinion about what can be better and how.



"QUALITY IS WHAT MAN PERCEIVES AS BETTER."

– ARISTOTLE

Moreover, it is understood that people are driven by intrinsic motivation, the general human basic needs. Maslov (1954) organized these needs hierarchically *(see figure 4)*. To inspire people to learn and to improve, we need to understand that people make choices that produce those intrinsic rewards and that provide for their basic needs.
You will not learn on an empty stomach (physical need), but there will also be little learning and improving in a class where students do not feel safe (need for safety and security). Social skills are necessary to function within a group. Respect and recognition create appreciation and commitment. Only when all these needs have been met can there be room for self-development.

METAPHYSICS OF QUALITY

Somebody who aptly described his struggle with the concept of quality is the American Robert Pirsig. His book *"Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance" (1976)* - which is neither about Zen nor about motorcycle maintenance - is world famous and made a lot of people think about what quality is and how this concept relates to with personal meaning and quality improvement.

Case and point is the fascinating chapter where Pirsig tells about the discussion with his students disucssing the concept of "Quality".

FIGURE 4: MOTIVATIONAL LADDER OF MASLOW (1954) IN RELATION TO QUALITY

ROBERT M. PIRSIG: "ZEN AND THE ART OF MOTORCYCLE MAINTENANCE" (1976)

'I DO NOT KNOW WHAT QUALITY IS, BUT I RECOGNIZE IT WHEN I SEE IT.'
Robert M. Pirsig in: *"Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance"* (1976)
Read the complete book on the Internet: http://design.caltech.edu/erik/Misc/pirsig.pdf

"There's a large fragment concerning Phædrus' first class after he gave that assignment on "What is quality in thought and statement?" The atmosphere was explosive. Almost everyone seemed as frustrated and angered as he had been by the question. "How are we supposed to know what quality is?" they said. "You're supposed to tell us!"

Then he told them he couldn't figure it out either and really wanted to know. He had assigned it in the hope that somebody would come up with a good answer. That ignited it. A roar of indignation shook the room. Before the commotion had settled down another teacher had stuck his head in the door to see what the trouble was.

"It's all right," Phædrus said. "We just accidentally stumbled over a genuine question, and the shock is hard to recover from." Some students looked curious at this, and the noise simmered down.

He then used the occasion for a short return to his theme of "Corruption and Decay in the Church of Reason." It was a measure of this corruption, he said, that students should be outraged by someone trying to use them to seek the truth. You were supposed to fake this search for the truth, to imitate it. To actually search for it was a damned imposition.

The truth was, he said, that he genuinely did want to know what they thought, not so that he could put a grade on it, but because he really wanted to know. They looked puzzled.
"I sat there all night long," one said.
"I was ready to cry, I was so mad," a girl next to the window said.
"You should warn us," a third said.
"How could I warn you," he said, "when I had no idea how you'd react?"

Some of the puzzled ones looked at him with a first dawning. He wasn't playing games. He really wanted to know. A most peculiar person.
Then someone said, "What do you think?"
"I don't know," he answered.
"But what do you think?"
He paused for a long time. "I think there is such a thing as Quality, but that as soon as you try to define it, something goes haywire. You can't do it."
Murmurs of agreement.
He continued, "Why this is, I don't know. I thought maybe I'd get some ideas from your paper. I just don't know."

This time the class was silent.

In subsequent classes that day there was some of the same commotion, but a number of students in each class volunteered friendly answers that told him the first class had been discussed during lunch.
A few days later he worked up a definition of his own and put it on the blackboard to be copied for posterity. The definition was: "Quality is a characteristic of thought and statement that is recognized by a non thinking process. Because definitions are a product of rigid, formal thinking, quality cannot be defined."
The fact that this "definition" was actually a refusal to define did not draw comment. The students had no formal training that would have told them his statement was, in a formal sense, completely irrational. If you can't define something you have no formal rational way of knowing that it exists. Neither can you really tell anyone else what it is. There is, in fact, no formal difference between inability to define and stupidity. When I say, "Quality cannot be defined," I'm really saying formally, "I'm stupid about Quality." Fortunately the students didn't know this. If they'd come up with these objections he wouldn't have been able to answer them at the time.

But then, below the definition on the blackboard, he wrote, "But even though Quality cannot be defined, you know what Quality is!" and the storm started all over again.
"Oh, no, we don't!" "Oh, yes, you do." "Oh, no, we don't!" "Oh, yes, you do!" he said and he had some material ready to demonstrate it to them.

He had selected two examples of student composition. The first was a rambling, disconnected thing with interesting ideas that never built into anything. The second was a magnificent piece by a student who was mystified himself about why it had come out so well. Phædrus read both, then asked for a show of hands on who thought the first was best. Two hands went up. He asked how many liked the second better. Twenty-eight hands went up.

"Whatever it is," he said, "that caused the overwhelming majority to raise their hands for the second one is what I mean by Quality. So you know what it is." There was a long reflective silence after this, and he just let it last.

SUMMARY – A PERSONAL AWARENESS

- Quality is (often unconsciously) personally determined and is colored by many factors that are bound by culture, time and place.
- Quality and continuous improvement requires personal interpretation and standard of what is 'good'; therefore everybody has their own system of values and standards.
- The process of awareness requires listening and self-reflection.
- The motivation to improve quality also depends on personal well-being and personal competencies (Maslov motivational ladder).

B – THE NECESSITY FOR COOPERATION; TEAM LEARNING AND COLLABORATION

It is natural for individuals to determine what quality is for themselves. Working collaboratively in an effective team doesn't come a naturally.
What one might consider "quality" education, another might not. The standard is unclear as each person has different images and different opinions about what good education is. Because each person has a unique perspective, irritation and discord can arise before team improvement efforts begin. In order to discuss 'good' education, teams will first have to have a common vision of 'good' education as it relates to the classroom, school, school board and school district.

"WHY IS OUR SCHOOL A QUALITY SCHOOL?"

The '5 why' tool provides insight into the underlying values and beliefs; why does the team think that their school is a quality school (or not)?

WHAT IS THE 5 WHY TOOL?

It is a questioning technique that, through listening and repeatedly asking the 'why' question, leads to deeper insight into the functioning of a process. The tool provides a reflective process to determine root causes.

WHEN DO YOU USE THE 5 WHY TOOL?

- To get the functioning of a process clear.
- To understand what is the real cause of a problem.
- To be able to discuss issues those that are abstract or obvious.
- To expose underlying values and standards.

THIS IS WHAT THE 5 WHY TOOL LOOKS LIKE.

The question: In a group seeting (2 people; 3 if 1 is acting as an observer/facilitator) the team tries to expose the underlying values and standards that are at the foundation of personal perspectives that determin why someone considers the school a quality school.

Why do you think our school is a quality school?
"Because the management listens to me, as a teacher, and takes my remarks seriously."

Why is this important?
"It makes me feel more respected as a professional and I feel more involved with the improvement plans."

Why is that important to you?
"Because this was not the case in my old school and I did not feel part of the team."

Why is the team this important to you?
"Because I....."

Summary and discussion;
For you a quality school is a school that.....
You think this is important because.....

THIS IS WHAT THE TOOL LOOKS LIKE.

1. Describe the problem or question clearly and preferably in the form of a theorem.
2. Ask the question why.
3. Recap the answer (listen carefully); according to you .....
4. Ask the question why.....
5. Repeat this procedure until it becomes clear what the real cause of the problem is or what the essence is of the underlying values and standards.

PAY ATTENTION!

- It is hard to know when to stop asking questions; usually it is enough to ask "why" five times.
- Beware that the answers reflect personal values and standards and are not random guesses.
- Sometimes the 'why' question can be replaced with the 'what' question.

Only if teams have a collective agreement and a clear and shared mission can they begin to work on continuous improvement together. Essentially, teams need to define quality as the standard to which they strive for.

A well described mission (why was this school founded, what is our basis for thinking and doing) and vision of good education (how are we going to realize good and better education) provides clarity and direction. Only then will teams be able to work toward their definition of quality. A vision that is discussed frequently will remain alive amongst everybody involved and will be reflected in the improvement efforts of the school. Essentially, mission statements provide clear team focus on the work ahead.

Teams need to frequently reference their mission and vision with stakeholders and keep it at the forefront of their improvement efforts. Schools constantly change and enolve as new parents, new students and also new teachers interact within the school system. As the school environment changes gradually, it can produce unintended consequences for the learning needs of the students.

"QUALITY IS A PERSONAL, OFTEN UNCONSCIOUS AND SUBJECTIVE VALUE ONE ACCREDITS TO SOMETHING OR SOMEONE."

Changes in education policy at a regional or national level can also be of influence. If school systems do not remain in touch with the changing needs of stakeholders through constant communication with parents, students and staff there is strong potential for a gap between what the team experiences as 'effective' and what other stakeholders value as 'effective'. Even if there is an agreement on what good education is, there can still be a difference in opinion in future expectation and targets.

Frequently seeking stakeholder satisfaction levels amongst personnel, parents, students is therefore a prerequisite to continuous improvement.

"WHO'S VISION IS THIS?"

A vision of good education has often been described in a previous plan by former leaders or even copied from another school.
According to John West-Burnham (1997) it is therefore necessary to investigate the following as a team:

- Who has participated in creating this vision?
- When was the vision created?
- Has it ever been adjusted?
- Does everybody know and accept this vision?
- Is this vision being used within evaluation criteria?
- Has the vision been written in clear language?
- Is the vision regulary measured to determine if progress is being made?

Clear vision and mission are necessary to work on quality improvement as a group. In the absence of a clear mission and vision, isolated improvement actions can occur resulting in less than desireable results. Michael Fullan (1991) has shown that schools that work on quality improvement has have teachers that know the vision, mission, values and goals of the schools and can apply them to their own classroom.

To accomplish common and shared goals that lead to continuous improvement, the team needs to be able to work well together. Reaching goals requires teamwork, collaboration and shared leadership. Results can not be obtained on your own. Each team member is dependent upon one another.

To get results and accomplish improvement goals, teams must create norms that describe the collective commitements they are willing to make to each other. Effective teams have clear procedures, detailed plans for accomplishing goals and a clear vision of the work ahead. Effective schools produce an environment where there is a certain stability and peace in the school to work on improvements.

The 'school team' should be an active group that helps set and communicate direction at the school. Practically, this is often a group of individual teachers led by school management. School leadership teams should try to avoid the following behaviors and pitfalls:

- Too much emphasis on controlling the agenda (what needs to be done) instead of discussing how the work can be done best.
- Too much time is spent on talking about subjects and principles (of which one has little or no control) instead of solving problems and working on a joint solution.
- Too much time is spent on reacting to events instead of anticipating on the basis of a shared vision.
- Too little time is spent on the social needs and wants and on celebrating successes.

"WHAT IS A TEAM?"

Effective teams can be recognized by the following characteristics (West-Burnham, 1997):

- There is a clear vision on good education and on learning how to learn.
- There is situational leadership (using each other's strong points).
- There is support and strong commitment.
- There is a process-oriented and systematic approach, with clear goals, described in proceeds, performance indicators, planning and means.
- There is feedback and self-evaluation to improve functioning even more (team building).
- There is an open culture (no hidden agenda's).
- There is effective networking and communication.
- Decisions are made collectively.
- There is emphasis on doing instead of talking about.

Leaders help teams become effective teams. If there is little to no experience with this way of working, and if the management has little experience with leading continuous improvement, the task can appear daunting. Knowledge about the philosophy, methods, processes and tools of continuous improvement should be part of leadership training for teams. Effective teams should participate in the training together, executing the improvement

assignments together and preparing a quality plan for the school team. Together, an effective leadership team is developed that can motivate and involve the rest of the team.

SUMMARY – B
PLC AND COLLABORATION

- Continuous improvement starts with looking, listening and understanding before working together.
- Teamwork is the will to realize a goal and to solve problems. This requires an active and positive mentality of all team members.
- Cooperation in a group requires rules to work together successfully and enjoyably.
- Together teams achieve more. This requires professional competencies in the area of quality and working on improvement continually.

C – THE NEED FOR CONSISTENCY; SYSTEM THINKING

System Thinking helps us to look at problems as a part of the whole system *(Senge 1990)*

Often we approach a problem from our own interpretation of what we observe (our mental model) and we come to fast conclusions. Often, we are not aware of our paradigm: an assumption that acts as a filter for all we perceive. Sometimes we see only an isolated event, rather than the big picutre. It can be problematic if teams are not looking for underlying data, trends and patterns.

Effective quality school systems ensure structure, processes and accomplishing goals. When teams have clear vision and mission, they are able to manipulate the parts of the system to obtain results.

Only 15% of problems in a system is related to people *(Deming, 1982)*. The rest (85%) are "system" issues that can only be changed with help of the people who shaped and owned the system (mostly superintendents and principals). If teams understand that the "process" is the issue for many problems, it can focus efforts on process improvement.

CONSISTENCY OF A SYSTEM

Deming emphasizes the importance of leading continuous improvement to improve the system instead of continuously trying to change people in an organization. He emphasizes that every system is unique and cannot be transferred to other (school) organization because of the principle of variation.

Deming says that everything is unique in its kind. No two schools are the same, no two parents are the same, no two children are the same and no two teachers teach in the same way. In other words, all characteristics of systems show variations. However, parents desire consistency of quality. Therefore, improving consistency and diminishing the variation of a system is essential for continuous improvement. Controlling and predicting the variation within a system by means of statistical techniques and instruments (see the use of control charts in the PDSA Improvement Cycle) is an important contribution of Deming in the continuous improvement model of (school) organizations.

THE SYSTEM APPROACH OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Systems theory has been implemented through a variety of related initiatives in education. In the next chapter (Chapter 2) we look for some practical implications for implementing continuous improvement as presented by various school leaders.

DEFINITION OF SYSTEM THINKING

According to the Wikipedia Encyclopedia System Thinking[10]; *"....is the process of understanding how things influence one another within a whole.*

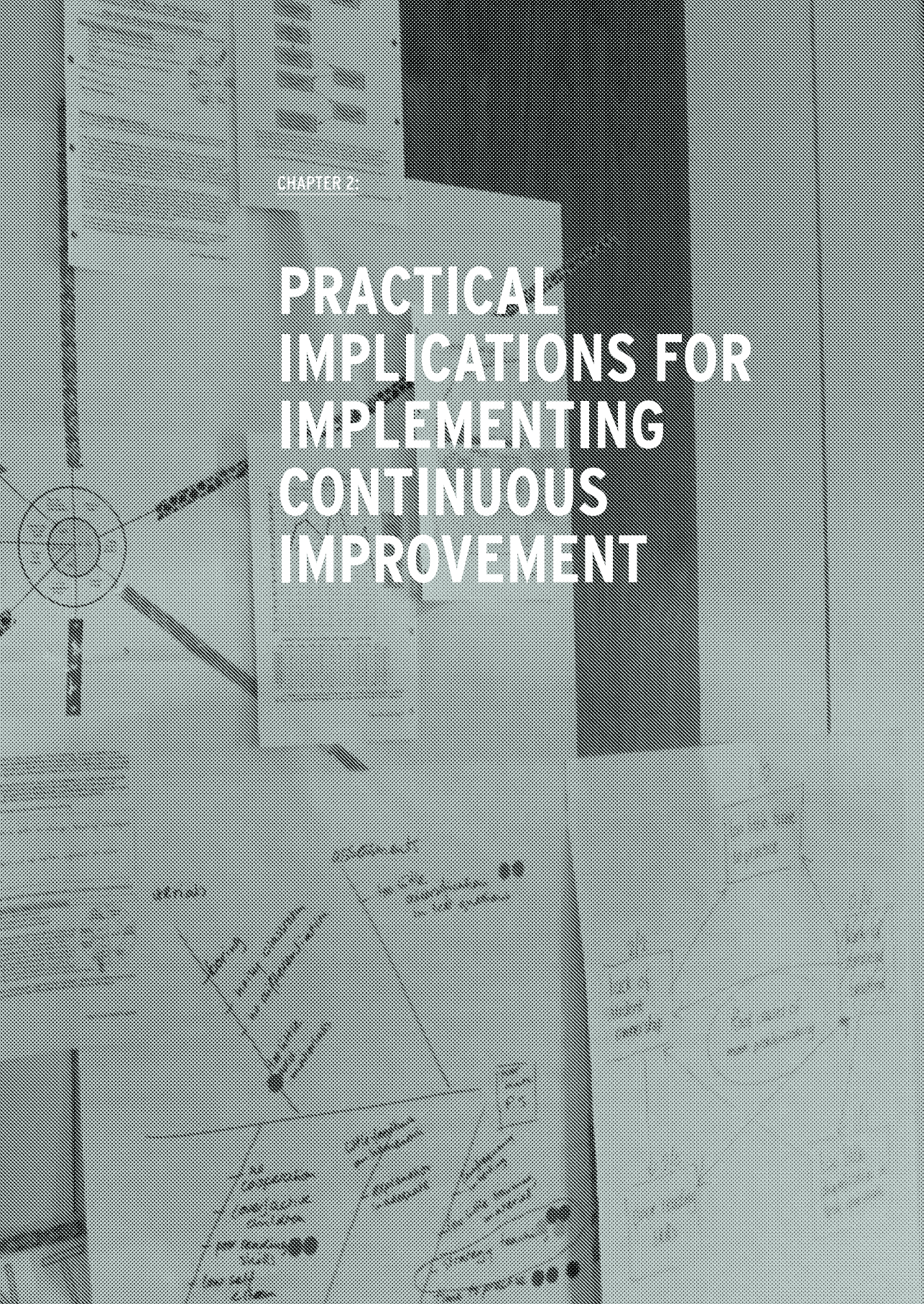
In organizations, systems consist of people, structures, and processes that work together to make an organization healthy or unhealthy. Systems Thinking has been defined as an approach to problem solving and continuous improvement, by viewing "problems" as parts of an overall system, rather than reacting to specific parts, outcomes or events and potentially contributing to further development of unintended consequences.

Systems thinking is not one thing but a set of habits or practices within a framework that is based on the belief that the component parts of a system can best be understood in the context of relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation. Systems thinking focuses on cyclical processes rather than linear cause and effect."

SUMMARY – C
SYSTEM THINKING

- It is critical to look at the school (quality) system before drawing conclusions to a problem.
- Look for (behavioral) patterns and trends, look for agreements in the quality system.
- People want to do a good job and are willing to collaborate to drive improvements; don't blame the person.
- Systems are designed to accomplish goals and increase performance. Effective teams don't hesitate to change or improve the system when it is not working.
- By collecting data over time and tracking progress using quality tools, teams can control and predict the variation of the (school) system.

[10] More information about System Thinking:
http://www.systems-thinking.org/stada/stada.htm and
http://www.thinking.net/Systems_Thinking/OverviewSTarticle.pdf



CHAPTER 2:

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

2: PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

"THE TOTAL QUALITY APPROACH IN EDUCATION HAS FOCUSED ON EVERYONE IN THE SCHOOL APPLYING SYSTEMS THINKING, RATHER THAN ON ONE PERSON'S PERFORMANCE TO IMPROVE THE SYSTEM."

2.1 SYSTEMS THINKING TO DRIVE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Systems theory has been implemented through a variety of related initiatives in education. One approach to continuous improvement has been the application of Total Quality Management which has incorporated:

A viewing the organization as a whole, rather than its parts;
B applying a team approach to decision-making; and
C encouraging improvement of processes that take place across standard organizational lines (Lannon-Kim, 1991).

EDUCATIONAL SETTING OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The term Total Quality Management (TQM) has been used to describe the implementation of continuous improvement and systems thinking in the educational setting.

Total Quality Management represents a process of change in the way members of an organization think about their work and has been applied in the educational setting resulting in the improvement of student learning (Bonstingl, 1992).

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT AS A PHILOSOPHY

Kopel (1997) defined Total Quality Management as a philosophy that involved everyone in continuously improving processes in order to meet and exceed customer expectations. Without customers (students, parents and the community), there is no school or school system, and without a school system, there is no need for students to attend.

To that end, a primary focus for a school system has been to strive for customer satisfaction by implementing effective systems and processes to provide the customers (students) with quality services (Deming, 1986).

Total Quality Management has been predicated on improving a product, which in the case of public schools, has been increased student achievement.

TOTAL QUALITY EDUCATION

Another variation of systems theory, derived from Total Quality Management, is Total Quality Education. Glasser (1990) related quality management principles to his own ideas of learning and believed that if schools were to follow Deming's principles, it would require students to evaluate both the quality of the work they do and the quality of the processes used to produce the work which he called Total Quality Education. Quality in education has been described as the integrity of how the teaching and learning process is executed. Cornesky (1993), described Total Quality Education as an avenue which allowed students to actively participate in classroom decision-making processes, the development of critical thinking skills, and the establishment of becoming life-long learners.

KEY ELEMENTS OF TOTAL QUALITY EDUCATION

Empowerment and ownership are key elements of Total Quality Education. Educators that empower students by allowing them to assess their own work and provide input about changes in the classroom have improved student performance (Cornesky, 1993). When students and teachers are empowered and work together collaboratively, a process that improves performance is established (Eisner, 2001). The total quality approach in education has focused on students, teachers, administrators and the school board applying systems thinking, rather than on one person's performance to improve the system.
The total quality philosophy allows the customer (students) to communicate with the decision-maker (teacher) in the interest of a continually improving classroom.
Five key points are offered by Cornesky (1993) in the implementation and development of a total quality philosophy in an educational setting including:

A helping students develop an understanding of total quality;
B developing trust;
C developing pride in work; and
D changing the classroom culture.

QUALITY DEFINITIONS

Quality has been defined as a system of continuous improvement that meets customer needs.
Quality has also been identified as the pursuit of customer satisfaction and the elimination of variation in the production process.
Quirke (1995) describes quality as being "about 'connectedness' where people have a sense of the whole relationships with their internal and external customers, and an understanding of how the process of which they are a part fits together to produce the desired result" (p. 162).
Quality has also been described as a commitment to excellence by each individual that can be achieved through teamwork and a process of continuous improvement (Cornesky, 1993).

THE SEVEN POINTS OF BETTS

To apply a systems approach in education, Betts (1992) recommended the following:

A development of increased capacity for self-reference, self-correction, self-direction, self-organization, and self-renewal in the educational environment;
B viewing system change as a process of problem-solving;
C putting emphasis on participation of the organization to the whole systems;
D focusing on cooperation rather than on competition;
E seeing everyone as responsible for the system;
F focusing on long-term consequences and root causes; and
G incorporating conflicting goals of the system into a single, clear goal which the system can attain.

COMPONENTS OF IMPLEMENTING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Schmoker (1996) summarized the discussion of continuous improvement by saying "Leaders must recognize teachers and others that are instrumental in the change process, and school improvements are the results of solid goals and data collection to determine progress toward goal accomplishment" (p. 59). The general framework of educational institutions implementing continuous improvement through a systems approach has included the following components:

1. **Customer Focus:** Organizations had well-defined customers and allowed them to define and judge quality based on their needs and requirements.
2. **Continuous Improvement:** Incremental and break through improvements were embedded in the way school systems functioned. Modifications, revisions, and improvements were based on collection and analysis of data gathered.
3. **Data driven decision making:** The collection of data on key processes and outcomes was used to make decisions for improvement. The Plan Do Study Act cycle of continuous improvement (and similar variations) was often used in a data-driven approach.
4. **Leadership:** Setting direction for achievement, establishment of clear mission and vision, determining core values, and establishing high expectations was evident.
5. **Systems thinking:** Stakeholders were striving to understand their role and their contribution to organizational results. There was a strong focus on the parts of the system and their interactions as a whole.
6. **Training:** Skills and motivation of the workforce remained a priority. Employees were involved in the planning and development of training processes.

2.2 "CONSTANCY OF PURPOSE" KEEPS THE FOCUS ON CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Deming's famous "14 points" have been the foundation of quality since their inception. By design, point 1 is "Constancy of Purpose" which basically means maintaining a focus of the important long term vision - NO MATTER WHAT. Leaders establish constancy of purpose by

"THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IS TO SET AND COMMUNICATE DIRECTION."

anticipating and assessing the impact of future changes, nursing the culture of the organization needed to adopt the changes, and implementing the changes necessary to make the vision a reality.

Within a strong focus on the important long-term factors, many organizations waste huge amounts of resources shifting focus from one crisis to the next without ever making sustained progress. Leaders ensure the day-to-day issues don't result in a shirting of resources and attention from the organization's "critical few" priorities to the shifting priorities of the day. Without constancy of purpose the rate of improvement over the long term will be greatly diminished.

Constancy of purpose means that quality decisions are not situational. End of month quality is the same as beginning of month. It means that the long term benefit of the organization is not sacrificed to make short-term targets. It means having your eye on the competition, whether it is in your industry or coming from elsewhere, with plans to stay ahead.

Constancy of purpose doesn't require the threat of a customer leaving to implement corrective actions based on root cause. It means that while your team may argue about how best to accomplish it, no one is confused about the commitment to deliver reliable quality. Constancy of purpose can only exist when leadership lives it, demonstrates it, and won't accept anything else.

DEMING'S 14 POINTS FOR EDUCATION

Deming's 14 points for Total Quality Management have been applied to many businesses. But here is how a class at Mt. Edgecumbe High School (Alaska) has modified them for Education:

1. **Create constancy of purpose** toward improvement of students and service. Aim to create the best quality students capable of improving all forms of processes and entering meaningful positions in society.
2. **Adopt the new philosophy.** Educational management must awake to the challenge, must learn their responsibilities and take on leadership for change.
3. **Work to abolish grading and the harmful effects of rating people.**
4. **Cease dependence on testing to achieve quality.** Eliminate the need for inspections on a mass basis (standardized achievement test, minimum graduation exams, etc.) by providing learning experiences which create quality performance.
5. **Work with the educational institutions from which students come.** Improve the relationships with student sources and help to improve the quality of students coming into your system.
6. **Improve constantly and forever the system of student involvement** and service, to improve both quality and productivity.
7. **Institute education and training on the job** for students, teachers, classified staff and administrators.
8. **Institute leadership.** The aim of supervision should be to help people use machines, gadgets and materials to do a better job.
9. **Drive out fear**, so far that everyone may work effectively for the school system. Create an environment which encourages people to speak freely.
10. **Break down barriers between departments.** People in teaching, special education, accounting, food service, administration, curriculum development and research, must work as a team. Develop strategies for increasing the cooperation among groups and individual people.
11. **Eliminate slogans, exhortations and targets** for teachers and students asking for perfect performance and new levels of productivity. Exhortations create adversarial relationships. The bulk of the causes of low quality and low productivity belong to the system and thus lie beyond the control of teachers and students.
12. **Eliminate work standards (**quotas) on teachers and students (e.g. raise test scores by 10% and lower dropouts by 15%). Substitute leadership.
13. **Remove barriers that rob the student, teachers and management of their right to pride and joy of workmanship.**
14. **Quality is everybody's job.** Institute a vigorous program of education and self-improvement for everyone. Put everybody in the school to work to accomplish the transformation.

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[1] As published by Mt. Edgecumbe High School (1990). See also a Dutch article of Jan Polderman about the 14 points of Deming for education in: *"De Kern van de zaak"; published by the Dutch Inspection of Education (2003)*

DUNLAP SCHOOL DISTRICT #323 STRATEGIC PLAN 2010-2015

MISSION

The Dunlap School Community will empower all students to excel in a global society.

VISION

Dunlap students will continuously excel in a global society by being:

- Self-motivated learners
- Critical thinkers
- Effective communicators
- Skilled collaborators
- Responsible and culturally aware citizens
- Technologically capable creators

VALUES & BELIEFS

We believe that:

- While all children can learn, they learn at different rates and in different ways.
- High expectations and an engaging, innovative, technological learning environment are critical to the learning success of all students.
- Students must take responsibility for their own learning and achievement.
- Effective collaboration requires trust, mutual respect, open, and honest communication.
- District policies are necessary to ensure equitable and consistent implementation of expectations.
- Goals must be specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound.
- Continual stakeholder feedback guides improvement.

GOALS

- Goal 1: To continuously improve student growth and achievement
- Goal 2: To obtain a satisfying and productive classroom and school learning environment
- Goal 3: To achieve a satisfying and productive classroom and school teaching environment
- Goal 4: To ensure a satisfying and productive partnership with families and the community
- Goal 5: To obtain efficient, effective, and equitable use of resources

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE:
TRANSFORMATION & ALIGNMENT VIA THE PLAN ON A PAGE

2.3 DEVELOPING A PLAN TO FOCUS "CONSTANCY OF PURPOSE"

The role of leadership is to set and communicate direction. Colleagues and experience have taught us that systemic transformation requires a well-defined plan and people who are committed to accomplishing it. Successful organizations involve employees, stakeholders and customers (the students) in the process of continuous quality improvement for organizational change.

Stakeholder participation in the development of the plan ensures ownership in the plan. Parents, community members, staff members, and students have unique views that contribute to a well-rounded and widely-accepted plan that describes the intent of the organization. A District strategic plan created by stakeholders is the basis for systemic reform and provides clear direction for "constancy of purpose".

When creating a comprehensive strategic plan, it is important to include questions such as: "What are the key challenges our District faces to provide an effective education?" and "What are the most important skills our students will need to be world-class learners?" Answers to these questions (and others) can be summarized into key themes. These themes create the essence of the core components of a strategic plan including common and shared: mission, vision, values & beliefs and goals.

To easily communicate the strategic plan, many organizations are using a concept called " The Plan on a Page" which can communicate vision, mission, values and goals in a simple format that can be easily shared with stakeholders. On page 36 is an example of Dunlap School District's Plan on a page.

By involving large numbers of stakeholders from various sectors of the school community in the planning process, stakeholders are able to make the plan their own. To really ensure that the plan becomes a "living and breathing document", organizations ensure that individual schools, classrooms, and students create their own Plans on a Page that are aligned to the strategic plan.

2.4 SYSTEMIC LEADERSHIP

In hopes of harnessing the efforts of everything and everyone in the system, educational leaders are encountering promising results through the implementation of powerful approaches to systemic leadership including:

- Shared leadership
- Clear direction and focus
- Alignment of the system and its parts
- Measurement of results
- Stakeholder participation in the improvement process

2.4.1 SHARED LEADERSHIP

The old paradigm of school leadership called for the principal or superintendent as "the boss" or primary decision-maker. Decisions were often made in isolation according to the whim of the highest ranking administrator. Today, at the heart of successful school leadership is a representative group of dedicated, front-line employees who are personally committed and involved in the improvement of the system in which they work.

The foundation of any effective plan is selecting the right process and people to work on it. By establishing a community of leaders, administrators can collectively harness the talent of a diverse group of stakeholders and benefit from their multiple perspectives. The new paradigm of educational leadership calls for collaboration and involvement in leading the educational organization. When a cohesive team is empowered with leadership responsibilities, it is more likely that their decisions will be supported and acted on by colleagues. An effective team utilizes the cooperative power of the group to guide the way.

Stakeholders need a "seat at the decision making table." Once strategic direction has been set, shared leadership teams can use quality processes and tools to set the stage for action by establishing clear and common focus within their circles of influence.

2.4.2 CLEAR DIRECTION AND FOCUS

To accomplish the work of the plan, teams need to identify clear and measurable goals. Goals written in SMART format (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time Bound) focus efforts and produce results. Goals can be monitored by leadership teams and can use frequent data to determine mid-course corrections needed when data suggest changes are necessary. Summative data can provide a reliable measurement of progress over time.

In the old paradigm of school improvement, strategic plans were nothing more than words on a piece of paper which made the people who created them feel like they were doing "something" about the problems they were trying to solve.

Leadership teams need to ensure that improvement plans incorporate explicit and agreed-upon focus. To ensure group consensus, input is essential to make certain that the values of stakeholders are represented. Only the most important or "critical few" focus areas should be included to keep the effort centered and manageable. Effective leadership teams know that in the absence of clear focus and direction, people will determine for themselves what is most important. When ambiguous and diversified direction exists in the system, success happens only by chance in what's referred to as "random acts of excellence". The new paradigm of organizational change demands clear vision and well-articulated goals that guide continuous improvement efforts through "intentional acts of excellence".

2.4.3 ALIGNMENT OF THE SYSTEM AND ITS PARTS

Successful organizations align their resources, budgets and people to their vision, mission, goals and core values. Effective teams incorporate a systems-thinking approach to ensure that improvement efforts are aligned horizontally (within the system itself) and vertically (within the various parts of the system in which it interacts). Without an approach that incorporates systems alignment, the efforts of individuals may have little impact on the bottom line.

Effective organizations ensure that every part of the system is directly connected to the identified improvement areas. System-wide results are experienced when all of the efforts of the front line are aligned to clear and specific goals. Systemic alignment harnesses the efforts of every employee, stakeholder and resource available to the organization. Systems thinking ensures that actions are not taken in isolation and focuses on decisions that will most positively influence the system as a whole.

Regardless of position or rank, all employees must understand how their work directly contributes to the vision, mission, core values and goals of the district to ensure optimal, system-wide improvements. The degree to which these are known is directly proportional to overall organizational success.

Using a systems approach, school improvement plans are tightly aligned to the district strategic goals. It isn't enough, however, to simply align school improvement plans to the district plan. To strengthen the alignment process, schools make certain that classroom goals are aligned to the school improvement plan. Classroom goals are developed in student-friendly language and posted in the classroom where progress is monitored by students and teachers. Through collaboration with students, classroom goals provide focus and direction for continuous quality improvement efforts on the front lines where the real action is taking place.

When students set individual goals, they understand how their work connects to the goals of the classroom (which are aligned to the school improvement plan which is aligned to the district strategic plan). In classrooms that utilize a continuous quality improvement approach, students monitor and track their progress toward goals in the student data center and in their student data folders.

The following scenario describes a systemic approach to continuous improvement and serves as an effective process for transformation in a school organization.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

The role of the board is to set and communicate direction through policy and governance. The school board maintains a "10,000 foot view" of the organization while ensuring continuous improvement progress described in the strategic mission, vision, values and goals. Gemberling, Smith, and Villani (2004), who said it best that the continuous improvement journey begins in the boardroom:

> *Board members cannot stand on the sidewalk watching the continuous improvement parade pass them by. The board must lead the parade. We all know the leaders should not just "talk the talk but walk the walk." But do we understand the efforts required to make such a transition? What we do speaks more loudly than what we say. Most of us (board members) are familiar with the principle in organizational development that Talking the talk is the easy part. First, we become familiar with the basic concepts and tools available through continuous improvement. Then we must get our feet wet- we try the tools. Next, we reflect on what happened. What did we learn? How did it help us do our work better? Then, and only then, can we develop our skill level to the point that we internalize continuous improvement as the way we do business. Only then will we walk the walk (p. 47).*

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The role of the school district is to manage and lead the school system in the direction of the Strategic Plan on a Page. To clearly set and communicate district direction in a simplistic way, a District Leadership Team of Stakeholders understand the plan in a document called the Strategic Plan on a Page.
The team communicates and ensures that all stakeholders understand the plan.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER, ROLE OF THE STUDENT

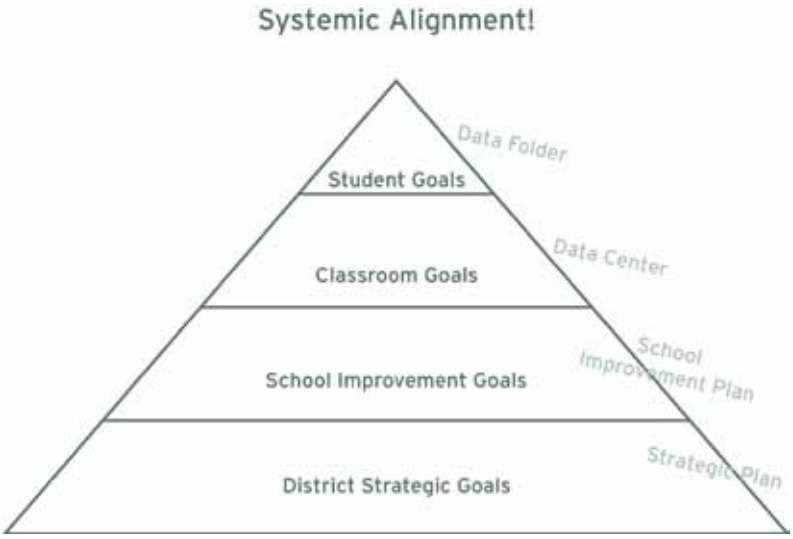


FIGURE 5: THE ILLUSTRATION DEMONSTRATES THE CONCEPT OF SYSTEMIC ALIGNMENT.

Systemic strategies are deployed and employees and stakeholders use the strategies to drive continuous improvement.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

The role of the school is to create a school leadership team comprised of stakeholders focused on continuous improvement. A Plan on a Page is developed and aligned to the District Strategic Plan. This plan is then distributed to all employees and stakeholders within the school to guide and align improvement efforts.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The role of the teacher is to create a balanced classroom learning community which empowers students and engages them in 21st century learning. Teachers post the school's Plan on a Page in their classrooms and talk with students about its meaning. Teachers then facilitate the creation of a classroom Plan on a Page with student input. Classroom plans include specific SMART goals that align to the school improvement plan. Teachers and students track goal progress in a classroom data center which provides a dashboard of "real-time" performance.

THE ROLE OF THE STUDENTS

The role of the student is to participate in the classroom learning community. Students and teachers monitor goal progress in a data center that contains charts and graphs that visually depict achievement. The class uses the data center to measure progress and identify opportunities for improvement within the classroom. Students also track and monitor their individual progress in data folders and compare their own performance to the class performance.

2.4.4 MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

The old adage "what gets measured, gets done" is true in a continuous improvement organization. In the old paradigm of school improvement, leaders would rely on the lagging "high-stakes, once-a-year" indicators to determine progress and goals. Decisions were based on the results of these assessments and often resulted in organizations chasing a data point that generated from work that occurred the previous year. This type of "autopsy" left educational leaders scratching their heads as they tried to determine how to change the trajectory of the next data point.

Today's leadership teams are measuring and monitoring progress frequently in order to determine the impact and effectiveness of strategies being deployed by front line employees. A measurement concept referred to as a "dashboard" can help educators observe real-time results using "leading indicators". These measures allow teams to make in-process adjustments in their strategies and improvement efforts. Like the dashboard of a car, educators can monitor key indicators of achievement in their system and keep an eye on "warning lights" or areas in need of attention.

Many continuous improvement organizations are using a concept called The Balanced Scorecard. This tool enables school districts to bridge the gap between strategy and actions. It also engages a broader range of stakeholders in organizational planning and reflects the most important aspects of the organization. Leadership teams can use the balanced scorecard tool to respond immediately to data and feedback to adjust to changing conditions.

The concept of the Balanced Scorecard has achieved increasing popularity in school districts. Many districts had previously built their objectives around financial and academic targets and goals of little relevance to a long-term strategic vision, thus typically leaving a gap between strategy development and implementation. For this purpose the Balanced Scorecard holds four different perspectives from which a district's activity can be evaluated:

- Financial Perspective
- Customer perspective
- Process perspective
- Innovation perspective

By this the Balanced Scorecard provides a more 'balanced view' by looking at not just financial and academic outcomes, but also customers, stakeholders, internal business processes, learning and growth. The Balanced Scorecard focuses on creating and communicating a total comprehensive picture to all members of the district from the board room to the classroom, taking a long-term view of what the district's strategic objectives really are, making good use of knowledge gained through experience and maintaining the required flexibility of such a system to cope with the fast-changing 21st century environment.
School, classrooms and students seem to prefer a more "graphic" representation of data often referred to as "dashboards". Dashboard measures provide a process for "early detection" of progress (or lack of) through a public display of data in graphical formats for easy interpretation by stakeholders. The days of waiting until next year to determine current performance are remnants of a past paradigm. Implementing a streamlined, in-process measurement system that connects everyone's work to expected targets and results is how organizational change occurs. Effective leadership teams know that what gets measured *frequently*- gets done!

2.4.5 STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

Involving stakeholders in organizational improvements is the responsibility of leadership. Effective organizations utilize the collective effort of the system (and its parts) to achieve results and ensure that all employees, regardless of their position or rank, understand how their work directly contributes to the vision, mission, core values and goals of the system.

In the new paradigm of organizational change, leadership teams strategically connect students to the improvement effort. When teachers assist students in setting individual goals, they begin to understand how their daily work connects to the goals of the classroom, which are aligned to school improvement efforts, which are aligned to district strategic improvement efforts. Effective leadership teams know that the work of continuous improvement is too important to be left just to the adults in the system.

The power of organizational change is realized when every employee, stakeholder and student understands how their work contributes to improving student learning. Continuous quality improvement can have a tremendous impact on student achievement results when leaders use a systemic approach and implement key strategies such as: sharing the privilege and responsibility of leadership; establishing clear vision and precise direction to guide improvements; aligning the system and its parts; measuring what's important and; involving everyone in continuous improvement efforts.

2.5 THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CLASSROOM

The Continuous Improvement Classroom is designed to instill a positive and collaborative school climate and an enthusiastic, participatory learning environment focusing on being better tomorrow than we are today. It is about instilling the belief that being "good" is never good enough and that "the biggest room in the house is the room for improvement."

A comprehensive model of a continuous improvement classroom can be illustrated in the Lotus diagram. *(see figure)*

The goal of the continuous improvement classroom is to engage every student through empowerment, ownership, responsibility and accountability for their own learning. This is accomplished by creating a "customer focused environment" that involves students in the implementation of observable (and measurable) components of the continuous improvement classroom such as:

CLASSROOM GROUND RULES
Students participate in the creation of classroom expectations that all agree to follow in order to accomplish the mission of the classroom.

A CLASSROOM DATA CENTRE

A TEACHER USING THE FLOW CHART QUALITY TOOL.

Ground Rules created by Students	Classroom Mission Statement	Classroom & Student Measurable Goals
Quality Tools & PDSA used regularly	**The Continuous Improvement Classroom**	Classroom Data Center
Classroom Meetings Facilitated by Students	Student-led Conferences	Student Data Folders

THE LOTUS DIAGRAM: A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL OF A CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CLASSROOM

CLASSROOM MISSION STATEMENTS
Students collaboratively create a mission statement that focuses the learning for the year and gets everyone "on the same page" for learning.

CLASSROOM SMART GOALS
SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented and Time bound. It is important that all classrooms in the school have goals and action plans that are aligned to school improvement goals. Students participate in goal setting that put a "laser like focus" on instruction.

CLASSROOM DATA CENTERS
Once goals have been created in student-friendly language, it is important that students participate in the collection and monitoring of progress toward the goals. The data center is the collection point to monitor academic progress.
Individual student data folders: to connect every learner to the classroom goals, students maintain a data folder that tracks and measures their individual progress toward their goals.

CLASSROOM MEETINGS
Effective classrooms take time to revisit the classroom data center, mission and goals to make sure that continuous improvement is progressing. This forum provides students an opportunity to problem-solve and modify the classroom system to obtain maximum results.

STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES
In a student-centered classroom, students are expected to be able to articulate their own progress of learning demonstrated through the review of their data folder. Students (instead of the teacher) facilitate the conference with parents.

QUALITY TOOLS AND PDSA IN THE CLASSROOM
21st century learners prepare for creative problem solving in the world ahead by learning and applying quality tools and the Plan Do Study Act cycle of continuous improvement. These continuous improvement tools and processes keep productivity at its peak!

Students play a unique role in continuous improvement driven systems. They are not only served by the system, but are active workers and participants in the system. The product they produce is learning, through a dynamic interchange between and among students and their teachers. Learning is focused on "what's most important" and students are able to monitor their performance and readily observe their academic/instructional progress. Consequently, students become more receptive to learning when they are active participants and learn powerful 21st century skills that will prepare them for the world ahead.

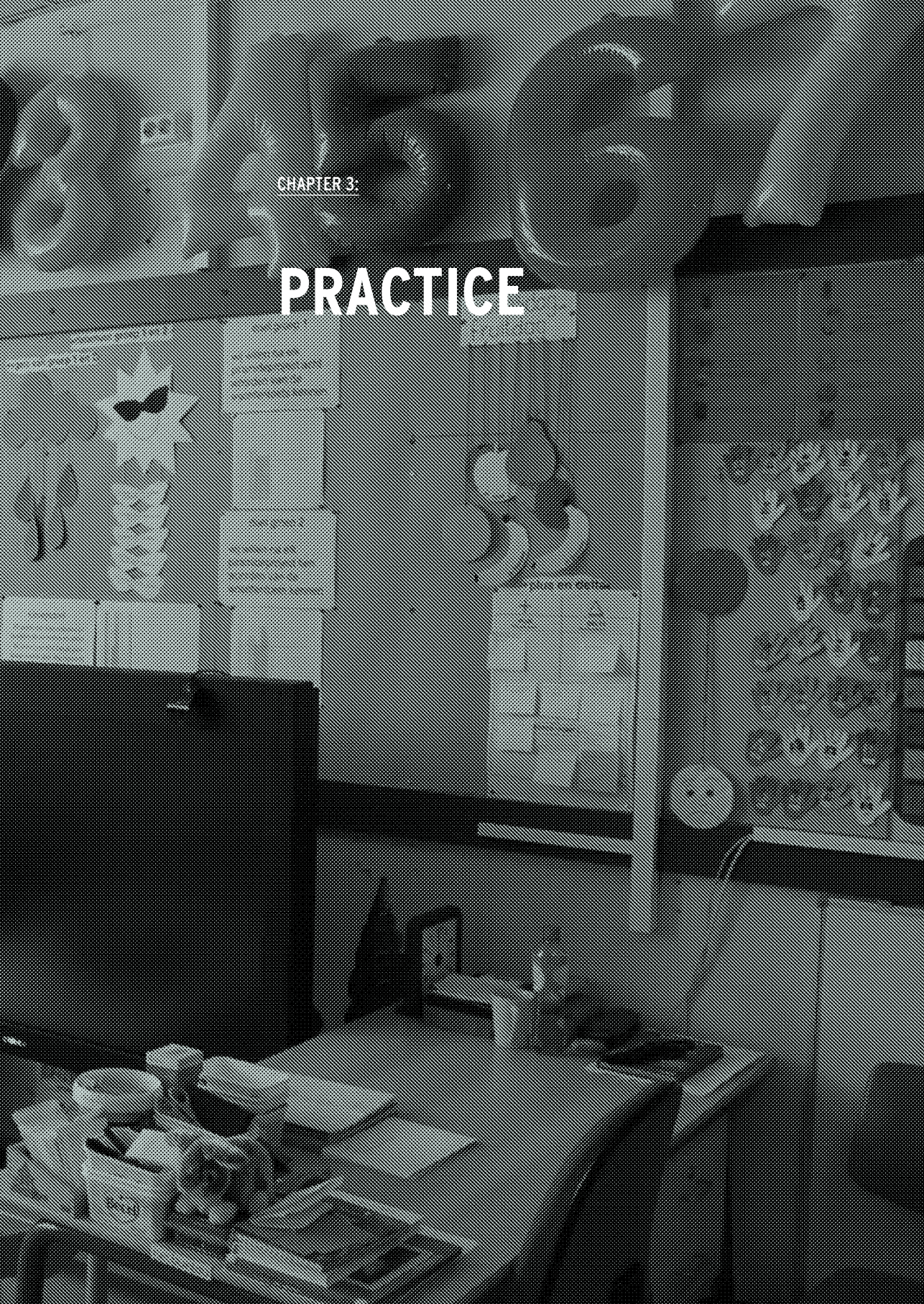
"IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE INTENDED CHANGE IS RECOGNIZED AS SOMETHING THAT WILL IMPROVE THE EXISTING SYSTEM."

2.6 OBSTACLES IN THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY

In any reform initiative involving change, obstacles are inevitable. It is important that the intended change is recognized as something that will improve the existing system. Implementing systemic change takes time and requires persistence and alignment of resources. Celebrating early successes and sharing evidence that the effort is working encourages staff to continue moving forward.

Two challenges to systemic change that are time and know-how. Failure to address these concerns will likely increase resistance. Organizations that have clear plans to support employees and providing time to work on initiatives has helped increase the acceptance of new practices. From a systems' perspective, it is important to also understand the necessity of letting go of ways that do not support the new direction.

EXAMPLE OF A CLASSROOM DATA CENTRE



CHAPTER 3:

PRACTICE

3. PRACTICE

In this chapter Dutch (see 3.1) and American (see 3.2) schools share their first experiences with the approach of continuous improvement.

"IN GENERAL THE DUTCH SCHOOLS ARE OBTAINING GOOD RESULTS IN STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT."

3.1 PRACTICES THE NETHERLANDS

The information below is intended to provide a better understanding of the Dutch Education System.

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE NETHERLANDS

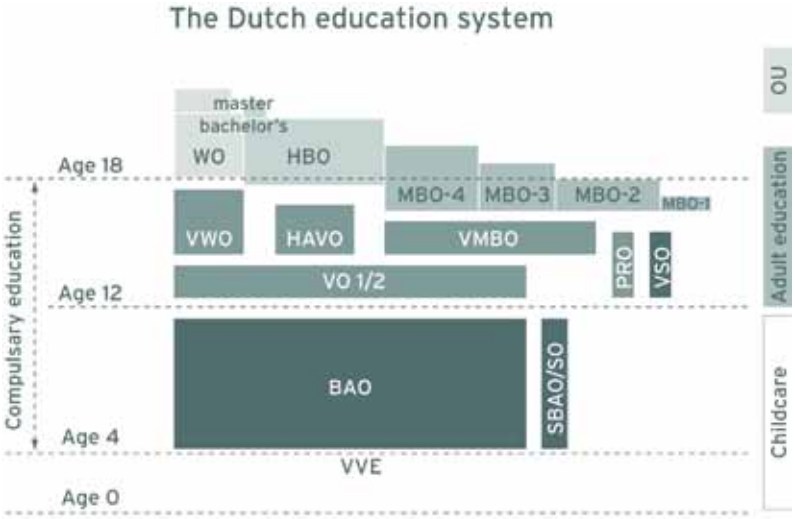
The Dutch education system has limited educational facilities for children under the age of 4. Pre-school and early childhood education focuses on children aged 2 to 5 who are in risk of developing an educational disadvantage.

Most Dutch children enter primary school in the year they turn 4, although the mandatory school age is 5. Primary education lasts 8 years.

For students who require specialized care and support, there is special (primary) education and secondary special education.

On average, children are 12 years of age when they enter secondary education. This sector offers several options: pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO), general secondary education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO).

Students can also transfer to practical training (PRO) or secondary special education (VSO).After special (primary) education, the majority of students transfer to VMBO or PRO.



BAO	Mainstream primary education
BBL	Block or day release in vocational education
BOL	Full-time vocational training
HAVO	General secondary education
HBO	Higher professional education
MBO	Vocational education
OU	Open University
PRO	Practical training
SBAO	Special primary education
SO	Special education
VMBO	Pre-vocational secondary education
VO	Secondary education
VSO	Secondary special education
VVE	Early childhood education
VWO	Pre-university education
WO	Research-oriented education

source: http://english.minocw.nl

SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCHOOLS IN THE USA AND THE NETHERLANDS

1 **Founding and financing schools**
All public and private schools are equally financed by the government based on the number and distribution of students; an amount by pupil and by school.Some schools ask parents for a contribution for extra activities, but not been manditory.

2 **Boards and election**
Most schools are owned by an association or a foundation. Parents don't elect the board. Parents and teachers have influence by a co-administration council. Most principals measure each year satisfactio by a small survey.

3 **Quality of schools**
The school board is responsible for the quality of their schools. A national inspection of education inspects the quality of schools based on quality standards (legalized by law). The best schools are inspected every 4 years, while underachieving schools are inspected at least once a year.

4 **Qualification of teachers**
A diploma of a School for Higher Professional Education is mandatatory for both teachers and principals (Bachelor's degree). Currently, the policy is to get more teachers and principals on a (professional) Master's degree level.

5 **Schooldays**
The length of a school day is between 3 (mostly Wednesday) and 6 hours. There are 5 school days in a week. About 200 schooldays in a year. In eight years of elementary school this is 7520 hours.

6 **Struggling learners**
Most schools have a system for remedial teaching and coaching. There are also elementary and secondary schools for children with special educational needs (SO and VSO). Currently, the law is changing; a district has to offer education that fits every child in the district. A district has the choice to offer that education in elementary schools or in special elementary schools.

7 **Buses and lunches**
There are no cafeteria's in Dutch elementary schools and there are no school buses. Most kids are lunching at home. If they stay at school, they bring their own lunches. Only schools for special educational needs utilizes small buses for their students.

FOCUS ON BETTER RESULTS AND OUTCOMES FOR MATHEMATICS AND READING

In general the Dutch schools are obtaining good results in student academic achievement, but on the international ranking list of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2009) they fell from the 7th position to the 11th (mathematics) and 10th (reading). The minister of education is worried about this trend and her policy therefore is focused on better results for mathematics and reading. The philosophy, the approach and tools of continuous improvement will become a powerful stragey to improve education results.

Dr. Jay Marino had the priveledge to present information about Continuous Improvement to The Ministry of Education in The Hague.

PISA PISA 2009 Results: What Students Know and Can Do:
Student Performance in Reading, Mathematics and Science (Volume I) - © OECD 2010

Table I.A
Comparing countries' and economies' performance

	On the overall reading scale	On the reading subscales					On the mathematics scale	On the science scale
		Access and retrieve	Integrate and interpret	Reflect and evaluate	Continuous texts	Non-continuous texts		
Shanghai-China	556	549	558	557	564	539	600	575
Korea	539	542	541	542	538	542	546	538
Finland	536	532	538	536	535	535	541	554
Hong Kong-China	533	530	530	540	538	522	555	549
Singapore	526	526	525	529	522	539	562	542
Canada	524	517	522	535	524	527	527	529
New Zealand	521	521	517	531	518	532	519	532
Japan	520	530	520	521	520	518	529	539
Australia	515	513	513	523	513	524	514	527
Netherlands	508	519	504	510	506	514	526	522
Belgium	506	513	504	505	504	511	515	507
Norway	503	512	502	505	505	498	498	500
Estonia	501	503	500	503	497	512	512	528
Switzerland	501	505	502	497	498	505	534	517
Poland	500	500	503	498	502	496	495	508
Iceland	500	507	503	496	501	499	507	496
United States	500	492	495	512	500	503	487	502
Liechtenstein	499	508	498	498	495	506	536	520
Sweden	497	505	494	502	499	498	494	495
Germany	497	501	501	491	496	497	513	520
Ireland	496	498	494	502	497	496	487	508
France	496	492	497	495	492	498	497	498
Chinese Taipei	495	496	499	493	496	500	543	520
Denmark	495	502	492	493	496	493	503	499
United Kingdom	494	491	491	503	492	506	492	514
Hungary	494	501	496	489	497	487	490	503
Portugal	489	488	487	496	492	488	487	493
Macao-China	487	493	488	481	488	481	525	511
Italy	486	482	490	482	489	476	483	489
Latvia	484	476	484	492	484	487	482	494
Slovenia	483	489	489	470	484	476	501	512
Greece	483	468	484	489	487	472	466	470
Spain	481	480	481	483	484	473	483	488
Czech Republic	478	479	488	462	479	474	493	500
Slovak Republic	477	491	481	466	479	471	497	490
Croatia	476	492	472	471	478	472	460	486
Israel	474	463	473	483	477	467	447	455
Luxembourg	472	471	475	471	471	472	489	484
Austria	470	477	471	463	470	472	496	494
Lithuania	468	476	469	463	470	462	477	491
Turkey	464	467	459	473	466	461	445	454
Dubai (UAE)	459	458	457	466	461	460	453	466
Russian Federation	459	469	467	441	461	452	468	478
Chile	449	444	452	452	453	444	421	447
Serbia	442	449	445	430	444	438	442	443
Bulgaria	429	430	436	417	433	421	428	439
Uruguay	426	424	423	436	429	421	427	427
Mexico	425	433	418	432	426	424	419	416
Romania	424	423	425	426	423	424	427	428
Thailand	421	431	416	420	423	423	419	425
Trinidad and Tobago	416	413	419	413	418	417	414	410
Colombia	413	404	411	422	415	409	381	402
Brazil	412	407	406	424	414	408	386	405
Montenegro	408	408	420	383	411	398	403	401
Jordan	405	394	410	407	417	387	387	415
Tunisia	404	393	393	427	408	393	371	401
Indonesia	402	399	397	409	405	399	371	383
Argentina	398	394	398	402	400	391	388	401
Kazakhstan	390	397	397	373	399	371	405	400
Albania	385	380	393	376	392	366	377	391
Qatar	372	354	379	376	375	361	368	379
Panama	371	363	372	377	373	359	360	376
Peru	370	364	371	368	374	356	365	369
Azerbaijan	362	361	373	335	362	351	431	373
Kyrgyzstan	314	299	327	300	319	293	331	330

Statistically significantly **above** the OECD average
Not statistically significantly different from the OECD average
Statistically significantly **below** the OECD average

Source: OECD PISA 2009 database.

MARJA VAN BIJSTERVELDT
(MINISTER OF EDUCATION)

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AT THE HAGUE

AGORA
STICHTING VOOR BIJZONDER PRIMAIR ONDERWIJS
IN DE ZAANSTREEK:

"BUILDING GOOD EDUCATION ON THE ROAD TO 2015"

RIEN SPIES
DIRECTOR EDUCATION & QUALITY

ORGANIZATION

The Agora Foundation includes 26 schools, 7800 students and 780 staff.

MISSION AND VISION

"From Christian faith, belief and values derived therefrom, we value our actions to the output of the child".

The most important goals are providing a quality education in three areas:

- Fitting education
- Broad School development
- Output oriented working
  The primary focus is on continuous improvement of the education.

INTRODUCTION TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Rien Spies is responsible for the education quality and the professional development in his school district. Rien was the initiator of continuous improvement in Agora and introduced the approach of continuous improvement at Agora.
With the assistance of a colleague director and the management team of Het Koraal, he visited a master class by Dr. Jay Marino in 2010 that was organized by Magistrum.
Rien had already been inspired by reading the book of Nancy Love: *'Using data to improve learning for all: a collaborative approach'*. The essence of this book is that it is important to use data to improve learning (not education). He also recognized this principle in the practical approach by Jay Marino.
"This will fit very well within our foundation", was the predominating thought during his attendance at a master class. The elements that mostly spoke to him were the power of ownership and alignment through the whole organization and the practical approach to bring this about.

The question the team debated was how to 'wrap' this American approach in a Dutch red-white-and-blue wrapper. Besides similarities there are also differences. The Foundation Agora works from the principles of the Rijnlands model which has a clearly different way of thinking than the American model. Agora works from a vision in which educative partnership of parents is characteristic. It is important to also use the knowledge of the parents in the dialog about the education of their child.
The advantage of a continuous improvement is that it is not a program, but an approach.
A program is more stringent, an approach offers you more possibilities to get those things out of it that fit within your own situation. For instance: you can start with the 'lotus diagram' (see tools) at any position you choose.

WORKING WITH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The choice was made, from within the Foundation, to start with two schools that could be very well suited to continuous improvement.
The school Het Koraal that would start in 2010 offered a splendid opportunity to develop the mission and vision of the school with the involvement of management, teachers, parents and children.

In March 2011, Jay Marino trained 49 staff members of 22 Agora schools.
The theory was alternated with bilateral discussions and a lot of video clips about how continuous improvement looks in practice. By starting with the various parts of continuous improvement in team assignments everybody got a clear picture and of how to continue the process in their own schools.

PROCEEDS AT FOUNDATION LEVEL

Getting started with with continuous improvement resulted in formulating a new mission and vision for the foundation. Educators have been inspired to implement good educational practices.

NEXT STEPS AT THE FOUNDATION LEVEL

- Establish professional learning communities in the form of various learning circles.
- Agora organizes Training by Dr. Jay Marino for all management teams in October 2011.
- Agora organizes a Continuous Improvement train-the-trainer education for employees that have already taken part in the master classes. Trainers will share responsibility for implementing Continuous Improvement within the foundation.
- Without trying to create 26 uniform schools Agora has chosen to work together to help all Agora Schools meet all characteristics of GOOD EDUCATION by 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Just do it and get started! Do not look ahead too far, but take the 1st step, then another and so on. Have a clear goal in mind. Know where you are going, but decide the route on the way.

HET KORAAL
IN ASSENDELFT

“EDUCATION THAT GETS THE BEST OUT OF EVERY CHILD.”

JOYCE DE VRIES
(DIRECTOR OF HET KORAAL)

THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Het Koraal is a growing school in a development area of Assendelft.
Rien Spies was closely involved at the beginning of Het Koraal's continuous improvement movement as a director education and quality and interim director of Agora.

Joyce de Vries (director) and Gabriella Locatelli (internal mentor) form the management team of the school together with Rien Spies.
In August of 2010 the new school began the year with a complete new team of teachers. When selecting teachers for the school, emphasis was placed on the competencies necessary to actively work together on continuous improvement. The expectations of the teachers are clear. The teachers all have the right attitude towards continuous improvement; they are open and share their experiences with each other. The team forms one entity and is critical towards itself and has the motto: "We go from A to Better".

The school has approximately 225 students divided over 9 groups and 10 teachers.
The children attended the new school were students from different elementary schools used to different educational approaches.
Due to the demographics in the district there are comparatively more students in the lower groups than in the higher years.

MISSION AND VISION

Room to develop, children, parents and teachers together. That is central at Het Koraal. The school works from three core values:

Value with regards to the child
The child:
- Is the owner of his/her learning process.
- Knows which goals the school is striving for.
- Evaluates and reflects.
- Feels responsible.

Value with regards to parents
Involvement with the child:
- Educational partnership: parents as pedagogic expert in the area of their child, the school as educational expert. Meeting each other through dialog in the interest of the development of the child.

Involvement with the school:
- Participation council.
- Parent's activity committee.
- Sounding board group.
- Class parents

Value with regards to teachers
What characterizes our teachers?
- Being a professional.
- Being well educated.
- Being accompanied.
- Learning from and with each other as professionals.
- Directed at the learning of children.
- Cooperation with parents.

GABRIELLA LOCATELLI
(INTERNAL MENTOR)

INTRODUCTION TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The master class in 2010 with Dr. Jay Marino came at the right moment for Joyce, Gabriella and Rien who were serving as leaders of the new school.

Being conscious of the changing environment in which children grow up, skills for the 21st century are essential in the vision of Het Koraal. The continuous improvement approach that Jay Marino shares provides a starting point and also offers practical tools to further develop.

Gabriella Locatelli (internal mentor) has worked as a consultant with a market research bureau. She noticed that a lot of child development information is in the heads of teachers and is not being shared with others (like the children themselves, parents, colleagues). From her former working environment in business, she recognized the value of working with data in the way Jay Marino introduced. She sees potential in sharing the available information on the development of children with others.

WORKING WITH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Gabriella Locatelli (Internal Mentor)

In the school year 2009-2010 Gabriella started with group 7/8 with the continuous improvement components of ground rules and class goals. All groups started continuous improvement in 2010-2011. A choice was made to start with the subject math because the data can be reflected easily in numbers. The group performed an average of 80% correct on the math test.

The teacher discussed possible goals with the group and the desired approach of continuous improvement. In this way group goals and individual goals were set together.
A data wall was introduced into the class room and every student took ownership over their own data. Both class and individual progress was tracked and goals were adjusted accordingly.

WORKING WITH DATA FOLDERS

Group 8 looked forward to he connection to secondary education. The children have thought and spoken about which form of secondary education they want to follow. For some that is VMBO, for another HAVO or VWO. The question: "What do you need to improve and what do you need in the form of guidance, homework, materials?" got the children thinking about feasible goals. One of the children for instance set herself the goal to reach 90% correct answers at the math tests because this corresponded with the form of secondary education she wanted to go to.

By recording results themselves, the children monitor their own progress and are aware of their academic status. The children plan their own weekly tasks (the time at school, but also homework, hobby's and free time).

Furthermore group 7/8 worked on goals like:

- Bring an agenda
- Syntax
- Good behavior when the teacher leaves the class room.
- For the evaluation of these goals the radar chart diagram quality tool is used.

Group 8 also started with student-led conferences. The application of student-led conferences turned out to be harder than expected. One lesson learned was that the children have to be better prepared.

In August 2011 group 1 started with continuous improvement.

The teachers managed to translate the program to the toddlers well.
For example, using the plus delta quality tool, the children work with smiley faces instead of written text. Goals the group set for themselves involve clearing up the classroom, learning how to tie laces, and counting back from 10.

Each group progresses at different rates. Continuous improvement offers a lot of flexibility that makes it adaptable to what is needed by the group.

At the beginning of last school year, agreements were made with the team during the opening day kick off meeting. A school data wall was established to display goal progress for the team. Two data teams were formed that meet approximately twenty times a year. During these meetings, there is much focus on school improvement. Teachers can collaborate with colleagues and offer each other support. In data teams, the teachers share the results of the previous period and discuss the goals for moving forward. The school management team coaches the teachers and provides guidance for continuous improvement.

PROGRESS

- Working with the PDSA circle at all levels.
- Have a data wall and goals in every group.
- Students get more and more accomplished in leading group discussions.
- Continuous improvement becomes 'alive', as teachers are speaking a different language,

CLASS RULES


SPIDER FOR MONITERICLASS RULES

aimed at continuous improvement.
- Parents, students and teachers are really communicating together.
- It has become a way of thinking and the lotus diagram is a dynamic tool. The heart of the lotus is the ownership at all levels of the organization. The goal is good education, keep on looking at what is needed.
- Continuous improvement training is mandated for new teachers (as a starting growing school there will be new teachers in the coming years).
- Challenge, growth, shared focus with teachers and children.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- By 2011-2012, 10 groups will start with continuous improvement.
- Student-led conferences occur throughout the school
- Develop a clearer structure for the individual data folders.
- Develop formats for the structure of group meetings and parent meetings led by children.
- Starting data folders for the toddler groups.
- Share more knowledge at team level.
- Integrate the PDSA circle in everything we do, it is a way of thinking.
- It is a development that will not stop, there is no finish line.
- Reinforce, learn and keep alive!

RECOMMENDATIONS

Take students, parents and team along from the beginning by engaging them in the process. Room to develop is central (= triangle: child – parent – teacher).

Start discussions with children:

- Individually (evaluate and set individual goals)
- On a group level (group meetings)
- School level (pupil council)

CHRISTIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DE EVENAAR
(THE EQUATOR) IN KROMMENIE:

"EVENAAR... LOOKING AFTER EACH OTHER!"

KEES VAN DIEST
(VICE PRINCIPAL)

THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

De Evenaar is a elementary school with two locations. A main building with ten class rooms, a tottler gym room , two outside school play areas and a branch building with four class rooms. The school had 378 pupils and 27 teachers in march 2010.
The school is led by the directors and, at a distance, by the board. The directors are Gerrit Kramer (director) and Kees van Diest (assistant director). The school has a management team that is comprised of the directors, the department coordinators and one of the internal mentors. The school has three departments, the lower department (group 1 and 2), the middle department (group 3, 4 and 5) and the upper department (group 6, 7 and 8). Every department is coordinated by a department coordinator and they have their own department meetings. The internal mentors are charged with arranging extra care for children that need support because of any possible circumstance what so ever. One internal mentor is specifically involved with guarding the proceeds and the quality of the education.

MISSION AND VISION

The name 'Evenaar' refers to the parallel around the globe: the largest circle, encompassing everything. This name was not selected at random: "Our education wants to be like that too: everything encompassing, more than just knowledge development". De Evenaar wants to be a safe starting point. Children spend a large part of their youth within the walls of the elementary school. In eight years of school they gather many impressions while playing, learning and discovering. They become aware of their own possibilities and develop skills in a number of areas. Skills they can use well now and later on. Besides the parents the school plays an important role in guiding and stimulating this process of growth. If parents entrust us with that process we will take that responsibility very seriously. We will do that with thorough craftsmanship and with an open eye for every child.

Important points that we focus on are:

- Always give every child the attention and help it needs.
- Stimulate children, especially in this day and age, to have an open critical attitude towards society.
- Teach children that they take a unique place in this society as a human being.
- Show other people space and respect.
- Teach children that they are in a relation with creation and God.

Since two years the Evenaar has been following the program of the Vreedzame School (peaceful school). This means striving that everybody learns to get along in a pleasant way and that the children learn to solve conflicts in a good way.

INTRODUCTION TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The director of De Evenaar, Gerrit Kramer was one of the first directors (together with Rien Spies) that got 'infected' by the approach of continuous improvement.

GERRIT KRAMER (DIRECTOR OF THE EVENAAR) AND JOYCE DE VRIES (DIRECTOR OF HET KORAAL) ON TRAINING

With 35 years of experience in education he was touched by the simplicity of the method and it felt like every piece of the puzzle fell in their right place. Even though it is not really something new: Jay Marino takes several existing tools for change and puts them together nicely for educators. The added value, the key factor, is the ownership.

De Evenaar was already output oriented, with good learning results and a good flow to secondary education. However there was a feeling of: "There must be more to it, more should come out of it". That possibility of enrichment was spotted by Gerrit in the ownership for children, as is central in continuous improvement. VI meets the questions that the school asks itself about future oriented education. The world will be completely different in 10 years, how will you prepare your children for that future? How important will spelling still be, how will we integrate IT developments into our education? At this moment we still take mobile phones away from children during lessons while these could be their tools.

WORKING WITH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

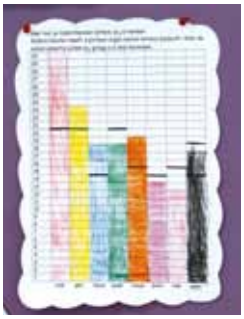
After the first introduction to continuous improvement Kees van Diest attended the continuous improvement master training in December of 2010 organized by Magistrum. Kees says: "I had the feeling that this was so logical. Setting goals is essential and you really see this everywhere around you, in sports and companies. Goals motivate us. How is it possible that we have left it so long in education?"

The data board was introduced into the team immediately after the conference. The plus delta method of seeking input was used to set norms for team meetings. Norms include concepts like begin and end on time, take it seriously.

Kees is teacher of group six for two days a week. This is a group of 29 children (of which one student has its own math learning curve). He began with setting goals together with the children: what are realistic goals? Is getting an 10 (A) a realistic goal? The choice was made to start with goals in the area of figures under 1000. First a baseline was established. The children gained more insight in the group results by using graphs.

As the team reviewed data, they noticed that the errors that were made in math were often the result of carelessness, checking what you have done and lack of motivation. This was a great opportunity for continuous improvement. The whole group talked about what would be achievable. The children set the bar high for themselves and wanted to have a 90% score on the math test.

The group goal was visualized and personal goals were formulated. Agreements were made about how to reach this goal together. The children suggested things like helping each other, practices in groups of two or three and practices work at home. The co-operative learning approach had a great effect. The children do not bring each other down. It was remarkable to notice that the weaker students



LEARNING LETTERS; CLASS DATA FOLDER

CLASS (PERIOD) GOAL FOR MATHEMATICS

relatively delivered the greatest contribution to the results of the group because of their progress.

Self reflection and evaluation are important to keep improving continuously. Kees thinks it is important to take time to evaluate with the class and also individually.
There was a lot of communication with parents;often informal, but also during the formal meetings. The parents are enthusiastic about the continuous improvement approach and they noticed at home that their child wants to improve as well.

The teacher of group 1 and 2, Mieke, has also very enthusiastically started continuous improvement with her toddler group. The goals that have been set mostly have to do with social development. One of the first goals was changing for the gymnastics lesson by themselves. At the end of the lesson, the teacher used cubes to visualize how many children were able to change by themselves. The children became enthused and started helping each other and thought about how they could achieve the goal together. When the goals were achieved, the children celebrated their success with a chair dance as a reward (an activity they love to do).
Working with continuous improvement in the toddler group proved to be simple. By repeating a lot and by pointing at the pictograms on the wall everybody can participate.

The management team supports the teachers in working with continuous improvement.

The school now works more from the qualities of the teachers as a starting point. For example, a teacher with musical qualities does not only teach their own group but also teaches music lessons in other groups.

PROGRESS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- We look at things in a different way, our focus to proceeds is linked to setting goals.
- The education results are 10 to 15% higher.
- The atmosphere in the group is good and focused on: "How do we want to improve ourselves?"
- It gets easier for the teacher if the children are more self-motivated.
- We get a better insight into the power of children, something we have underestimated until now.

PROCEEDING DEVELOPMENT

In the school year 2011 - 2012 all groups will start making group agreements.
In group 7 and 8 the focus will be on data for a good preparation for secondary education. The different levels will be separated more so that the pupils can work at their own levels.
Co-operation in professional learning communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Do it with passion and let the results speak for themselves.
- Give space, children can do more than you think.
- Develop in steps.
- Give space to teachers that need more time.

CBS DE SAENPAREL
IN ZAANDAM:

“CBS DE SAENPAREL; A GOOD SCHOOL IN A BEAUTIFUL DISTRICT!”

TEAM OF DE SAENPAREL

THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

De Saenparel is the smallest school of the Agora foundation.
At the start of the school year 2011-2012 the school will have approximately 80 students divided into 4 groups. The school has a larger number of students with "extra budget" (40%) which means that the school is in a socially weak area and language delays play a big role with these children.

In recent years, the school has been under tightened supervision by the school inspection. Since March 2011, the school is back in the regular status of the inspection. To reach this, the school is now better tuned to the target group and the organization of student care has been strongly improved. It is now important to anchor and continue the progress. Striving for positive results and continuous improvement remains important. The school also wants to distinguish itself and have a good reputation and keep the number of students up to the mark. Continuous improvement is a way the school will try to achieve these goals.

MISSION AND VISION

"We, the team of De Saenparel, teach our pupils the skills they need for a successful future. In an atmosphere of openness, respect and care for each other, the team, the pupils and the parents work together to reach the set goals. The name Saenparel refers to our children who are like pearls. Under the right circumstances, with the right care, from something small something beautiful will grow of which we are proud. In our school, close to the river Zaan, we cherish our pearls of children and let them grow, so that they will be ready for the future."

INTRODUCTION TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Agora Foundation wanted to start a continuous improvement pilot with two schools. De Saenparel was chosen because continuous improvement offers a good possibility to support the chosen path of quality improvement. Marjon de Boer-van Groeningen already worked at one of the Agora schools and she was asked to become the director of De Saenparel. We were familiar with outcomes based education, amongst other things, also worked with the results-based math pilots. The assignment to lead De Saenparel from the continuous improvement principles appealed to her and she got to work in September 2010.

The school's leadership team agrees with the continuous improvement approach; they want to continue to drive improvements. Together with the group 7/8 teacher Marjon participated in Dr. Jay Marino's master training of Magistrum in December 2010 to learn more about continuous improvement in education.

WORKING WITH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Marjon has extensive contact with Joyce, the director of Het Koraal, the other continuous improvement pilot school. Together, they shared experiences about working with continuous improvement in their schools.

MISSION, VISION, GOALS, RULES

The journey began at team level to formulate the mission. The team reflected on the question "What do we find important?" Because of the importance of a supported mission they took their time for the process to unfold. Formulating a good mission is not something you do within a month.

The decision was made to start in group 7/8 with continuous improvement. The group teacher, Mieke, was enthusiastic and she participated in the master class. She was the inspiration for the other teachers begining continuous improvement.
As a director, Marjon leads the process at team level. After formulating the mission statement, setting of the school goals followed. Goals were formulated that described the school's focus area. The school uses a data wall displayed in the hallway for parents, teachers and children to follow the goals and the results.
Also, the plus delta quality tool was used during team meetings to seek input. This evaluation method worked well, because the team could focus on what works well and on what can be changed or improved. Improvement areas are sometimes about small things that are important, like the care of the building or being in the classroom on time.
With the plus delta method, everybody can share ideas. Teachers were able to use the plus delta tool in their class rooms naturally with ease.

Every team meeting now starts with the plus delta method to ensure all voices are heard.
In March, a large part of the team went to the master classes of Jay Marino. Because of this training experience, there now is someone in each class who knows well how continuous improvement works.

Teachers inspire each other. One teacher tries something and another thinks: "I will do that too". In group 7/8 there is a 'secret' mission on the data wall. This has to do with a surprise for one of the teachers.At a central point in the hall where the trophy cabinet used to be, is now the school data wall. Everybody entering the school can see what this school is working on.

PROGRESS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- A positive atmosphere and positive reactions: appreciation for and pride of our school: "How well things are going".
- A data wall in every class room.
- Continuous improvement connects everything; it is not a trick, not hard and not a lot of extra work.
- A clear way of working for teachers.
- The school rules are the peg on which the school rules are hung.
- It gives you a guide to reach what you always wanted.
- Meaningful contacts within the circle of Agora schools.
- Motivated students.
- Good results.

PROCEEDING DEVELOPMENTS

- As the school opens under a new name, it will be a challenge to renew the mission and image of the school.

THE DATA WALL

THE DATA WALL IN THE CLASSROOM

- Starting the school year 2011-2012 with data team meetings to discuss with each other the output and the functioning of the children. Every two weeks there will be a data team meeting of which inter vision is an integral part. Also there will be general team meetings every two weeks.
- Besides working with group goals from the school year 2011-2012, the school will start working with individual goals. The middle and upper departments will start with data folders for the students.
- Involve parents more with the goals of the school by way of information evenings, newsletters, walk in moments.
- During the year, students will tell their parents about the goals and progress with the help of the data wall in the class room.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- At Agora, people with a vision about what the organization needs are closely connected to starting continuous improvement. After that, they have motivated others and key persons have followed the master classes. After that a natural snow ball effect has taken place amongst the teachers.
- Show how continuous improvement works during team meetings. This way the teachers will experience how it works.
- Let everybody set their own pace.
- Get out of it (continuous improvement) what you need. Look through the 'American' approach.
- Watch how continuous improvement works in other schools. Realize that what works in one school, may not be the right way in another school.
- Let teachers talk together and collaborate.
- Listen to the students.

SCHOOL FOR SPECIAL ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (SBO) SJALOM IN ZAANDIJK:

"NOT SEPARATE BUT TOGETHER"

MARIJE RUTTE
(INTERNAL MENTOR)

THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Sjalom is a school for Special Elementary Education for children in the age of 4 to 12. Children that attend this school have stagnated in normal elementary education because of either learning of behavioral problems. The population of Sjalom is especially characterized by psychiatric problems. As an organization, the school is characterized by a smooth transition between education, youth social work and welfare organizations. There is a strong focus on meaningful learning, for which a working relation has been entered into with a farm. The farmer and his wife are employed by the school for a limited number of hours. For that reason the school is part of the Broad Education Care Centre Zaanstad.

Currently, Sjalom has 90 children that are divided into 6 groups. Children and parents are assisted by a team of specialists that come together in the Broad Development Committee (OBC). The OBC consists of the following disciplines:

- Department coordinator
- Internal mentor
- Social worker
- Psychologist
- Director/remedial teacher
- School medical doctor

Next to the teaching staff there is also a group of educational support personnel like: education assistants, speech therapist, creative therapist, caretaker and administrative assistant.

MISSION AND VISION

"We are convinced that children will achieve more if education focuses on the possibilities of children instead of their limitations. If children become owners again of their own learning process, they will enjoy learning again. And they will, with the guidance of teachers that stimulate and coach them, be able to create an independent living for themselves. That is why we want to create a learning environment in the school where the basis is the child itself. Where children are stimulated to each develop in their own way. A school that is in contact with the parents and all others that have anything to do with the child.

INTRODUCTION TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

In December 2010 Marije Rutte, internal mentor of Sjalom, took part in a four day master class continuous improvement from Jay Marino.
While in the past years the quality improvement had been controlled by the management, the approach that Jay Marino presented starting at the 'shop floor' was very refreshing. The image of continuous improvement really appealed to Marije.
In her discussions with Jay Marino Marije initially had a lot of questions like: "Can our children do this?"

Jay Marino answered this by the right counter question: "How does it work now?" America also has a lot of students with 'special needs' within the regular groups and they also work successfully with continuous improvement. Everybody can participate in the group goals.
Marije's enthusiasm arose because the approach is

THE CENTRAL HALL

practical and can be put into practice immediately. Working in data teams for instance gives space and an overall picture. The ideas, fed by many practical examples are applicable in every educational situation.

STARTING WITH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The start was made at team level by setting group norms and the mission. The whole team brainstormed about the question: "What do you want to achieve as a school?"
Every team member replied to this question on a 'sticky note'. A small group of team members organized the input from with the norms and the new concept mission for the school came into existence: "We of SBO-Agora offer children with special development needs a safe and stimulating learning environment where they can develop optimally, in a climate of collegiality and cooperation with parents and social work."

At the level of three departments, all improvement processes were discussed in data meetings with the help of the PDSA circle. These are goal oriented meetings without elaborations, always putting the steps in the circle at the center.
One of the teachers started continuous improvement in his group since May. The first experiences have been positive, especially where it concerns ownership. Dialogue has started and children really have input into classroom decisions. They continuously ask themselves: what have we accomplished and what have we learned?

PROCEEDS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

In the short time since Sjalom started with continuous improvement the following proceeds can be mentioned already:

- Clarity about group norms within the team.
- (Re)formulating the mission.
- The teachers know the lotus diagram (8 components of the continuous improvement classroom)
- The inspection is enthusiastic about the continuous improvement process, especially the data meetings.
- Ownership and quality have increased.

PROCEEDING DEVELOPMENT

- In the school year 2011-2012 the team will start further developing the goals. Already, examples have been given of what a goal could be. For instance: In the first week after the summer holidays, every group has made their ground rules in the class rooms. The rules will be developed together with the children according to the continuous improvement model. Or for the longer term: Before the Christmas holiday a 100% of all house visits will have been made to the pupils that have been in the school since September.
- The school, as a learning organization, has set itself the goal for the coming year to let teachers experience from a group level what the added value is of thinking in a process of continuous improvement.
- The ground rules that have been formulated at

team level at too abstract are this moment, the first action is to translate them to concrete goals.
- A next step is to communicate these goals to the parents.

RECOMMENDATION

- Share your enthusiasm about this form of working with your colleagues, start with one element and use that as a fly wheel.
- Use the lotus diagram, start with what you want and find important for your school or group.
- Bring rest and reflection to your meetings.
- Do not go too fast and take everybody along in the developments.
- Share experiences with each other in large and small groups.
- Monitor the process with a small group.

HSN: DE HERVORMDE SCHOOLVERENIGING
IN NIJKERK:

“PLAY, GROW, LEARN, DEVELOPING YOURSELF? WE ARE READY!”

JAN BLONK
(SUPERINTENDENT)

THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND MISSION

The HSN consists of six schools for elementary education in Nijkerk, which have as a joined mission:

- Passing the gospel.
- Transfer a positive Christian vision on life.
- Good education.
- Emphasis on the basic skills reading, language and math.
- Order, tranquility and regularity.
- Responsible educational renewal.
- Openness and a good contact between school and home.

Jan Blonk has been superintendent of HSN since August 2001 and he leads the school leaders. At the counting date in October 2010 the HSN schools had 1063 students and 115 personnel (61 full time).

Core values in the cooperation of the HSN professionals are:

- *Craftsmanship*
- *Responsibility*
- *Trust*

INTRODUCTION TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

In June of 2010 Jan Blonk participated in a seminar about continuous improvement organized by Magistrum. He became inspired by the ambition, the enthusiasm and positive attitude towards life of Jay Marino and he especially saw the practical applications of continuous improvement for his own schools.

The schools mostly work with loose concepts like action oriented functioning, solution oriented functioning and autonomic functioning. Continuous improvement does not mean 'again something new', but connecting to existing developments and integrating them.
Jan Blonk sees the central principles that have to do with teamwork, alignment and ownership as big advantages. These principles directly connect to the core values of HSN. The practical applicability in every situation, with pupils, team members, parents and management, constitutes an important added value. Working with the PDSA circle at every level of the organization brings clarity to the mission and goals of a group.

Jan Blonk inspired his management team and in September four school principals went with him to a continuous improvement seminar in Zaandam at the Agora foundation. They too were touched by the practical applicability; continuous improvement quickly becomes 'normal' because it makes a link between existing methods and it offers concrete, usable, tools.

Characteristic for the procedure that Jan used at the introduction of Continuous Improvement is:

- Not top-down.
- Enthuse and motivate.
- Connect to current projects.
- Find and use natural moments for continuous improvement.
- Offer continuous improvement as a 'way of

THE QUALITY WALL

THE RESULTS OF THE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

thinking' and a 'means to' and definitely not as a goal in itself.
- Communicate successes often.
- Make the circle wider, more and more people participate out of enthusiasm.
- Use elements and method of continuous improvement in all levels, meetings, discussions and forms of communication.

An internal HSN study day for all school leaders followed, during which they all determined the "next steps". During this study day, the team first looked for the 'big rocks'; the large basal parts of continuous improvement with which they want to start.
For inspiration the school leaders viewed a film about continuous improvement on a elementary school in Kessel, made by Marijke Broer-Bos. The team discussed their enneagram type to be able to make good use of each other's qualities. Then everybody went to work in their own way within their own school.

WORKING WITH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Connecting to natural moments is an important base of HSN at starting continuous improvement. Such a natural moment presented itself at the start of the school year at elementary school Ichthus. Group 6 was seen as a 'difficult' class; a lot of boys displaying macho behavior and frequent fights among them.

Jan Blonk discussed with the director and teacher how the continuous improvement way of working could make a positive difference to improving the climate in the class.
The lotus diagram (8 components of the continuous improvement classroom) was reviewed by the team as a model. Group 6 began the journey, with the aid of the PDSA circle, the creation of their mission and goals and they started a data wall in the classroom.

In their first improvement project, while gathering data it was noticed that there were a lot more fights on Monday then on other days of the week. The teacher had ideas about why this is: the weekend is turbulent for a lot of children, the normal rhythm disappears, they go to bed later and therefore are more tired and more quickly irritated. Working from continuous improvement also means a different way of thinking for teachers, not settling for just your own explanation but looking at the relation between cause and effect with the pupils and formulate improvement goals together.
The students also named the turbulent weekend as a cause for the arguments in the class room on Mondays.

During the analysis of the problem it soon became clear that the parents could also participate in solving the problem, thereby making the parents a real partner in continuous improvement with this group.
The pedagogic climate improved because of this method and the shared ownership.

At the management level, there was also a natural

JAN BLONK (AT THE RIGHT) AT THE MASTER TRAINING ORGANISED BY MAGISTRUM

moment to implement the continuous improvement tools. A difficult issue in relation to the identity of the schools was whether or not to watch the live television broadcast of the soccer world cup final during school hours.

Amongst parents and teachers there were equal advocates and adversaries and the schools all handled this situation differently.
For reflection and to learn from the situation, the Plus-Delta quality tool was used during the management meeting to seek input. What happened exactly? What went right? What can we learn? Which change is necessary?

This process provided everybody ownership of the situation and the solution. It was real team work and the core values (Craftsmanship, Responsibility, Trust) became concrete this way. Visualizing factors in the plus-delta tool contributes to working together. Visualizing also neutralizes the problems.
The result of this process was a more proactive policy linked to the HSN vision.
Immediately in this first school year in which Continuous improvement was introduced, different spontaneous initiatives have been started at most HSN schools:

Rehoboth
- The pupils of group 8 participate in scorecard discussions with parents.
- Setting individual goals is mentioned as intention in the school plan.

Maranatha
- Intake interviews are held with parents before a child is placed.
- Involvement of pupils in score card discussions group 8 is planned.
- Emphasis on mission - vision - goals.
- Setting educational goals together and evaluate them.

Ichthus
- Working with PDSA circle; on low intermediate proceeds reading.

Hoeksteen
- Working with PDSA circle.
- Ownership realized among parents, teachers, and students.
- Pupils develop research questions and set own goals.

PROCEEDS OF WORKING WITH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Jan Blonk thinks it is a little too early to name concrete results. Realizing that the first moment of inspiration for the management was in September 2010. From this first inspiration the schools have started with continuous improvement during the past months, all at their own natural moments. About the proceeds of the initiatives that have been started until now you can say in general that:
There is more involvement of the pupils in their own learning process; setting goals and looking for solutions to problems.

Parents are more involved in the school as partners. A proactive cooperation has been stimulated within the management team by working with the continuous improvement tools.
As a superintendent, Jan experiences working with continuous improvement as a kind of 'little refurbishment' in which he is also submerged with respect to content in working on improvements within the school and within the groups.
HSN cooperates with the Christian University Ede (CHE) in training teachers. This year some of the students have also worked with a group of pupils with the PSDA cycle in the scope of Young Management and Learning on the Job (WPL). HSN will cooperate with CHE to make sure that future teachers also experience the principles of continuous improvement.

The intention for the school year 2011 - 2012 is to work with continuous improvement in a more methodical manner in all the HSN schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS
You may have high expectations of continuous improvement and communicate these to your colleagues.
Realize that we already have comparable skills in which continuous improvement can be integrated.
Make sure the process happens bottom up and take little steps over time.
Have people choose from the various methods. People want to execute things in their own way and this is very compatible with continuous improvement.
Continuous improvement is not a goal in itself, the importance is to anchor continuous improvement in the pedagogic climate.

Finally Jan Blonk thinks it is important to come together with all participating school leaders in two or three years to share the begining experiences with each other.

PRISMA; STICHTING VOOR PRIMAIR ONDERWIJS
TE PEEL EN MAAS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 'DR. POELS' IN KESSEL-EIK
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 'DE WISSEL' IN PANNINGEN

"LEARNING WITH AND FROM EACH OTHER WITH RESPECT FOR EVERYBODY'S INDIVIDUALITY"

"A CHILD FRIENDLY SCHOOL WITH A CHALLENGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT"

JAN STEEHGS
(DIRECTOR)

TRUUS VAN LOON
(INTERNAL MENTOR)

THE IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Jan Steeghs has been director of elementary school Dr. Poels for 10 years and has also been director of De Wissel for 6 years.
Truus van Loon is internal mentor at both schools. Jan and Truus, together with teachers Mark de Wit and Hanneke Heijkens, form the improvement team of both schools.
Dr. Poels is a small village school with 72 pupils divided into 4 groups and is characterized by a small team with short lines of communication and a lot of teacher ownership.
Kessel-Eik is a tight community. Several years ago the village council took the initiative to develop Dr. Poels into a "broad" school. This means the school was expanded to also house a playgroup, library, computer lessons for the elderly, blood withdrawal clinic and offered a changing range of sports and culture.
De Wissel has 192 pupils and is located in an 80's building estate in Panningen. The school has 8 groups. There is a team of 12 teachers that has a diversity of professional development.
Both schools are different but work together on continuous improvement under the guidance of the Improvement Team.

MISSION AND VISION

The vision of both schools describes the long-term goal of education:
"We want to keep checking our education against quality criteria. The children develop optimally in the contact with themselves, others and their environment. The talents are expressed in all sorts of ways."
To achieve the 'challenging goal' (the vision) the school asks the following questions:

Why and what are children learning more than now?

- More responsibility for their own learning process within each one's frame (feeling autonomic and competent);
- Rich learning environment with a lot of development possibilities;
- Fitting education;
- Keep working in a development oriented way with a focus on high proceeds: fascinating and effective education;
- Developing different styles of learning and intelligences.

Why do we want that?

- Motivated children and teachers;
- A lifelong learning;
- Getting the best out of one's self;

What does society ask of citizens?

- Flexibility;
- Self-knowledge;
- Communicative skills;
- Cooperation;
- Being enterprising;
- Responsible for one's self and the other;
- Creativity.

What do teachers do?

- Give education that is characterized by and activating pedagogic climate of challenge, support and trust; guidance where necessary, letting go where possible.
- The teachers trust in the intrinsically motivated pupil.
- These elements can be found in the interaction between teacher and pupils, in the way in which instruction is given and in the class management.

INTRODUCTION TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The transformational school improvement journey for the elementary schools began three years ago. Although exposed to the PDSA working model, it was too abstract, to technical and did not appeal to the teachers of Dr. Poels and De Wissel. It was necessary to focus more on what practically works in the school. With the help of Marijke Broer-Bos, the concept of continuous improvement was introduced. The accent was put on developing ground rules in the classroom, formulating a group mission, setting goals for the group and for individual students. This learning together connected well to the mission of the schools. It became clear that the power of continuous improvement lies in the integration; it connects the processes that are already used into one coherent system.
Teachers made a fresh start in the school year 2009 – 2010 and started enthusiastically with drawing up vision, rules and goals together with the children. The teachers noticed immediate results and the children became enthusiastic as active participants. Dr. Poels and De Wissel hereby became the first schools in The Netherlands that started working with the concept of continuous improvement. Since that time, there has been a lot of interest from other schools to come and see how continuous improvement works in practice.

WORKING WITH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

In the first year, the school started with students setting ground rules, group mission and goals. This was quickly followed by working with the data board, the student data folders and discussions with students about individual goals. Teachers appreciated the practical tools that working with continuous improvement offers such as: the cause and effect diagram, the plus delta, and various charts and graphs. Teachers and students learn to use quality instruments to drive continuous improvement.

The data board visualizes the mission, goals and plans of the group to everybody concerned. On the data board, the graphs show the relation between goals and progress. The data folder is an instrument, with which pupils give direction to their own learning progress.
During the last school year, work was done on school goals in the area of language, math, spelling and receptive reading using the PDSA cycle to drive improvements.

The individual goals of students connect to the group goals. A student would ask himself: "What is my goal,

DATAWALL OF GROUP 5/6

DATAWALL OF THE SCHOOL FOR ALL GROUPS

what is my plan to reach it, how will I visualize that, which instrument will I use?" The student datafolder shows the progress of the student.
The datafolder plays an important role during student-led conferences.

Initially, teachers and parents were concerned about potential competition between the children.
By putting the focus on being responsible together for goals and agreements, this fear proved to be unfounded. Celebrating successes together also improves the joint responsibility. Children determine together how they want to celebrate an achieved goal, for instance with a fun activity.

Vertical teams have been working on the improvement of technical reading education. Working with a data board for the team is an important tool for this.
One of the conclusions that this vertical team mentioned was that making group plans for reading together is essential.

PROGRESS OF WORKING WITH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Teachers are more in tune to the ideas of children which generates more enthusiasm and motivation.
- Teachers are more goal oriented and methodical. Teachers as well as students are more aware of the goal of a lesson.
- Teachers present the data, analysis and goals of their groups to each other. Developing competences as a researching teacher got a powerful impulse because of this.
- Working with Continuous Improvement has enhanced natural reflection of practice. The PDSA circle is in use in all groups and more depth can be observed every time in the effect of the circle and the use of the instruments. Every group sets itself two goals every two months. In group 1 and 2 there is one goal every two months.

PROCEEDING DEVELOPMENTS

Some points of attention for the new school year are:

- Teachers will work together to determine what needs to be measured, especially in connection to behavior and task / work attitude.
- Use continuous improvement more structurally during working at team level.
- Student-led conferences will be implemented and students will discuss the results of their own portfolio. The teacher will be there as a mentor, supplements and supports the pupil during the meeting.
- Teachers will continue to improve their continuous improvement practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Introduce continuous improvement to teachers by showing how it is practical and can deliver results.
- Do not start the PDSA circle immediately, but rather link it to mission and goals.

FEDRA; STICHTING VOOR PRIMAIR ONDERWIJS TE BEVERWIJK
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PANTA RHEI IN BEVERWIJK

"DEVELOPMENT IN YOUR OWN WAY."

MIEKE ALKEMADE
(DIRECTOR)

THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Panta Rhei is part of the inter denominational Foundation Fedra, a group of 10 regular elementary schools and a school for special elementary education in Beverwijk and the surrounding area. The school started on the 1st of January 2002 in a new district with seven pupils. Now the school has 750 students, in 28 groups. The new school building that was taken into use three years ago has now become too small. After the summer holiday new class rooms will become available.
Mieke Alkemade has been director of Panta Rhei since the foundation of the school, together with four department leaders and two care coordinators she forms the management team of Panta Rhei.

MISSION AND VISION

We offer children a safe learning climate and adequate guidance in a challenging environment. Every child is unique and no child will develop in the same way. Our educational program takes this into account. Children learn to take care of themselves at Panta Rhei, of each other and of the environment they live in. To feel welcome and safe is an important principle in our school. The school is the center of the society. It is therefore important that you listen and react adequately to signals from that society.

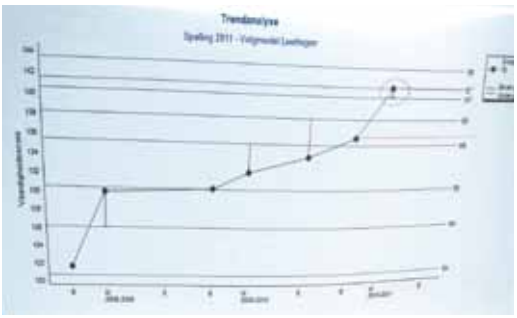
The name Panta Rhei (everything flows) reflects the core of our thoughts on education and child upbringing. We see the elementary school as a part of the dynamic community where we are constantly confronted with renewal and change. By being aware of these developments, we can also constantly put our education and didactic proceeds to debate. Key questions we ask: Are we doing the right things and are we doing them right?
Because of this basic attitude we are capable to prepare the students adequately for the position that they will take in society. We try to form children into critical, assertive and responsible people.

To accomplish our objectives at Panta Rhei we work from the basic assumptions of Development Oriented Education (OGO). We organize the education in a way that children can develop in their own way, in a manner that can be called obstinate (in our own way and manner) within our current traditional norms. ‘Development in your own way’, is our motto. We constantly wonder: what do we do? What meaning has this for children? and what contribution does it give to their development? We want to make education challenging and meaningful so that education captivates children and forms them into enterprising independent ‘entrepreneurs’.

INTRODUCTION TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Mieke was introduced to continuous improvement during a seminar in March 2010.
It had been a busy year in which she had not had much time to attend professional meetings. She was curious about the American approach.
She was excited about the forward-looking vision that is at the base of continuous improvement and by the ownership for children. Both aspects connect seamlessly to the mission and the OGO-concept that

" EVERY CHILD HAS A TALENT"; TESTSCORES 2005 - 2009



TESTSCORES FOR DUTCH LANGUAGE (TRENDANALYSE)

Panta Rhei works with.

There had been much attention within the foundation Fedra and Panta Rhei to output oriented functioning but something was still missing. The problem at the introduction of output oriented functioning was that teachers mostly experience this as something that was imposed upon them top down. As OGO-school the team often wondered: 'do we have to link the development of children to high proceeds for the school?'.

In the approach of continuous improvement, Mieke saw the 'missing link' between OGO and output oriented functioning. After the inspiring seminar she immediately informed the management team and showed them Dr. Jay Marino's material.
The group 6 teachers showed interest and Mieke suggested: "Shall we do this together?" That is how and experiment started with technical reading as the content.

Teachers began showing the students graphs with group student achievement results and together they discussed which goal they wanted to set and discussed how they would get there. They also discussed individual scores so that children could indicate what they still found difficult or what they did not understand and what kind of help they needed. Within only a couple of weeks, the results showed that the continuous improvement approach was successful.

Before the summer holiday, Mieke participated in a five day master class with Jay Marino and she gained insight into the whole classroom community system. After the summer holiday she brought a board member and three team members to a conference where Dr. Jay Marino's was presenting. Due to his inspiring presentation and practice oriented approach they also became enthusiastic about continuous improvement.

WORKING WITH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

In the school year 2010-2011, group 7B (28 pupils) started with continuous improvement from day one. It was a deliberate choice to start with one group and from there inspire others to implement continuous improvement practices. The school is too big to start with all the groups at the same time and we needed a model to refer to.

Mieke was closely involved with the teachers and the group that would work together to experience how continuous improvement would shape into practice. The teachers enjoyed reflecting with the director on the introduction of continuous improvement and were ready to continue the implementation.

The group started with formulating a mission, goals, expectations and ground rules, during which the steps of the continuous improvement classroom were followed.
It was remarkable how serious the children entered into conversation about questions like: "why do you go to school?; What do you learn for?". They wanted

to achieve to get ahead, for a good future, they also have long term goals in sight.
Panta Rhei works with the "Kanjertraining" as a basis for a good social climate. The "Kanjertraining" teaches the children to make a choice for behavior. Continuous improvement fits in very well by setting up group rules together and by working on goals for a good work attitude.

During October/November the group started working with student data folders. Every student is tracking group goals and their personal goals.The results are being documented and the goals adjusted when necessary. The group set goals for spelling, technical reading and work attitude. Every other week there is a group meeting about the goals and students take turns at being the leader or secretary of the meeting.

The group decided quickly to choose a permanent group leader, because they were very pleased with the way in which one of the students performed this task. "She knows a lot and makes sure that everybody participates well", according to the children.

PROGRESS OF WORKING WITH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- The ownership of children and teachers is the greatest outcome. By continuously visualizing the progress of the group with data, the grades reflect the process like a mirror. It is not about the achievement as an end result, but as a reflection of the development process.
- In January 2011 test results showed that the group had progressed very well in the specific areas for which they had set goals. Even better was the side effect that flowed from there to other areas like receptive reading. A more serious work attitude and improved skills have a positive influence on the results of more areas.
- It has also become clear to parents how things had been done and they have reacted enthusiastically to the results. They get more insight into the goals of the whole group and of their own child.
- The children think working with continuous improvement is good: " the meetings help us making things more fun at school".
- The whole group has grown this year because of continuous improvement and everybody was able to participate!
- Mieke gave a presentation to her colleague directors in the Fedra direction council. One of the other directors will also start working with continuous improvement next year.

PROCEEDING DEVELOPMENTS

- The first half of the PDSA cycle can get even better in the way of analyzing data. The team wants to learn much more on analyzing the student achievement results.
- Improving the class meeting, it can be shorter and more efficient.
- Implementing continuous improvement in more groups: all groups 7 and 8 will start in the school year 2011-2012. The in-service training institute for OGO has been invited to come and learn the possibilities of continuous improvement.
- Further develop process oriented portfolios.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Start small, let people who want to start first do so. The examples that originate in their group can be shared with their colleagues and inspire others.
- Let the children talk about their experiences.
- Things may go 'wrong'. If you start changes you will encounter things: 'you have to go through mud, but do not go back to the safe place you came from'.
- Do not set goals to high but take small steps all the time.
- Realize that continuous improvement is important to prepare children well for their future.


PRACTICES
USA

DR JAY MARINO
(SUPERINTENDENT)

3.2 PRACTICES USA

DISTRICT INFORMATION

The Dunlap Community Unit School District is situated in the state Illinois in the USA. Since 2009 is dr Jay Marino the superintendent of this school district.
In 2009, the Dunlap Community Unit School District embarked on a journey to set a course for the future. A team of 38 stakeholders (including students, parents, teachers, Dunlap Education Association, administrators, school board members, community members and government elected officials) worked together during the 2009- 2010 school year to answer questions such as: *What will the future look like in 5 years? What will the Dunlap School District need to do to succeed? How will we know if we have been successful? What are the challenges we will be facing? Will we be ready for those challenges? What does the desired "future state" of our District look like 5 years from now? How will we systemically transform our District from good to great?*

BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAMS (BLTS)

Continuous improvement through teamwork, collaboration and shared leadership is modeled by our school's Building Leadership Teams (BLTs).
These teams are facilitated by the school principal and include membership of teacher leaders that represent various content areas and grade levels.
BLTs come together quarterly to share best practices and learn techniques for setting and communicating direction at their school. Specifically, each school has created their own strategic documents, which align to the District strategic plan to set and communicate direction at their school. These documents include:

- **School Plan on a Page,** which includes the school mission statement, vision, values & beliefs and SMART goals;
- **School Improvement Plan**, which includes SMART goals and action, plans to drive continuous improvement.
- **School Balanced Scorecard,** which identifies measures that are monitored at the school to gauge progress.

View each school's strategic documents to learn more.

WORKING WITH THE BALANCED SCORECARD

"The Balanced Scorecard" enables school districts to bridge the gap between strategy and actions, engage a broader range of stakeholders in organizational planning, reflects the most important aspects of the organization, and respond immediately to progress, feedback and changing conditions. *The Balanced Scorecard* is a great help used as a strategic tool, a management methodology or / and a measurement system.
The Balanced Scorecard provides school districts with the ability to clarify vision and strategy and translate them into action. By focusing on future potential success it becomes a dynamic management system that is able to reinforce, implement and drive strategies and action plans.
It provides feedback around both internal processes and external outcomes in order to continuously improve strategic performance and results.

The concept of *the Balanced Scorecard* has achieved increasing popularity in school districts. Many districts had previously built their objectives around financial and academic targets and goals of little relevance to a long-term strategic vision, thus typically leaving a gap between strategy development and implementation.

For this purpose the *Balanced Scorecard* holds four different perspectives from which a district's activity can be evaluated:

- **Financial perspective**
  - return on investment, stakeholder value
- **Customer perspective**
  - customer satisfaction, our community image?
- **Process perspective**
  - in what processes should we excel to succeed?
- **Innovation perspective**
  - how will we go on from lessons learned and sustain our ability to change and improve?

By this *the Balanced Scorecard* provides a more 'balanced view' by looking at not just financial and academic outcomes, but also customers, stakeholders, internal business processes, learning and growth. *The Balanced Scorecard* focuses on creating and communicating a total comprehensive picture to all members of the district from the board room to the classroom, taking a long-term view of what the district's strategic objectives really are, making good use of knowledge gained through experience and maintaining the required flexibility of such a system to cope with the fast-changing 21st century environment.

THE DUNLAP STRATEGIC PLAN

The "Dunlap Strategic Plan" is the answer to these questions and our staff and stakeholders are pivotal to assuring our success in accomplishing all that we have set out to do in the next five years. We will concentrate on meeting the goals and objectives identified in our strategic plan and will rely on our values and beliefs to accomplish our mission of empowering students to excel in a global society.

We'll use our " Dunlap Balanced Scorecard" to monitor our progress and will use continuous improvement processes and tools to make systemic improvements. Finally, teamwork, collaboration and shared leadership will be crucial to transforming the District, which will have an emphasis on 21st century learning.

See for the actual plans the website of the Dunlap School District:
http://www.dunlapcusd.net/StrategicPlan/Pages/default.aspx

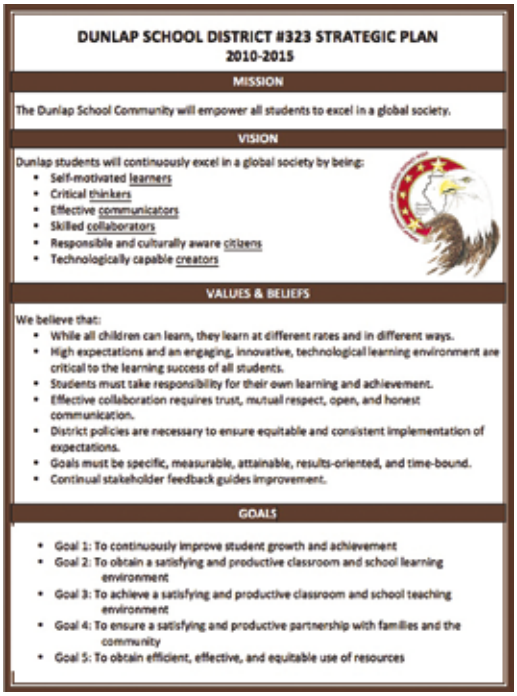


FIGURE: PLAN ON A PAGE: THE "DUNLAP STRATEGIC PLAN"

DUNLAP HIGH SCHOOL:

“WE WILL ENRICH THE PROGRESS OF ALL LEARNERS TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY."

THOMAS WELSH
(ADMINISTRATOR)

5220 WEST LEGION HALL ROAD
DUNLAP IL 61525
(309)243-7751

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Dunlap High School is a four-year senior high school of approximately 1200 students located in Dunlap, Illinois, (pop. 950) about 10 miles north of Peoria, Illinois. The school is the only high school in Dunlap Community Unit School District #323. The high school has a staff of sixty-five certified teachers including three Counselors, two Assistant Principals, one Librarian, and five Special Education teachers. Dunlap High School offers a wide and varied curriculum of academics, vocational areas, and personal interest areas.

Beginning with the 1976-77 school year, students began attending the new Dunlap High School attendance center located on the southern edge of the village. The new high school was approved by voter referendum on December 1, 1973, and approximately $3.5 million has been spent on the complex. A complete academic area was built for approximately 600 students with a "core" complex constructed for 1,000 students. A complete, modern library, a 1200 seat auditorium, a complete kitchen, a gym that currently seats 1,800, an auxiliary gym and an Olympic size swimming pool surround a commons area.

The school colors are maroon and gold. Our athletic teams are called the "Eagles", and the yearbook is the "Eagle." A wide variety of both boys' and girls' sports are offered and students are encouraged to take an active part in these and all other school activities.

THE PRINCIPAL AND THE TEAM

The principal's name is Thomas Welsh. Mr. Welsh has been the principal at Dunlap High School for the past 4 years. The Dunlap High School Building Leadership Team is made up of seven staff members and three administrators (principal and two assistant principals). The Department Chairs serve on this team. The role of the Building Leadership Team is to set and communicate direction for the school.

TEAM MEMBERS

Language Arts – Chris Friedman
Math – Marjorie Rieke
Science – Polly Johnsen
Social Studies – Brad Love
Foreign Language / Special Education – Liz Weber
Business / Fine Arts / Family and Consumer Sciences – Kay Harwood
Physical Education / Health – Mark Klokkenga

WHAT IS THE MISSION AND VISION OF THE SCHOOL?

"The Dunlap High School Community will enrich the progress of all learners to meet the challenges of the 21st century."

- **Goal 1:** To continuously improve student growth and achievement
- **Goal 2:** To maintain a professional, productive environment for Dunlap High School
- **Goal 3:** To ensure a productive partnership with families and the community.

After determining the goals collectively, the Building Leadership Team (BLT) at Dunlap

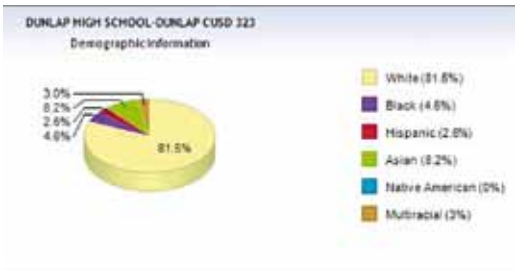


FIGURE 6: DEMOGRAPHICS

THE DUNLAP HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAM

High School split into 3 sub-committees to make each goal SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, Target date).

GOAL 1
By the end of the 2011-12 school year, each department at Dunlap High School will create a quarterly plan to incorporate problem solving and/or literacy skills into all courses.

GOAL 2
During the 2011-2012 school year, the Dunlap High School BLT will measure the productivity and professional environment of DHS as perceived by recent DHS graduates and new teachers.

GOAL 3
To be measured in the 2011-12 school year, Dunlap High School will ensure a productive partnership with families and the community by: 1) increasing the number of students participating in Project Lead the Way or other 21st Century courses as aligned with the balanced scorecard; and 2) to achieve 95% of junior participation in job shadowing to promote community involvement.

Each goal has accompanying documentation concerning data sources that were consulted as well as a summary analysis of the data that indicate the need for the goal. The correlation of each goal to the district strategic plan is also indicated and the needed evidence of goal attainment is provided.

Each goal also has an action plan that specifically indicates how the goal will be achieved. This includes a description of the proposed action or activity, how the activity is justified by best practices and research as well as components for resources and timeline.

The Building Leadership Team plans to review and adjust these plans periodically as necessary to support the school and district mission statements.

WHEN DID YOU HEAR ABOUT CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?
I had been exposed to continuous improvement efforts from both the Association of Illinois Middle Schools (AIMS) and Edison Schools. My initial experiences with AIMS were at a low-performing middle school in the inner-city of Peoria, IL. AIMS provided structure that promoted the middle school concept whose may principles are founded on teaming and collaboration, which match the principles of Continuous Improvement.

Several years later I became a principal of an Edison School, which was a for profit organization that partnered with school districts in an effort to change the culture of the school and surrounding community to one that promotes academic excellence and successful lifestyles. The fundamental premise was teaming and collaboration. The difference was the inclusion of all stakeholders in the community, not just the immediate school.

HOW ARE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED IN YOUR SCHOOL?

We utilize various quality tools to gather feedback/ data on areas of the school we can improve. In order to address these areas we formed teams of teachers and other stakeholders at the building and district level in the spirit of collaboration. These teams examine the data collected, set goals, and formulate strategies on efforts to continuously improve our schools and school district.

HOW DID YOU START?

The process began with continuous improvement training for our administration and teachers where we were exposed to mission, vision, values, etc. statements, classroom meetings, data centers, the use of surveys, and various quality tools.

WHAT WERE THE TOPICS YOU WORKED ON?

In order to create buy-in for continuous improvement practices, it must be integrated into the regular practices and routines of the school. It is important that staff do not view separate activities as "Continuous Improvement" time. With over seventy staff members, we felt it crucial to create tremendous buy-in on our Building Leadership Team and encourage them to be the spokespersons for this. In order to create an atmosphere that would enhance teamwork, collaboration and shared leadership, we felt it most important to create a mission, vision and values piece that everyone could believe in and felt that they had a voice in creating. As the DuFours and Eaker describe in their book (Getting Started), we felt that continuous improvement would not be successful unless the leaders in the department first bought in and then showed enthusiasm for it. We spent the first few months of the school year developing a mission statement. This included many cycles of draft, re-draft and collecting stakeholder feedback as the Department Chairs presented the information about the mission and the process to their departments in their own department meetings.

That, in many ways, was probably the most important component to creating buy-in. We modeled the process by using quality tools and responding to stakeholder feedback. We did not just sit down in one meeting with the attitude that we needed to check one more thing off our list of things to do. Through a sometimes painstaking process, we created a mission statement that has started to shift the focus from teaching to learning and that has created more ownership of the mission statement than if it had been simply "hammered out" in one or two meetings. Now, the leadership team is charged with implementing the ideas from Getting Started and promoting, protecting and defending the school's mission, vision and values as well as confronting behavior that is inconsistent with the school's mission, vision and values. We can now be defined by more than simply those who view the school as a Christmas tree that needs to be decorated with the "ornaments" of various educational fads.

As one would expect with a staff of over seventy people, the buy-in levels are somewhat varied at the high school, but great strides were made this year. As the skeptics see that this vehicle for school improvement is not simply the next educational fad, the pay-off in student achievement will truly begin to be realized across the board. It is vital that this process be organized, sustained, cyclical and continuous. The focus of the Building Leadership Team is not on managerial issues, but transformational leadership. We have stressed that this is a non-linear process and we must remain persistent. To that end, the Building Leadership Team is largely on board and very excited about seeing what can be accomplished with the PLC time next year.

While the Building Leadership Team has developed three SMART goals for the 2011-12 school year, it is important to note that many of our teachers who have completed the continuous improvement training are beginning to implement data centers, classroom mission statements, etc. into their classrooms. Through collaboration, this has even started to spread to teachers who have not yet completed the training. We felt it important to

focus on three important SMART goals and follow through completely on that cycle for this upcoming year, but it is exciting to see how it is already being implemented at the classroom level as well. We are constantly striving to overcome the "this too shall pass" mentality by commitment to becoming the kind of school described in our mission, vision and values.

HOW WAS THE BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAM FORMED?

The Building Leadership Team was selected through the interview process required to become a Department Chair. The terms for the position are staggered so that there will be some turnover from year to year on the team. We feel it is important to have some new faces and perspectives each year while maintaining some consistency from year to year. This way, it will not be necessary to create buy-in "from scratch" at the beginning of each school year.

WHAT WERE THE RESULTS SO FAR?

While no data has been collected yet, the excitement that has been generated by the process used to create the plan on a page and school improvement plan is nearly palpable. We have been approached by staff members ready to get started on the process for this upcoming school year. Of course, creating an hour long block of time each week for teachers to collaborate and work through the professional learning community process will be invaluable. As we begin to develop common, formative assessments, we are excited to see the gains in student achievement.

WHAT ARE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS?

As mentioned previously, a great deal of time was spent on developing buy-in and creating the mission, vision and values of the school. While spending the time to create a mission, vision and value statement definitely helped to create this buy-in, the process might have been able to be shortened a bit as we began to reach consensus. It is important to have a good feel for the push and pull on your team members. The creation of Professional Learning Communities will be an integral step in the Continuous Improvement cycle. It is important that the Continuous Improvement model be integrated throughout the routines and practices of the school. We must always keep in mind that cultural shifts are not always easy, some will occur quickly, but others may take years. It is important that decisions be research-based and not just made by "averaging opinions." If schools are to develop a collaborative culture, they must overcome a tradition of teacher isolation. If schools are to overcome teacher isolation, teachers must learn to work in effective, high-performing teams. This will be our work ahead in 2011-12. We must create a culture of collaboration by escaping the traps of traditional schools and realizing that collaboration by invitation will not work. It is vital to have interdependence as teams pursue specific and measurable goals that focus on key questions associated with learning. As administrators, we must not only speak of these things, but model them in our own actions and practices.

TIPS AND (WEB) ADDRESSES

- Dunlap High School website: www.dunlapcusd.net/dhs
- Data warehouse for all Illinois schools featuring assessment results and assessment results: http://iirc.niu.edu
- Website for the Consortium for Educational Change: http://www.cecillinois.org/
- Website that describes PLCs and why they are important: http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61/beginnings.html
- Website resource on formative assessments: http://www.stemresources.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=70
- Website about "Integrating Technology into the Classroom using Instructional Strategies based on the research from: Classroom Instruction that Works by Robert J. Marzano, Debra J. Pickering, Jane E. Pollock": http://www.tltguide.ccsd.k12.co.us/instructional_tools/Strategies/Strategies.html#similar

DUNLAP MIDDLE SCHOOL:

"WE WILL CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL GROWTH THROUGH COLLABORATION, SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATION WHILE PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP, INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT AND INDIVIDUAL SUCCESS."

ZAC CHATTERTON
(PRINCIPAL)

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Dunlap Middle School opened in January 1999 serving all students in grades 6th, 7th, and 8th. A new middle school was added to the school district in 2008. As a result, the enrollment reduced by almost 50%. Currently there are 463 students that attend the school. Within that 463 there are 35 preschool age students and 16 kindergarten students. The remaining 422 are 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. The students at Dunlap Middle School are served by 33 certified teachers and 15 support staff members.

THE PRINCIPAL AND THE TEAM

Our building leadership team (BLT) is made up of:

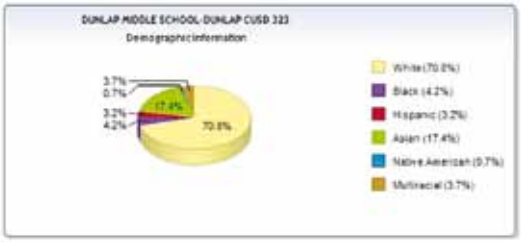
- **Zac Chatterton**, Principal, 2 years at DMS
- **Jeff Alderman**, Assistant Principal, 3 years at DMS
- **Ginger Slocum**, 6th grade language arts teacher 3 years at DMS
- **Shauna Segler**, 6th grade social studies teacher, 3 years at DMS
- **Kathy Carson**, 7th grade language arts teacher, 4 years at DMS
- **Nicole Sivertsen**, 6th-8th grade special education teacher, 2 years at DMS
- **Allan Hansen**, 6th and 8th grade art teacher, 11 years at DMS
- **Carole Rogers**, 8th grade language arts teacher, 31 years at DMS

All but one of the team members have teaching experiences outside of Dunlap Middle School and have other experiences to draw upon when contributing to the team. The team was determined with the consensus of the entire staff at the conclusion of the 2009-2010 school year and have been unchanged since that time. It is the intent of the team to have some level of change over to ensure new ideas are shared while retaining a certain level of continuity that the team currently has. A driving force in our ability to be an effective time is our strict adherence to our norms which are:

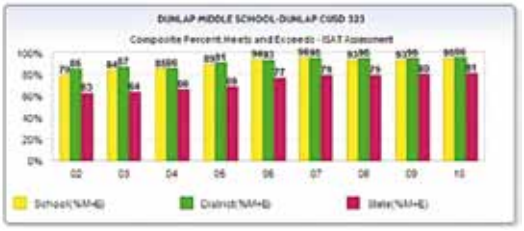
- The DMS BLT will be a student-centered team focused on setting goals and making decisions based on what is best for the students at DMS.
- The DMS BLT will develop a focused and mission driven learning environment in order to meet the needs of all stakeholders.
- The DMS BLT will work collaboratively to reach a consensus by openly sharing ideas and actively listening to the ideas of others.
- The DMS BLT will be professional and ethical in all of our dealings with all of our stakeholders in our district.
- The DMS BLT will strive to keep open communication with faculty and staff with the awareness that we have a diverse group that we represent.

WHAT IS THE MISSION AND VISION THE SCHOOL?

Our mission is: "The D.M.S. community will create an atmosphere of academic and social growth through collaboration, support and communication while promoting responsible citizenship, intellectual development and individual success."



DEMOGRAPHICS OF DUNLAP MIDDLE SCHOOL AS OF 2010



COMPOSITE PERCENT MEETS AND EXCEEDS- ISAT ASSESSMENT

The mission was developed using such quality tools as an affinity diagram over the course of 3 faculty meetings. This allowed all staff members to be able to contribute to its development as well as there being time for reflection. The parent group also provided input as well as teachers taking the developmental process back to the students for input.We adhere to the districts vision of:

- Dunlap students will continuously excel in a global society by being:
- Self-motivated learners
- Critical thinkers
- Effective communicators
- Skilled collaborators
- Responsible and culturally aware citizens
- Technologically capable creators

WHEN DID YOU START WITH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?

There was no formal School Improvement Plan (SIP) prior to 2009. We started the process of developing one by analyzing other schools' plans. Through collaborative efforts on the part of the DMS staff it was determined that we had two primary needs. We needed to improve in the area of writing as determined by ISAT test testing. The second was that we needed to adopt some form of service learning within our curriculum.

Continuous Improvement was first introduced to the staff in the fall of 2009. Being a middle school with a common planning time for grade level teams allowed us an easier venue for which to implement it. The grade level teams developed mission statements and norms. From there teams worked to develop mission statements and ground rules within the classroom. Student led conferences were already present at the 6th grade level. They have expanded with full implementation of all students participating in student led conferences in the fall of 2011. We started seeking stakeholder input in the form of satisfaction surveys being distributed at the first public event of the 2009 school year, which is "Back to School" night.

HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?

Ongoing training was provided by the district and modeled by administration until such time there was internal capacity for teachers within the building to provide the training. Most trainers had attended the national Quality Tools Conference in 2009 and had varying areas of strength within the usage of Quality Tools. Out sourced training was utilized only for new component introduction. Some examples would be PLC implementation and the Plan, Do, Study, Act tool. With common planning time for core teachers already in place within the middle school concept teacher's quickly embraced and implemented continuous improvement. Students welcomed the opportunity to give input in the development of ground rules and mission statements that were applied across the grade level. Classroom meetings were introduced and used during the 2010 school year. Parents were involved and informed through student led conferences and media outlets that are normally used by the school.

The school used faculty meetings, common planning time, and teacher institute days as opportunities to collaborate on effective implementation of Quality Tools. Such tools as Plus/Deltas and affinity diagrams were a fixture at all professional development activities. Most tools were modeled and practiced at these meetings before being implementation within the classroom. In some instances the tool was used by a pilot group and brought back to the larger group for further analysis before full implementation. This was the case with classroom meetings. One challenge for DMS was duplication and repetitiveness. For example in the area of establishing ground rules students found it to be redundant when developing them in all 8 classes they attend each day. It was determined that ground rules would be done one time at each grade level. From there the ground rules were validated in each class and refined for specific purposes if necessary. The driving motivator for DMS was the desire to have the young adolescent population of students that we serve be more accountable for their own educational endeavors. There is greater motivation when they are involved. This was our primary emphasis over teacher or parental input. Teacher and parental input was obviously a part of its implementation and were not ignored.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT WAS DEPLOYED USING A THREE TIER FORMAT.

› The first tier was provided by the district in the form of a four day Continuous Improvement workshop that a group of our teachers participated in. The district provided the opportunity to attend the National Quality Tools Conference in 2009. A mixture of teachers, administrations, and board members represented the district at the conference.

› The second tier was the use of quality tools at grade level team meetings, faculty meetings, and all other professional development activities.

› The third tier was the voluntary piloting or peer sharing of strategies that worked within the classroom. The most common venue for this was informal discussions and observations on the part of teachers within the building. We also had formal opportunities to share ideas and implementation strategies during grade level teaming meetings and faculty meetings. Data centers where the most common form of monitoring and evaluating successes.

Generally speaking goals at the classroom level were established so that success would easily be obtained. The grade level team and building level goals were more challenging to achieve and were not always met. The future will determine if this approach was successful. Research supports that students need to experience early success with newly introduced concepts and approaches. The concern on the part of the staff is if successes are not as easily achieved in the future will there be less commitment to working towards their goals.

Dunlap Middle School has experience a great deal of benefit in the short duration that we have been practicing continuous improvement. The sustainability will be there within areas of ground rules, having a plan on a page, school improvement plans, and a building leadership team. The challenges ahead will be to implement Professional Learning Communities and further implement the Plan, Do, Study, Act tool.

TIPS AND (WEB) ADDRESSES:

› Dunlap Middle School website: http://www.dunlapcusd.net/dms

WILDER-WAITE GRADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“WE BUILD A FOUNDATION THAT EMPOWERS DIVERSE LEARNERS IN THEIR JOURNEY TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL 21ST CENTURY CITIZENS.”

TODD M. JEFFERSON
(ADMINISTRATOR)

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Wilder-Waite Grade School is a K-5 elementary school in the Dunlap School District.

The enrollment of Wilder-Waite is 380 students. We have a half-day kindergarten program and kindergarten students attend either the morning session (7:45 to 10:45) or the afternoon session (11:45 to 2:45). Maximum class sizes in K-2 are 25 students per class while maximum class size in grades 3-5 is 30. Wilder-Waite houses 3 classes of each grade level with class sizes averaging roughly 24 students.

The demographic chart does not capture the true diversity of the school. The figure below represents the number and variety of home languages spoken by Wilder-Waite students and provides a clearer picture of our diversity.

The mobility rate at Wilder-Waite was 13.6% in 2010 and is slightly higher than the state average (13%) and significantly higher than the district average (8.6%). The mobility rate is a calculation of the movement of students in and out of school during the course of a year.

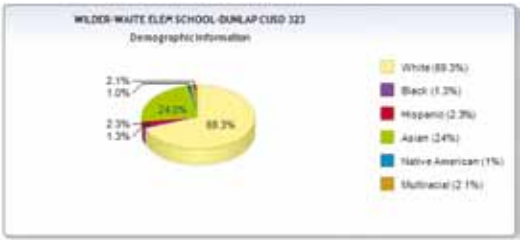
The Wilder-Waite staff is made up of the following:

- 16 full-time regular division classroom teachers
- 1.5 special education teachers serving students with special needs
- 1 full-time speech pathologist
- physical education teacher (students have daily P.E. for 30 minutes)
- 1 technology teacher (students have technology twice per week for 30 minutes)
- 0.75 English as a Second Language teacher (students not speaking English)
- 0.5 vocal music teacher (students have music twice per week for 30 minutes each)
- 0.5 art teacher (students have art class 1 time per week for 50 minutes)
- 0.25 orchestra teacher (students may participate in orchestra in 4th and 5th grade)
- 0.25 band teacher (students may participate in band in 5th grade)
- 0.25 librarian

Wilder-Waite employs a part-time literacy aide which provides literacy intervention support for students in the area of reading. Other classroom aides are employed on an as-needed basis. This is typically done for students with significant needs and varies from year to year.

THE PRINCIPAL AND THE TEAM

The principal's name is Todd Jefferson. Mr. Jefferson has been the principal at Wilder-Waite for the past 8 years. Prior to becoming principal at Wilder-Waite, Mr. Jefferson served as a teacher, coach, and then assistant principal at Dunlap Middle School. Mr. Jefferson has been an educator for 20 years. During Mr. Jefferson's tenure at Wilder-Waite, there has been significant turnover in staff. There are only two staff members remaining from the 2003-04 school year.



SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

WILDER-WAITE HOME LANGUAGES

The Wilder-Waite Building Leadership Team is made up of seven staff members. There is not a specific rotation of membership, however, the intent is that there is some turnover on the team each year in order to allow opportunity for all staff members to serve on the team over time. The following is a listing of the Building Leadership Team members and the staff groupings that they represent:

- Rachelle McConaghie (first grade)
- Sheri Eppel (second grade)
- Annie Pavlik (third grade)
- Monica McComb (fourth grade)
- Cheryl Wooden (fifth grade)
- Tammy Browning (specials)
- Mandy Ellis (intervention)
- Todd Jefferson (principal)

One member of the Building Leadership Team also serves on the District Leadership Team. The District Leadership Team meets four times a year and oversees the District Strategic Plan. The role of the District Leadership Team representative is to serve as a communication liaison between the district and the school. The role of the Building Leadership Team members is to set and communicate direction for the school.

The Building Leadership Team was formed in the fall of 2009. The purpose of the team at that time was simply to learn more about teamwork, collaboration, and shared leadership. We took small steps initially. Our work revolved around gathering consensus about our mission and staff norms.

WHAT IS THE MISSION AND VISION OF THE SCHOOL?

The Building Leadership Team established a mission statement during the spring of 2010. The mission statement is as follows: " Build a foundation that empowers diverse learners in their journey to become successful 21st Century citizens."
This mission statement aligns with the mission and values of the district and provides focus and direction to our work.
In addition, our staff developed a set of norms to establish professional expectations in our collaborative work. Our staff norms were also developed during our first year and are listed below in the form of "We Will" statements:

- "We will communicate openly, honestly, and constructively by listening and respecting the ideas of all team members."
- "We will respect each other's personal and professional opinions, ideas, and privacy."
- "As professionals, we will be open minded and committed to new ideas and change through a strong work ethic."
- "We will take a positive and cohesive team approach across grade levels and all curricular and non-curricular areas toward common goals."
- "We will support and encourage each other, trusting that each member of our team brings something different and valuable."

After establishing a mission and staff norms, our team took aim at focusing on the needs of our school. We were still in the process of learning more about Continuous Improvement at the time and

EXAMPLE OF A CLASSROOM MISSION STATEMENT

not all staff members were trained in Continuous Improvement yet. Instead of diving into the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle of school improvement, we decided to take a more informal approach to teamwork and collaboration. The Building Leadership Team spent time gathering input from the staff on what improvements we could make in our school and, as a result, focused our attention on making cosmetic building improvements. This provided us with a safe means of learning how to function together as a team.

In our second year (2010-11), the Building Leadership Team focused more on creating a formalized School Improvement Plan. This was a year-long process that resulted in the creation of three school-wide S.M.A.R.T. goals. Our school goals were not developed through a P.D.S.A. process and this is an area that will require further training and understanding. Our goals provide a foundation for the work of our Professional Learning Community teams and alignment for classroom Continuous Improvement implementation. The Building Leadership Team will track progress toward school goals in a variety of ways. A School Data Center has been established to track goals in a visual, student-friendly manner. In addition, our school goals are listed in the Plan on a Page which is posted on our school website. A Balanced Scorecard has also been created to track data over time relative to our school goals and other pertinent school-wide data.

Professional Learning Communities will be a focal point of our work ahead during the 2011-12 school year. These PLC teams will meet on a weekly basis and will serve as the engine that drives our work. Professional Learning Communities will focus their collaborative efforts on four key questions:

- What do we want students to know and be able to do?
- How will we know if students have learned?
- How will we respond when students do not learn?
- How will we respond if students are learning?

Professional Learning Community teams will begin meeting in the fall of 2011.

WHEN DID YOU HEAR ABOUT CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?

I had read about Continuous Improvement in educational journals in the past. I was also aware of Continuous Improvement concepts and practices through colleagues from a local district that had implemented Continuous Improvement. Our superintendent, Dr. Jay Marino, is well-versed in Continuous Improvement and has made this a focal point for improvement efforts in our district.

The Continuous Improvement philosophy has provided focus and alignment to our district. From a principal's perspective, the focus on Continuous Improvement has pushed the district forward with a laser light focus and clarity. Dunlap has always been a high achieving school district, however, too often there have been great individual efforts examples of excellence without great unity and alignment.

DATA CENTER DEPICTING GROUND RULES DEVELOPED WITH STUDENTS

DATA CENTER IN A SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM

In addition, Continuous Improvement is student focused and filters all the way down to the student level and allows students to take ownership of their own learning and growth.

Teachers have embraced Continuous Improvement, appreciate the focus on student learning, and generally have bought in to the philosophy. Some teachers and staff still struggle with finding the time to implement Continuous Improvement and making Continuous Improvement a part of their daily routine. Students have also embraced Continuous Improvement thus far even though we are still in the early phases of implementation. Parents are the least educated on Continuous Improvement but to this point there have been no negative feedback from parents regarding Continuous Improvement.

HOW ARE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED IN YOUR SCHOOL?

There are many examples of how Continuous Improvement is being implemented at Wilder-Waite Grade School. It is important to note, however, that we are still in the beginning phases of understanding and implementation. The following bullet points outline some examples of implementation:

› Soliciting Feedback – Teachers are asking both students and parents for feedback on a far more regular basis today. We have established a safe environment for soliciting feedback from stakeholders. Many of our classrooms have plus/delta charts as a part of the classroom data centers. This feedback is used during classroom meetings.

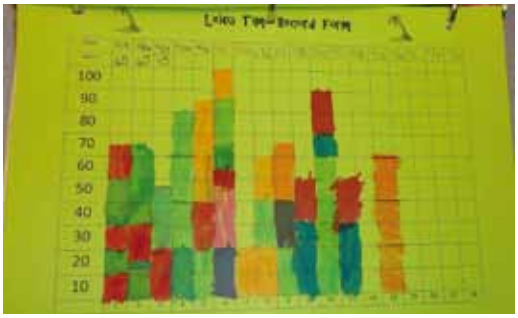
› Classroom Meetings – Many of our teachers have incorporated classroom meetings into their Some are more frequent than others. These meetings are led by students and the classroom data centers are used to discuss plus/deltas and classroom goals.

› Mission Statements – All classrooms have solicited student input on the creation and development of classroom mission statements. These statements align with our building mission and are reviewed during classroom meetings.

› In addition to classroom mission statements, students have also had input in most classrooms on the development of classroom ground rules. These are common expectations that students hold themselves accountable for. These ground rules are also referred to during classroom meetings.

› A few teachers have facilitated student-led conferences. One classroom in particular was a fifth grade classroom. These conferences were conducted in the fall and students used their data folders to share information about classroom mission, ground rules, goals, and their own growth in key academic areas. They used charts and graphs in their data binders to visually represent their learning and progress. Feedback from both parents and students regarding this process have been overwhelmingly positive. Some parents have indicated a desire to still have some direct one-on-one feedback from the classroom teacher and we have discussed a way to provide more direct contact with the teacher while still maintaining the student-led conference concept.

EXAMPLE: 3RD GRADE CLASSROOM DATA CENTER



TRACKING PROGRESS TOWARD LEXIA INTERVENTION GOALS IN READING

› One special education teacher has allowed students to lead their own IEP (Individualized Education Plan) meetings. This has been very positive for both the student and parents involved in these meetings. Students with IEP's have taken ownership of their IEP goals and have a greater sense and awareness of what is in the plan and what the plan is for.

› Classroom data centers are located in each classroom and teachers track pertinent classroom goals on a regular basis. The classroom data centers will become more aligned by grade level next year when teachers are collaborating on a weekly basis as Professional Learning Communities.

› A school-wide data center has also been created to track school improvement goals. This data center is located in the main hallway of the school just across from the school office.

› All teachers in the building have been provided enough 3-ring binders to allow each student to have a data folder. Most teachers have created data folders for students to allow students to track progress on key instructional goals. Some teachers have been more systematic about the tracking of data in these folders than others.

› Teachers have on occasion used Quality Tools as an instructional tool for students. This is an area that teachers will need further training and support in.

EXAMPLES OF STUDENT DATA FOLDERS

It is important to note that not all teachers at Wilder-Waite have completed the Continuous Improvement training. Teachers are still at different stages of the learning process and there have been loose expectations for implementation to this point. Teachers have been encouraged to take chances and try different Continuous Improvement concepts as they feel comfortable. Many teachers have begun experimenting with student data centers, classroom mission statements, common ground rules and student data folders on their own prior to undergoing the training. As more teachers receive the training and teachers begin working in Professional Learning Communities, the expectations and consistency in implementation will increase. Pictures have been attached to provide visual representations of Continuous Improvement practices being implemented in Wilder-Waite classrooms.

HOW WAS THE BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAM FORMED?

The Wilder-Waite Building Leadership Team was formed in the fall of 2009. Grade level groups were asked to discuss and nominate a representative from their group to serve on the team so membership was voluntary. The expectation has been set that all staff members have a responsibility to serve on the Building Leadership Team at some point. At the end of each year, the team meets and discusses openly which members are going to remain on the team for the next year and which members will rotate out. Those rotating out are asked to meet with their

5TH GRADE CLASSROOM DATA CENTER

grade level team to determine which staff member will fill the open position.

As an administrator, I wanted to assure our staff that the philosophy of Continuous Improvement is naturally connected with our values as a school. Throughout the year through both formal and informal discussions with staff, I talked about Continuous Improvement philosophies and concepts and tied them to current practices and beliefs we had as a school. As we sent teachers through trainings, I encouraged teachers to try what they were comfortable with and to take risks. I was careful not to be critical of any attempt to implement Continuous Improvement concepts. Time was taken during faculty meetings to share practices and a safe environment was created to try new things without the pressure of a timeline for implementation.

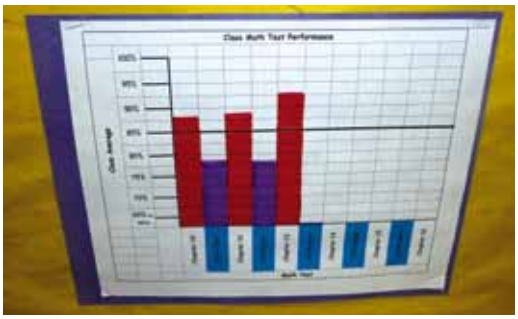
We had spent a great deal of time and energy with early intervention prior to implementation of Continuous Improvement. Our early intervention system was driven by data. We have a benchmark assessment system in place that assesses students in the fall, winter, and spring and compares students to both local and national norms. Students falling below the target (set at the 50th national percentile) are provided with research-based intervention and assessed more frequently. Students who continue not to respond to intervention are then referred to our problem-solving team who works in a collaborative fashion to create a more intensive intervention plan.

There are many opportunities for continued growth for all members of the Building Leadership Team, administration, and staff. They are as follows:

- Continued training in how to administer the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle to analyze, assess and develop school improvement plans.
- A deeper understanding of what shared leadership and collaboration is and how it is works in practical fashion in day-to-day operations.
- Further understanding and mastery of the Atlas curriculum mapping software. This will allow us to become cohesive and tight on what we want students to know and be able to do.
- Training in how to develop common, formative assessments and how to tie these assessments to the essential learning outcomes.

WHAT WERE THE RESULTS SO FAR?

We do not yet have data that specifically points to improvement directly related to Continuous Improvement. As we work in Professional Learning Communities and begin using common, formative assessments we will begin to see data pertaining to the impact of Continuous Improvement. One of the biggest challenges we have is that we are a high performing school district. Change is difficult in a high achieving district due to the fact that standardized test results have been well above average. I am confident that the use of common, formative assessments will allow us to see great gains in student achievement over time. In addition,



DATA BEING TRACKED TOWARD CLASSROOM GOAL ON CLASSROOM DATA CENTER

our state standardized assessment process will dramatically change in 2014. Students will be assessed multiple times over the course of a year at each grade level. This assessment should provide us with more meaningful student data relative to standards achievement as well as growth over time.

WHAT ARE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS?

The implementation of Professional Learning Communities is a key component of Continuous Improvement. Teachers will be collaborating in a way that is much different than they have in the past. We introduced Continuous Improvement to teachers first. After teachers became familiar with Continuous Improvement and began implementing concepts we then introduced Professional Learning Communities. Teachers were more likely to be open to Professional Learning Communities after understanding Continuous Improvement as they began to see the value and need for collaborative time with colleagues. Teachers have historically worked in isolation and had a great deal of autonomy in the instructional practices they incorporated, the content that is taught, and the manner in which students are assessed. Professional Learning Communities are intended to create consistency and better instructional practices through collective inquiry and greater group IQ.

My recommendations for implementation are as follows:

- Create buy-in by building a base of understanding through training and support.
- Provide the tools and resources for teachers to implement new concepts.
- Provide a safe atmosphere to begin implementation at a comfortable pace (teachers will push each other naturally – no one will want to be left behind).
- Provide a clear timeline from the beginning of the process that will provide direction, set expectations, yet not be intimidating or overwhelming.
- Provide examples and research on the rationale for the changes being made.
- Solicit steady feedback throughout the process and use the feedback to adjust the pace of implementation and provide for the needs that arise.

TIPS AND (WEB) ADDRESSES

- Wilder-Waite Grade School website: www.dunlapcusd.net/wilderwaite
- Resource from the architects of Professional Learning Communities: www.allthingsplc.info
- Data warehouse for all Illinois schools featuring assessment results and assessment results: http://iirc.niu.edu
- Website for the Consortium for Educational Change: http://www.cecillinois.org/
- Resource for materials related to Professional Learning Communities: http://www.solution-tree.com/Public/Main.aspx

APPENDIX

I SCHOOL ATTACHMENTS

A Dunlap High School

B Dunlap Middle School

C Wilder Waite Grade Elementary School

II TOOLS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

I SCHOOL ATTACHMENTS

All schools in Dunlap works with Data and School Strategic Documents; Plan on a Page, School Improvement Plans, Balanced Scorecards. In the attachments you will find examples of these data's and plans.
See for the complete documents the website of Dunlap School District:
http://www.dunlapcusd.net/StrategicPlan/Pages/SchoolStrategicDocuments.aspx

A SCHOOL ATTACHMENT OF THE DUNLAP HIGH SCHOOL

ATTACHMENT 1: ARTIFACTS AND DATA

The following charts and graphs indicate a historical representation of the performance of Dunlap High School students on the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) and ACT College Readiness Benchmark Results. The PSAE measures the achievement of grade 11 students in reading, mathematics, science and writing.
The PSAE includes three components: (1) the ACT Plus Writing, which includes the ACT battery of four multiple-choice tests (English, mathematics, reading and science) and a 30-minute constructed–response writing test with a single prompt question; (2) an ISBE (Illinois State Board of Education) – developed science assessment and (3) two WorkKeys assessments (Applied Mathematics and Reading for Information). The ACT test assesses high school students' general educational development and their ability to college-level work. The multiple choice tests cover four skill areas: English, mathematics, reading and science. The Writing Test, which is optional, measures skill in planning and writing a short essay.

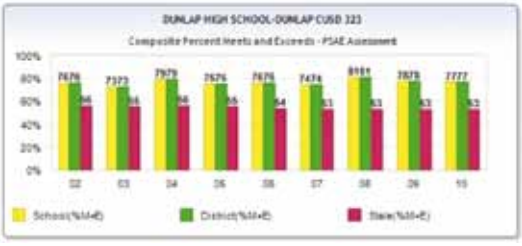


FIGURE 1:
COMPOSITE PERCENT MEETS AND EXCEEDS – PSAE ASSESSMENT

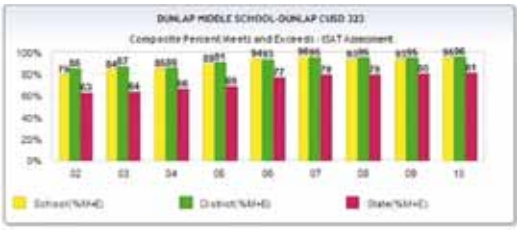


FIGURE 2:
PSAE PERFORMANCE BY SUBJECT AREA

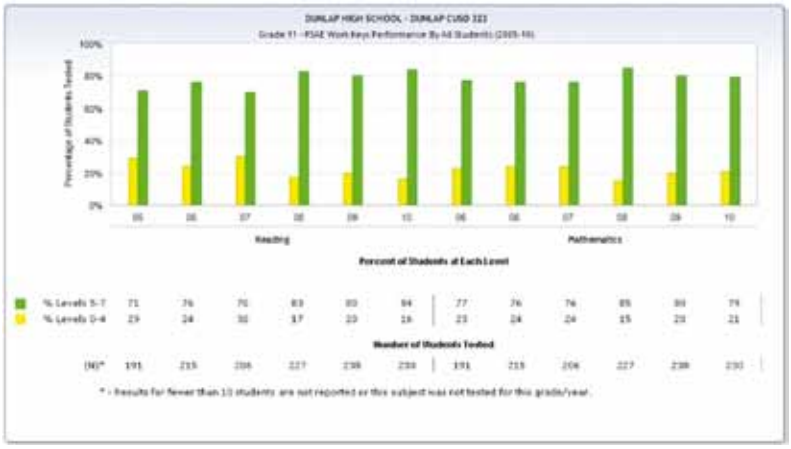


FIGURE 3:
PSAE WORK KEYS PERFORMANCE

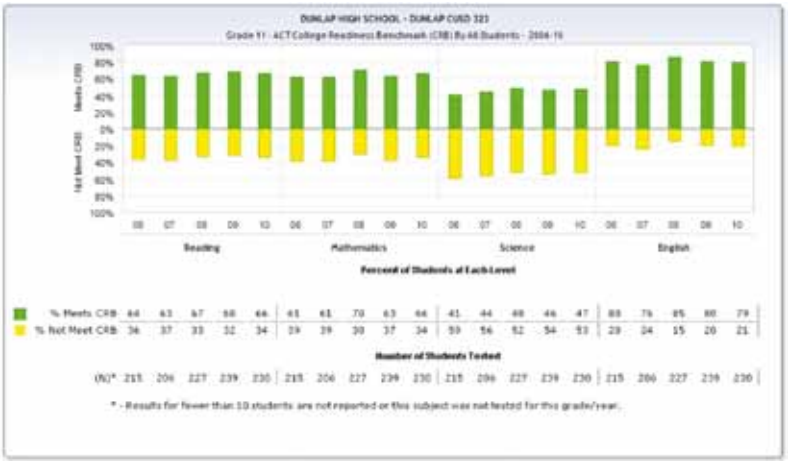
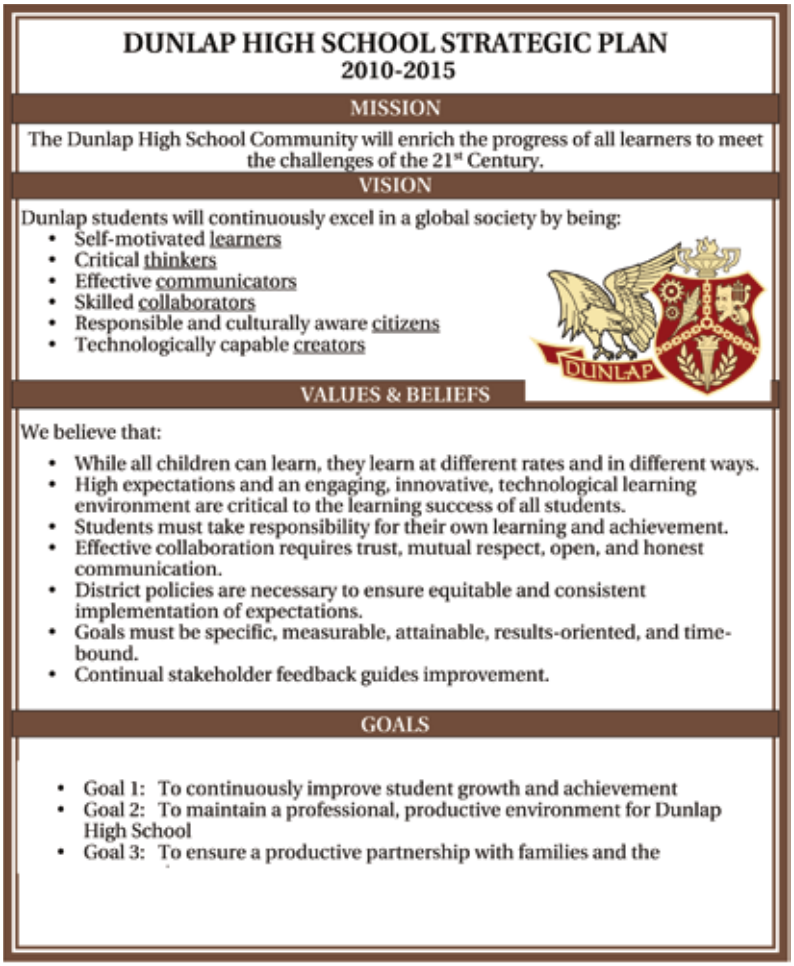


FIGURE 4:
ACT COLLEGE READINESS BENCHMARK RESULTS

ATTACHMENT 2: THE STRATEGIC PLAN ON A PAGE

See for the actual plans the website of the Dunlap School District.



DUNLAP HIGH SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN
2010-2015

MISSION

The Dunlap High School Community will enrich the progress of all learners to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

VISION

Dunlap students will continuously excel in a global society by being:

- Self-motivated learners
- Critical thinkers
- Effective communicators
- Skilled collaborators
- Responsible and culturally aware citizens
- Technologically capable creators

VALUES & BELIEFS

We believe that:

- While all children can learn, they learn at different rates and in different ways.
- High expectations and an engaging, innovative, technological learning environment are critical to the learning success of all students.
- Students must take responsibility for their own learning and achievement.
- Effective collaboration requires trust, mutual respect, open, and honest communication.
- District policies are necessary to ensure equitable and consistent implementation of expectations.
- Goals must be specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound.
- Continual stakeholder feedback guides improvement.

GOALS

- Goal 1: To continuously improve student growth and achievement
- Goal 2: To maintain a professional, productive environment for Dunlap High School
- Goal 3: To ensure a productive partnership with families and the

PLAN ON A PAGE

ATTACHMENT 3: EXAMPLE FROM THE BALANCED SCORECARD

Goal #1: To Continuously Improve Student Growth and Achievement									
#	Measure	Grade & Subject Subject	Historical Trend				Future Targets		
			2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
I.A	Increase the % of students proficient in **reading** as measured by the **ISAT/PSAE**.	11th Reading	73	78	79	79	80	81	82
I.B	Increase the % of students proficient in **math** as measured by the **ISAT/PSAE**.	11th Math	75	83	77	74	75	76	77
I.C	Increase the % of students proficient in **science** as measured by the **ISAT/PSAE**.	11th Science	75	81	78	78	79	80	82
I.D	Increase the % of students proficient in **writing** as measured by the **ISAT/PSAE**.	11th Writing	69	78	77	75	76	77	78
I.O	Increase the **Composite ACT** score	11th Comp.	23	24	24	24	24.1	24.2	24.3
I.P	Increase the % of **Math** students meeting College Readiness Benchmarks on the **ACT**.	11th Comp.	65	65	68	68	69	70	71
I.Q	Increase the % of **Science** students meeting College Readiness Benchmarks on the **ACT**.	11th Comp.	45	53	47	51	51	54	56
I.R	Increase the % of **Reading** students meeting College Readiness Benchmarks on the **ACT**.	11th Comp.	65	72	72	71	72	73	74
I.S	Increase the % of **English** students meeting College Readiness Benchmarks on the **ACT**.	11th Comp.	84	84	90	85	87	89	91
I.U	Increase the % of students scoring a 3 or above on the **Advanced Placement** exam.	9-12 All	72	72	83	78* (Prelim Data)	79	80	81
I.V	Increase the % of students who report that their HS education **prepared them for post-secondary success** (ACT post graduate data).	Graduates	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			
I.W	Increase the % of students **advancing to post-secondary education** (2 or 4 year college).	Graduates	N/A	N/A	N/A	96	97	98	98
I.X	Increase the number of students participating in Project Lead the Way or other **21st Century courses**.	9-12 All	20	25	24	35	45	55	65
Goal #2: To Obtain a Satisfying and Productive Classroom and School Learning Environment									
2.C	Increase **high school students overall satisfaction** with school as measured by the satisfaction survey (TBD).	Grades 9-12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD
2.D	Increase the % of all secondary students participating in **co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.**	Grades 6-12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD
2.E	Increase the % of students who **feel safe** and accepted at school as measured by the student satisfaction survey (TBD).	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD

DUNLAP HIGHSCHOOL BALANCED SCORECARD
BALANCED SCORECARD DHS FOR THE GOALS 1 AND 2

B SCHOOL ATTACHEMENT OF THE DUNLAP MIDDLE SCHOOL

ATTACHMENT 1: STRATEGIC PLAN DOCUMENTS

DUNLAP MIDDLE SCHOOL

2010-2011

MISSION

The D.M.S. community will create an atmosphere of academic and social growth through collaboration, support and communication while promoting responsible citizenship, intellectual development and individual success.

VISION

Dunlap students will continuously excel in a global society by being:

- Self-motivated learners
- Critical thinkers
- Effective communicators
- Skilled collaborators
- Responsible and culturally aware citizens
- Technologically capable creators

VALUES & BELIEFS

We believe that:

- While all children can learn, they learn at different rates and in different ways.
- High expectations and an engaging, innovative, technological learning environment are critical to the learning success of all students.
- Students must take responsibility for their own learning and achievement.
- Effective collaboration requires trust, mutual respect, open, and honest communication.
- District policies are necessary to ensure equitable and consistent implementation of expectations.

GOALS

- 100% of the middle school students at DMS will participate in a service learning activity by the conclusion of the 2010-2011 school year.
- 100% of the ISAT assessed students at DMS will complete one formal written assessment with a success rate of 85% by the conclusion of the third term of the 2010-2011 school year.

PLAN ON A PAGE OF DMS

ATTACHMENT 2: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Dunlap Community Unit School District 323

School Improvement Plan

Dunlap Middle School 2010-11

District Strategic Plan
MISSION
The Dunlap School Community will empower all students to excel in a global society.
VISION
Dunlap students will continuously excel in a global society by being: • Self-motivated learners • Critical thinkers • Effective communicators • Skilled collaborators • Responsible and culturally aware citizens • Technologically capable creators
GOALS
GOAL 1: To Continuously Improve Student Growth and Achievement GOAL 2: To Obtain a Satisfying and Productive Classroom and School Learning Environment GOAL 3: To Achieve a Satisfying and Productive Classroom and School Teaching Environment GOAL 4: To Ensure a Satisfying and Productive Partnership with Families and the Community GOAL 5: To Obtain Efficient, Effective, and Equitable Use of Resources

Goal 1:	• 100% of the middle school students at DMS will participate in a service learning activity by the conclusion of the 2010-2011 school year.
Goal 2:	• 100% of the ISAT assessed students at DMS will complete one formal written assessment with a success rate of 85% by the conclusion of the third term of the 2010-2011 school year.
Goal 3:	

Section 1: School Improvement SMART Goals
*Copy this page and complete for each SIP goal

SIP Goal Detail

SIP Goal # 1 of 2

1.) State the SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, Target date).

- 100% of the middle school students at DMS will participate in a service learning activity by the conclusion of the 2010-2011 school year.

2.) Describe data sources consulted and a summary analysis of the data that indicate the need for the goal.

A three question survey will be given during the first quarter of the school year. The survey will be done electronically during social studies classes. The questions are:

1. **What grade are you in?**
2. **Before this school year began did you know what a service learning was?**
3. **Before this school year had you ever participated in a service learning project?**

3.) Identify the correlation of the stated school improvement goal to the District strategic plan.
Check all that apply:

x GOAL 1: To Continuously Improve Student Growth and Achievement
GOAL 2: To Obtain a Satisfying and Productive Classroom and School Learning Environment
GOAL 3: To Achieve a Satisfying and Productive Classroom and School Teaching Environment
x GOAL 4: To Ensure a Satisfying and Productive Partnership with Families and the Community
xGOAL 5: To Obtain Efficient, Effective, and Equitable Use of Resources

4.) Summarize how this goal will be measured. What will be the evidence of goal attainment?

We will keep attendance of each student's participation in a project. During the fourth quarter of the school year we will have students self assess their reflections of the experience. They will work in small groups building to larger groups to formulate a plus/delta of their experiences.

*Copy this page and complete for each SIP goal

Action Plan

SIP Goal # 2 of 2 (State Goal):

- 100% of the ISAT assessed students at DMS will complete one formal written assessment with a success rate of 85% by the conclusion of the third term of the 2010-2011 school year.

Description of Proposed Action/Activity (What is going to be done to address this goal?)	**Research/Rationale For Activity** (Explain how best practices and research justify this activity)	**Results** (What will be the evidence of completion of the activity?)	**Resources** (Funding Source & Cost)	**Timeline** (When will the activity occur?)
Activity #1 of 2: **Language Arts teachers will meet to analyze and plan for formal writing assessment**	08-09 and 09-10 ISAT Writing Scores	Continuity on rubric implementation Confirmed assessment date Assigned assessment areas	Individual ISAT writing scores ISAT writing rubric	8-18 9-30 1-18
Professional Development:				
Activity #2 of 2: **All ISAT assessed students will take a formative writing assessment**	08-09 and 09-10 ISAT Writing Scores	6th Narrative 7th Expository 8th Persuasive		1-28

ATTACHMENT 3: BALANCED SCORECARD

Dunlap Community Unit School District #323 Balanced Scorecard

Goal #1: To Continuously Improve Student Growth and Achievement

#	Measure	Grade & Subject	Historical Trend			Current	Future Targets		
		Subject	2007	2008	2009	09-2010	2011	2012	2013
1.A	Increase the % of students proficient in **reading** as measured by the **ISAT**.	8th Reading	98	96	97	96	**95.5**	**96**	**96.5**
1.B	Increase the % of students proficient in **math** as measured by the **ISAT**.	8th Math	97	97	96	96	96	96.5	97
1.C	Increase the % of students proficient in **science** as measured by the **ISAT/PSAE**.	7th Science	94	87	94	97	95.5	96	96.5
1.D	Increase the % of students proficient in **writing** as measured by the **ISAT/PSAE**.	8th Writing	79	77	78	81	n/a	n/a	n/a
1.E	Increase % of cohort growth in **reading and math** as measured by **ISAT** by 8th grade cohort scores from 3rd grade.	8th Reading	5	8	14	4	5	6	7
		8th Math	-1	2	4	-1	3	4	5
1.F	**Decrease the % performance gap** (in 8th grade ISAT reading and math) between "all students" and the low SES and IEP subgroups.	8th Reading Low SES	6	5	4	13	8	6	4
		8th Math Low SES	30	6	10	9	10	8	6
1.I	Increase the % of students scoring at or above the 50th national percentile for **reading fluency** as measured by **AIMSweb** (Spring).	8th Fluency	X	X	83	88	87	88	89
1.L	Increase the % of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile as measured by **STAR reading.**	6th Reading	N/A	N/A	68	67	68	69	70
		7th Reading	N/A	N/A	78	69	70	71	72
		8th Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A	70	71	72	73
1.M	Increase the % of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile as measured by **STAR math.**	6th Math	N/A	N/A	N/A	66	67	68	69
		7th Math	N/A	N/A	N/A	71	72	73	74
		8th Math	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	73	74	75

DUNLAP COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT
EXAMPLE OF THE BALANCED SCORECARD OF DMS

C SCHOOL ATTACHMENT OF THE WILDER WAITE GRADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ATTACHMENT 1: ARTIFACTS AND DATA

The following charts and graphs indicate a historical representation of the performance of Wilder-Waite students on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). These assessments are administered each spring to students in grades 3-5 in the areas of math and reading. Fourth grade students are also assessed in the area of science. These assessments indicate student achievement relative to the learning standards established by the state of Illinois. Most states in the United States are moving toward implementation of the Common Core Standards which is designed to align all states in the union to more common learning standards. Illinois has adapted the Common Core Learning Standards as well and our assessment process will soon be changing as a result.

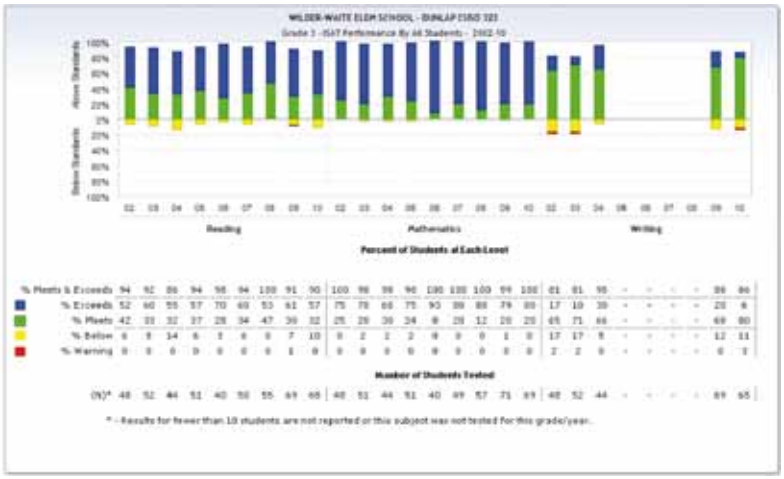


FIGURE 1:
3RD GRADE ISAT PERFORMANCE IN READING, MATH, WRITING

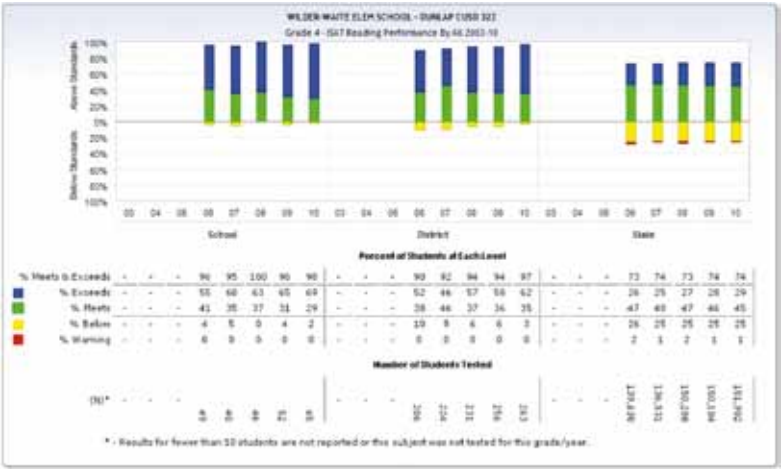


FIGURE 2:
4TH GRADE ISAT PERFORMANCE IN READING, MATH, WRITING

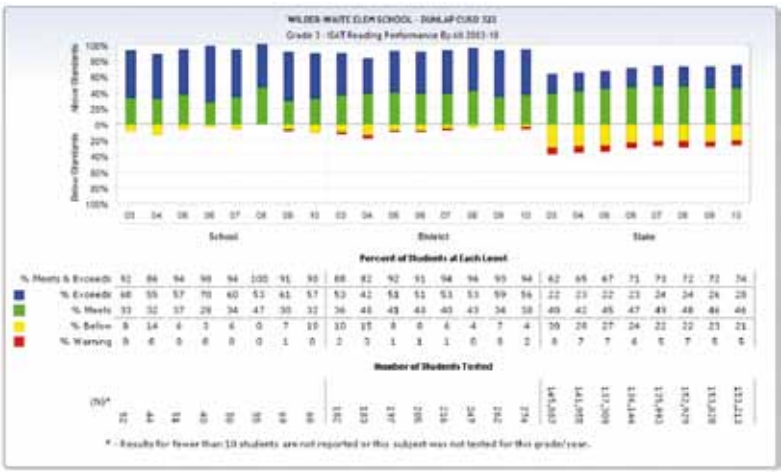


FIGURE 4:
3RD GRADE ISAT RESULTS COMPARED TO DISTRICT AND STATE

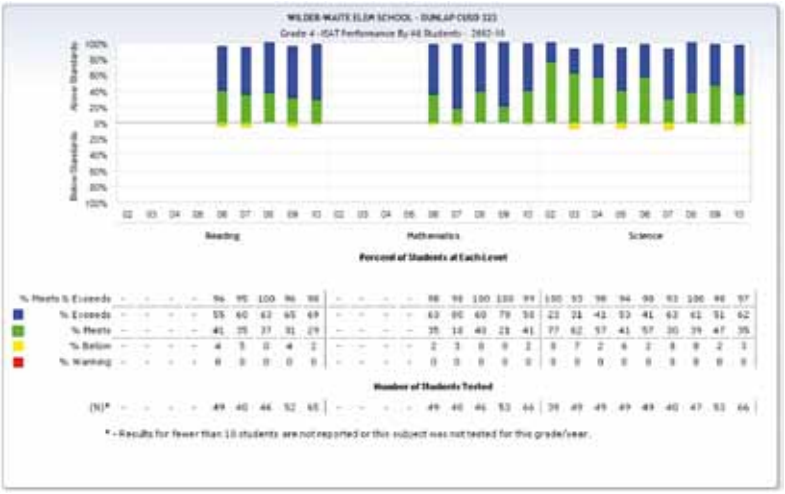


FIGURE 5:
4TH GRADE ISAT RESULTS COMPARED TO DISTRICT AND STATE

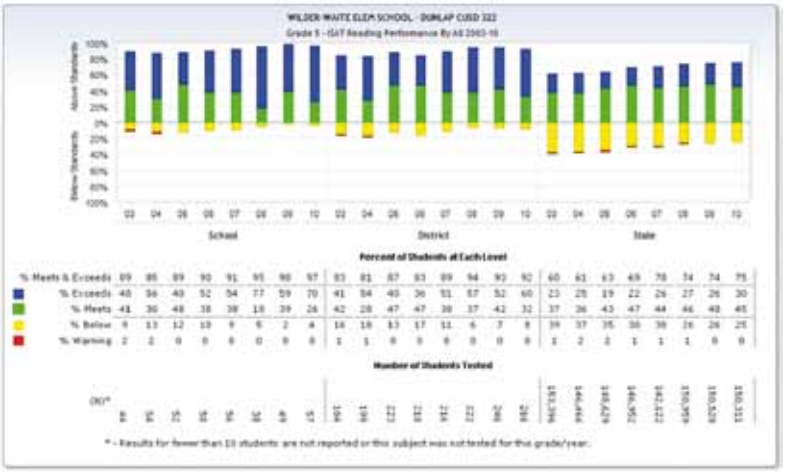
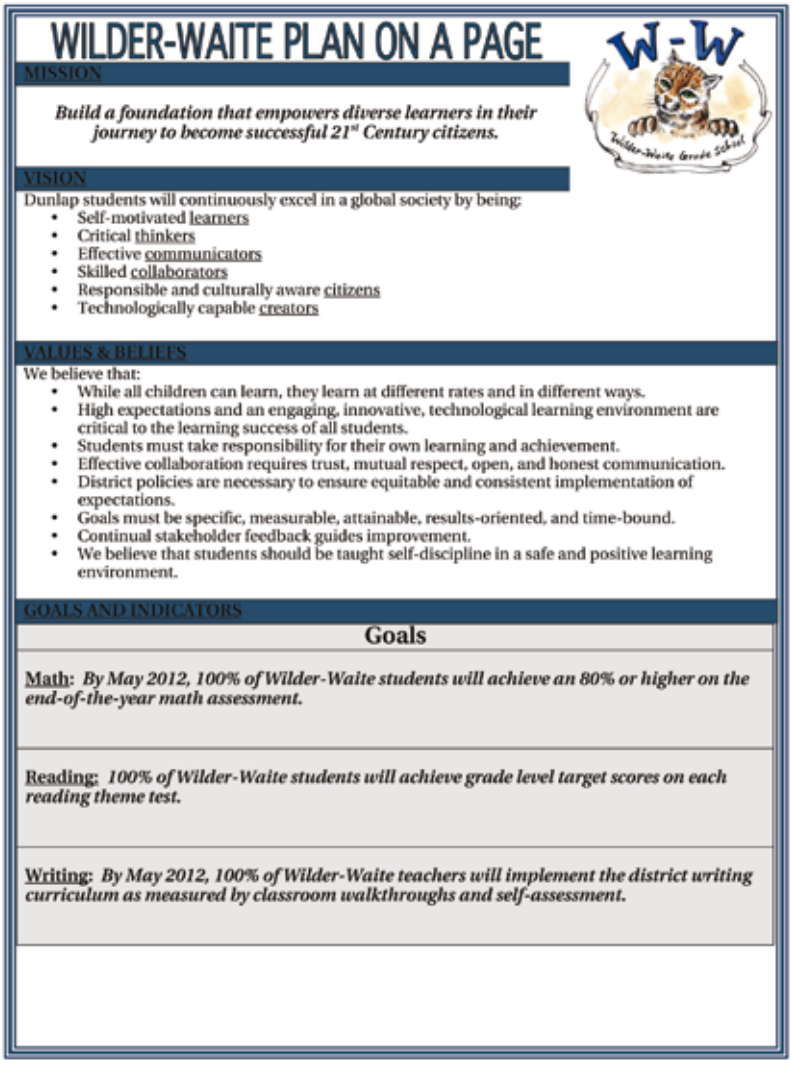


FIGURE 6:
5TH GRADE ISAT RESULTS COMPARED TO DISTRICT AND STATE

ATTACHMENT 2: STRATEGIC PLAN DOCUMENTS



WILDER-WAITE PLAN ON A PAGE

MISSION

Build a foundation that empowers diverse learners in their journey to become successful 21st Century citizens.

VISION

Dunlap students will continuously excel in a global society by being:

- Self-motivated learners
- Critical thinkers
- Effective communicators
- Skilled collaborators
- Responsible and culturally aware citizens
- Technologically capable creators

VALUES & BELIEFS

We believe that:

- While all children can learn, they learn at different rates and in different ways.
- High expectations and an engaging, innovative, technological learning environment are critical to the learning success of all students.
- Students must take responsibility for their own learning and achievement.
- Effective collaboration requires trust, mutual respect, open, and honest communication.
- District policies are necessary to ensure equitable and consistent implementation of expectations.
- Goals must be specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound.
- Continual stakeholder feedback guides improvement.
- We believe that students should be taught self-discipline in a safe and positive learning environment.

GOALS AND INDICATORS

Goals

Math: ***By May 2012, 100% of Wilder-Waite students will achieve an 80% or higher on the end-of-the-year math assessment.***

Reading: ***100% of Wilder-Waite students will achieve grade level target scores on each reading theme test.***

Writing: ***By May 2012, 100% of Wilder-Waite teachers will implement the district writing curriculum as measured by classroom walkthroughs and self-assessment.***

PLAN ON PAGE WW

Wilder-Waite Grade School

School Improvement Plan

2011-12

District Strategic Plan Summary Information Here

MISSION:

The Dunlap School Community will empower all students to excel in a global society.

VISION:

Dunlap students will continuously excel in a global society by being:

- Self-motivated learners
- Critical thinkers
- Effective communicators
- Skilled collaborators
- Responsible and culturally aware citizens
- Technologically capable creators

VALUES & BELIEFS:

We believe that:

- While all children can learn, they learn at different rates and in different ways.
- High expectations and an engaging, innovative, technological learning environment are critical to the learning success of all students.
- Students must take responsibility for their own learning and achievement.
- Effective collaboration requires trust, mutual respect, open, and honest communication.
- District policies are necessary to ensure equitable and consistent implementation of expectations.
- Goals must be specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound.

Continual stakeholder feedback guides improvement.

GOALS:

- Goal 1: To continuously improve student growth and achievement
- Goal 2: To obtain a satisfying and productive classroom and school learning environment
- Goal 3: To achieve a satisfying and productive classroom and school teaching environment
- Goal 4: To ensure a satisfying and productive partnership with families and the community
- Goal 5: To obtain efficient, effective, and equitable use of resources

SIP Goal Detail

SIP Goal # 1

1.) State the goal. (use SMART format- Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, Target date).

By May 2012, 100% of Wilder-Waite students will achieve an 80% or higher on the end-of-the-year math assessment.

2.) Describe data sources consulted and a summary analysis of the data that indicate the need for the goal.

Baseline data from end-of-year assessment administered August, 2011.

3.) Identify the correlation of the stated school improvement goal to the strategic plan.
Check all that apply:

☒ District goal 1: ***To continuously improve student growth and achievement***
☒ District goal 2: ***To obtain a satisfying and productive classroom and school learning environment.***
☐ District goal 3: ***To achieve a satisfying and productive classroom and school teaching environment.***
☐ District goal 4: ***To ensure a satisfying and productive partnership with families and the community***
☐ District goal 5: ***To obtain efficient, effective, and equitable use of resources.***

4.) Summarize how this goal will be measured. What will be the evidence of goal attainment?

Measure	Target	Date
End-of-year assessment	Baseline	August, 2011
End-of-year assessment	Increase	End of quarter 1
End-of-year assessment	Increase	End of quarter 2
End-of-year assessment	Increase	End of quarter 3
End-of-year assessment	80%	End-year assessment

Action Plan

SIP Goal # 1: *By May 2012, 100% of Wilder-Waite students will achieve an 80% or higher on the end-of-the-year math assessment.*

Description of Proposed Action/Activity (What is going to be done to address this goal?)	**Research/Rationale For Activity** (Explain how best practices and research justify this activity)	**Results** (What will be the evidence of completion of the activity?)	**Resources** (Funding Source & Cost)	**Timeline** (When will the activity occur?)
Activity # 1 of 2: Each classroom will track progress toward this goal on their classroom data center.	American Society for Quality The Baldridge Model (Plan, Do, Study, Act) 9 Habits of Highly Effective Schools	Observation of classroom data centers	Binders Bulletin board materials	School year 2011-2012
Professional Development: Continuous improvement training	American Society for Quality research	Attendance records of training	Funding needed to cover costs of substitute teachers	Fall of 2011
Activity #2 of 2: PLC teams will meet weekly to discuss the following PLC questions: • What do students need to learn? • How will we know if they learned it? • How will we respond when they do not learn? • How can we extend and enrich the learning for students who have learned?	Learning by Doing 9 Habits of Highly Effective Schools	Minutes recorded from meetings	Core curriculum Atlas curriculum map Aims Web Assessment data Interventions	During scheduled PLC time from August, 2011 to May, 2012.
Professional Development: BLT team will facilitate PLC training of staff.				

ATTACHMENT 3: EXAMPLES FROM THE BALANCED SCORECARD WW

Wilder-Waite Grade School Balanced Scorecard

Wilder-Waite Grade School Demographics, Enrollment, and Class Size, Intervention, & Discipline

Measure	Group	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Class Size (As per 6th day attendance)	Kindergarten	22,3	20,5	19,7				
	First Grade	24,3	24,7	25				
	Second Grade	24,3	23,7	23,7				
	Third Grade	23,3	22,3	24				
	Fourth Grade	23,0	23,3	20,3				
	Fifth Grade	29,0	23,3	29				
Demographics (as per 6th day attendance)	White	68,0%	69,3%					
	Black	1,0%	1,3%					
	Hispanic	2,9%	2,3%					
	Asian	25,3%	24,0%					
	Native Amer.	0,3%	1,0%					
	ELL	10,9%	10,7%					
	Special Ed.	*	8,6%					
	F/R Lunch	1,3%	2,9%					
	Mobility	15,1%	13,6%					
Overall School Enrollment (6th day attendance)	6th Day Att.	384	384	394				
Response to Intervention (collected at the end of the school year)	Tier II Entries	108	89					
	Tier II Exits	86	54					
	Tier III Entries							
	Tier III Exits							
	New IEP's	7	8					
Office Referrals by grade level	Kindergarten	1	4					
	First Grade	11	18					
	Second Grade	8	9					
	Third Grade	4	17					
	Fourth Grade	25	4					
	Fifth Grade	25	20					
Number of Suspensions and top reason for referral and top location of incident (collected end of year)	ISS	4	8					
	OSS	3	3					
	Location	Bus	Class					
	Month	Feb.	Jan.					

WILDER-WAITE GRADE SCHOOL BALANCED SCORECARD

Wilder-Waite Grade School Balanced Scorecard

Goal #1: To Continuously Improve Student Growth and Achievement

#	Measure	Grade & Subject	Historical Trend			Current	Future Targets		
			2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1.A	Increase the % of students proficient in **reading** as measured by the **ISAT meets/exceeds %**	3rd Reading	100	91	90	93	92	93	94
		4th Reading	100	96	97	94	94	95	96
		5th Reading	95	98	96	94	95	96	96
1.B	Increase the % of students proficient in **math** as measured by the **ISAT meets/exceeds %**	3rd Math	100	99	100	100	99	100	100
		4th Math	100	100	97	98	97	98	99
		5th Math	98	100	98	94	96	97	98
1.C	Increase the % of students proficient in **science** as measured by the **ISAT meets/exceeds %**	4th Science	93	98	96	98	97	97	98
1.D	Increase the % of students scoring at or above the 50th national percentile for **nonsense word fluency** as measured by **AIMSweb**.	Kind. Fluency	43	71	82	100	91	93	95
		1st Fluency	61	73	73	78	100	93	95
1.E	Increase the % of students scoring at or above the 50th national percentile for **reading fluency** as measured by **AIMSweb**.	2nd R-CBM	92	79	88	85	80	82	84
		3rd R-CBM	88	89	90	91	87	89	91
		4th R-CBM	88	82	83	92	93	95	97
		5th R-CBM	73	87	84	85	94	96	98
1.F	Increase the % of students scoring at or above the 50th national percentile for **math computation** as measured by **AIMSweb** using Spring benchmark data.	1st Math	72	69	86	N/A	88	90	92
		2nd Math	58	46	68	N/A	90	92	94
		3rd Math	65	65	67	N/A	90	92	94
		4th Math	58	51	67	N/A	72	92	94
		5th Math	42	61	69	N/A	71	74	94
1.G	Increase the % of students scoring at or above the 50th national percentile in **AIMSweb early numeracy** measures using Spring benchmark data.	K Oral Count.	66	82	79	89	92	94	96
		K Number ID	68	78	80	89	92	94	96
		K Quan Discr	66	78	80	83	85	87	89
		K Miss Numb	57	85	76	70	75	77	79

WILDER-WAITE GRADE SCHOOL BALANCED SCORECARD

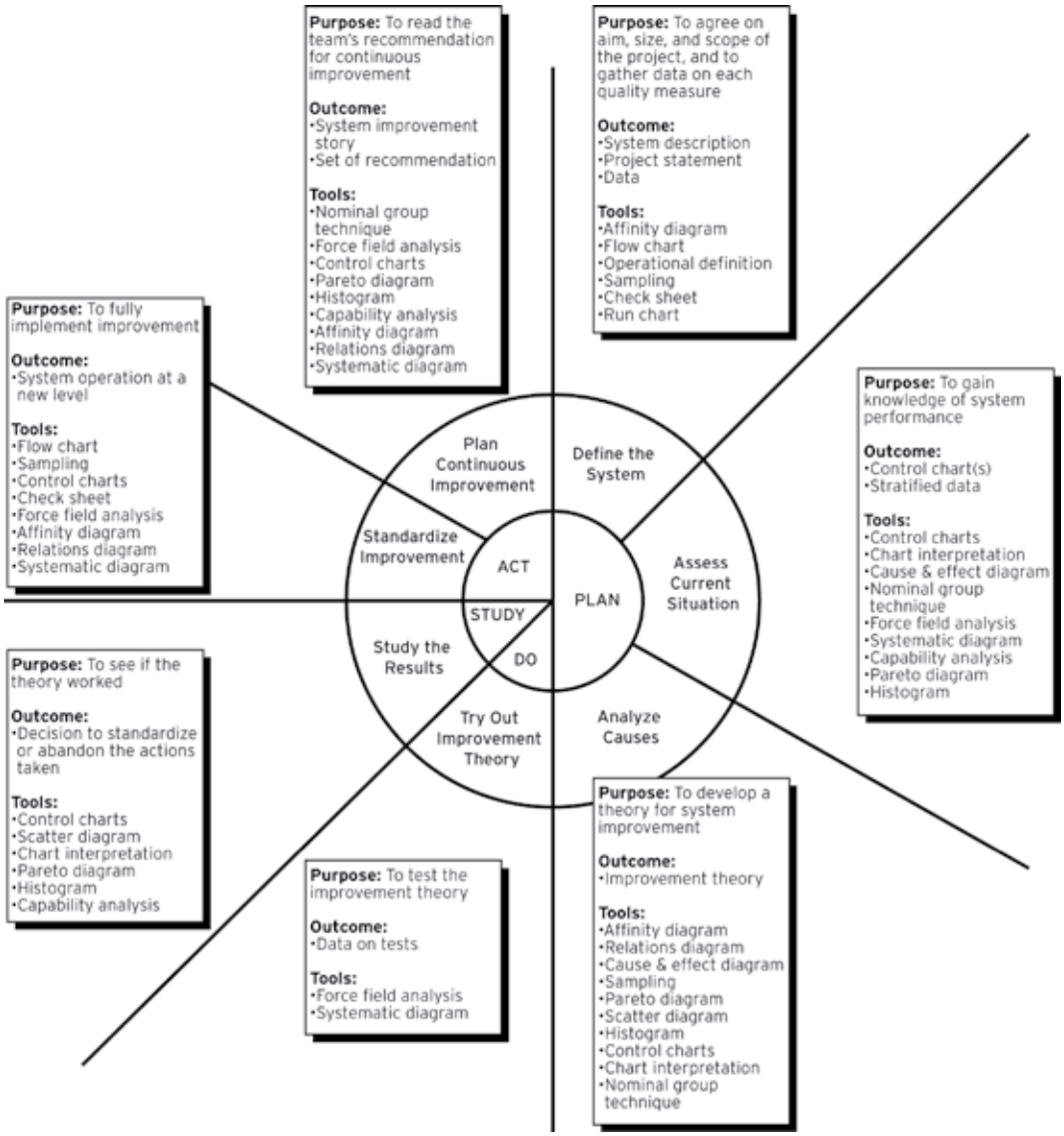
II TOOLS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

There are a lot of tools that can helps us to collaborate, to create new ideas, to collect and analyse data, to plan and to implement.
In the training with the schools we used the materials and books from PQ Systems and the ASQ. See also the examples of the schools in this publication.
We are enough here with an overview of the quality tools as showed on the web-page of the ASQ: http://asq.org/learn-about-quality/quality-tools.html

Based on the book of Nancy R. Tague's The Quality Toolbox, Second Edition, ASQ Quality Press, 2004.

Overview	Tools
Cause Analysis Tools Tips and tools for the first step to improvement: identifying the cause of a problem or situation.	**Fishbone (Ishikawa) diagram:** identifies many possible causes for an effect or problem and sorts ideas into useful categories. **Pareto chart:** shows on a bar graph which factors are more significant. **Scatter diagram:** graphs pairs of numerical data, with one variable on each axis, to help you look for a relationship.
Evaluation and Decision-Making Tools Making informed decisions and choosing the best options with a simple, objective rating system, and determining the success of a project.	**Decision matrix:** Evaluates and prioritizes a list of options, using pre-determined weighted criteria. **Multivoting:** Narrows a large list of possibilities to a smaller list of the top priorities or to a final selection; allows an item that is favored by all, but not the top choice of any, to rise to the top.
Process Analysis Tools How to identify and eliminate unnecessary process steps to increase efficiency, reduce timelines and cut costs.	**Flowchart:** A picture of the separate steps of a process in sequential order, including materials or services entering or leaving the process (inputs and outputs), decisions that must be made, people who become involved, time involved at each step and/or process measurements.
Seven Basic Quality Tools These seven tools get to the heart of implementing quality principles.	**Cause-and-effect diagram** (also called Ishikawa or fishbone chart)**:** Identifies many possible causes for an effect or problem and sorts ideas into useful categories. **Check sheet:** A structured, prepared form for collecting and analyzing data; a generic tool that can be adapted for a wide variety of purposes. **Control charts:** Graphs used to study how a process changes over time. **Histogram:** The most commonly used graph for showing frequency distributions, or how often each different value in a set of data occurs. **Pareto chart:** Shows on a bar graph which factors are more significant. **Scatter diagram:** Graphs pairs of numerical data, one variable on each axis, to look for a relationship. **Stratification:** A technique that separates data gathered from a variety of sources so that patterns can be seen (some lists replace "stratification" with "flowchart" or "run chart").

Data Collection and Analysis Tools How can you collect the data you need, and what should you do with them once they're collected?	**Check sheet:** A generic tool that can be adapted for a wide variety of purposes, the check sheet is a structured, prepared form for collecting and analyzing data. **Control chart:** A graph used to study how a process changes over time. Comparing current data to historical control limits leads to conclusions about whether the process variation is consistent (in control) or is unpredictable (out of control, affected by special causes of variation). **Histogram:** The most commonly used graph for showing frequency distributions, or how often each different value in a set of data occurs. **Scatter diagram:** A diagram that graphs pairs of numerical data, one variable on each axis, to look for a relationship. **Stratification:** A technique that separates data gathered from a variety of sources so that patterns can be seen. **Survey:** Data collected from targeted groups of people about their opinions, behavior or knowledge.
Idea Creation Tools Ways to stimulate group creativity and organize the ideas that come from it.	**Affinity diagram:** Organizes a large number of ideas into their natural relationships. **Benchmarking:** A structured process for comparing your organization's work practices to the best similar practices you can identify in other organizations, and then incorporating the best ideas into your own processes. **Brainstorming:** A method for generating a large number of creative ideas in a short period of time. **Nominal group technique:** A structured method for group brainstorming that encourages contributions from everyone.
Project Planning and Implementing Tools How to track a project's status and look for improvement opportunities.	**Gantt chart:** a bar chart that shows the tasks of a project, when each must take place, how long each will take and completion status. **PDCA Cycle (plan-do-check-act) or PDSA (plan-do-study-act):** a four-step model for carrying out change that can be repeated again and again for continuous improvement.
Seven New Management and Planning Tools Ways to promote innovation, communicate information and successfully plan major projects.	The seven MP tools, listed in an order that moves from abstract analysis to detailed planning, are: **Affinity diagram:** organizes a large number of ideas into their natural relationships. **Relations diagram:** shows cause-and-effect relationships and helps you analyze the natural links between different aspects of a complex situation. **Tree diagram:** breaks down broad categories into finer and finer levels of detail, helping you move your thinking step by step from generalities to specifics. **Matrix diagram:** shows the relationship between two, three or four groups of information and can give information about the relationship, such as its strength, the roles played by various individuals, or measurements. (see for the other three the ASQ website)



THE USE OF TOOLS IN THE PDSA IMPROVEMENT CYCLE
(PQ SYSTEMS; PROCESS AND TOOLS TRAINING, 2002)

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All schools in this publication were trained in leading continuous improvement by Dr. Jay Marino.

This book is a first-hand look inside American and Dutch schools as they share their leadership for better educational systems in the 21th century.

The school teams in this book were working in different countries, in different cultures and under different circumstances.

Collectively, they have chosen the philosophy, the approach, the process and the tools of continuous improvement as a way to work together to improve their school systems.

They hope that their stories will inspire you to improve the quality of your education system.

By working globally with continuous improvement in education, we are working to improve the future of education for our children.

The improvement journey continues!