Welcome to Wixom Elementary!

Wixom Elementary is characterized by high standards for learning in a caring environment. In 2009-2010, Wixom Elementary served 595 students in grades K-5. Our principal, Alec Bender, worked closely with a staff of 65 to create quality learning opportunities for all students. Our PTA President was Jennifer Jennings. We are happy that you are a part of the Wixom Elementary family. We invite you to read our Annual Report and call us with questions or comments at (248) 956-3400.

NCA School Improvement Plan

Walled Lake’s high schools have been accredited by NCA since their beginnings, and all middle and elementary schools have been accredited since the mid-1990’s. In May 2007, when the NCA Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Team made its three-day visit to Walled Lake, the team found a district and its schools who had long and productive histories both with strategic planning and with NCA’s school improvement models.

The QAR Team cited 13 primary strengths in the district programs. Among these strengths are the following:
- The leadership and vision of the Superintendent who has led the creation of a research-based, systematic process of improvement.
- Continuity and leadership from the Board of Education.
- Professional Learning Communities as a process of collaborative teams that support both district and site-level improvement efforts.
- A climate of trust expressed by teachers, students, parents and administrators.
- An updated curriculum and common assessment program aligned with state content expectations and with the district’s vision and goals.
- A strong desire to connect instructional and operational programs in order to ensure the district accomplishes its mission of becoming the best educational system in America.

Over the past year, Administrative Council has developed plans to address the opportunities for improvement indicated by the NCA QAR Team and the priority goals of the district’s NCA Team. Working in level-alike groups, the following administrative groups have developed plans that are currently being implemented across the district:
- All Principals: elementary, middle school, high school
- Curriculum Department
- Business Departments
- All Operations Departments: Maintenance, Transportation, Food Services
- All members of the Superintendent’s Cabinet

These plans, created and implemented by administrators, align with and support the SMART goals of the Professional Learning Communities in all schools.

Wixom Mission Statement

The staff of Wixom Elementary, in cooperation with the parents and community, will facilitate progressive learning through diverse experiences and challenges, in a safe and nurturing atmosphere, so all students will become lifelong learners who are responsible, knowledgeable and adaptable citizens.

“SMART” goals are Strategic and Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented and Time-bound. Teachers often incorporate their grade-level’s or their department’s SMART goal into their annual inquiry projects and learning fair reports.

At Wixom Elementary, the staff chose non-fiction writing as our school improvement focus in the spring of 2007. Writing Committees worked during the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years to analyze our writing data, research best practices in writing instruction and to write our Writing School Improvement Plan. Our Writing Committee and Leadership Team wrote two long-term, building-wide writing SMART Goals which we are using to measure the improvement of writing by all students. In addition, grade level teams have created short-term writing SMART Goals to focus their school improvement efforts. We are pleased to report that our students have demonstrated a growth of 23.5% building-wide on the district’s spring writing assessments over the first two years that we have collected data.

The District/System NCA Accreditation process enables Walled Lake to implement improvement strategies throughout its schools and support departments, to utilize common planning and communication processes, and to hold itself accountable for improved results, a focus on teaching and learning and a positive climate for students and staff.

Information about the standards which NCA accredited schools must meet can be found at:

The District/System Accreditation Process is summarized at:
Parent involvement continues at high level

One of the most important factors in a child’s success in school is the involvement of parents and guardians in the educational process. Parent involvement is high throughout our school district as evidenced by the fact that at the elementary level in 2009-10, 6,785 elementary students, or 96%, were represented by parents and guardians who attended parent-teacher conferences. 96% of the parents who attended conferences were parents of male students and 92% of the parents who attended conferences were parents of female students. In 2008-09, our secondary parent participation was 92%, compared to the previous year’s 97%. In analyzing a gender breakdown, there was 93% parent participation for male students and 91% parent participation for female students.

At the secondary level in 2009-10, 8,632 students, or 62%, were represented by parents and guardians who attended conferences. 62% of the parents who attended conferences were parents of male students and 62% of the parents who attended conferences were parents of female students. In 2008-09, our secondary parent participation was 63%.

A Wixom Elementary, our 2009-10 parent participation was 92%, compared to the previous year’s 97%. In analyzing a gender breakdown, there was 93% parent participation for male students and 91% parent participation for female students.

Specialized schools serve district students

In addition to the regular K-12 program, our school district provides educational alternatives and opportunities for students as well as meeting special education needs. See the “Report on Specialized Schools,” for complete information available in our school office or on the Web site at: www.wlcsd.org.

We also offered 19 college-level Advanced Placement (AP) courses within the high school curriculum. In addition, Walled Lake’s high schools had 29 students enrolled in post-secondary courses during the 2009-10 school year.

Students do well on MEAP

The students at Wixom Elementary continued to do well on the MEAP (Michigan Educational Assessment Program) tests that were administered to all third, fourth and fifth graders in the State of Michigan in October 2009. In reading, 98% of our third graders, 93% of our fourth graders and 87% of our fifth graders met or exceeded the proficient level for the State of Michigan. In mathematics, 99% of our third graders, 96% of our fourth graders and 87% of our fifth graders met or exceeded the proficient level for the State of Michigan.

The science test is only given to fifth graders, and 88% of our fifth graders met or exceeded the proficient level for the State of Michigan. Our fourth graders were given a “pilot test” in writing this year; however, the State of Michigan did not report any writing MEAP scores this year due to the “pilot test.”

MEAP scores reported through AER

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2009-2010 educational progress of your child’s school. The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school’s report contains information about student assessment, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact your school principal. The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the school Web site or you may review a copy from the school office.

Academic rigor emphasized

The Walled Lake Schools’ curriculum provides students with learning experiences based on a rigorous foundation of skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of language arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening and literature), mathematics, social studies, science, health, physical education, art, vocal and instrumental music, technology, family life education, business and world language instruction.

The district’s mission statement promises all students the opportunity to learn to their maximum potential and to graduate as “...a caring, knowledgeable, responsible citizen” as a result of a sound K-12 educational program based on well-defined, highly articulated benchmarks. In addition, the district’s strategic plan specifies a K-12 articulated and interdisciplinary curriculum and a five-year cycle for reviewing and revising curriculum. The benchmarks in all core and encore academic areas are now being implemented in classrooms throughout the district. The benchmarks are supported by carefully researched-based instructional materials including textbooks, technology and other resources.

Unit plans, further aligning benchmarks, text materials and assessments have been developed in all curriculum areas. Copies of benchmarks, course descriptions and instructional materials are available on the district’s curriculum Web site: curriculum.wlcsd.org.

Graduation rate reported

Walled Lake Schools’ 2008-09 graduation rate, the most current available, is 87.765 %. The state graduation rate is 75.23 %.

The Michigan Department of Education has developed a new method for calculating the graduation rate using a four-year, cohort formula. This system tracks students from the year they enter ninth grade, until they graduate.

Our students wrote wonderful stories that were performed at two assemblies in April by the “Brainstormers” theater company.

Our students loved the cotton candy at the PTA’s “Cabin Fever Reliever” Spring Fair in March.
Points of pride

Active and generous PTA providing resources and programs for the school:
- Welcome Back Picnic
- Assemblies and author visit
- Books for the Literacy Library
- Charity volleyball game benefiting the Muscular Dystrophy Association
- Market Day
- Science Night
- Scrip program
- Box Tops for Education
- Bingo Night
- Reflections program
- Field Day
- Walk-A-Thon for Document Cameras and Epson Projectors for the classrooms
- Cabin Fever Reliever Spring Fair
- Scholarships for students in need for fifth grade camp and field trips

Dedicated staff members encouraging academic and social growth beyond the classroom:
- After-School Tutoring Program at the Village Apartments
- Literacy Nights
- Family Math Night
- Book fairs
- Authors’ teas
- Coffee House poetry readings
- Literacy Luau
- Third grade Rock and Mineral Museum
- Fourth Grade Wax Museum
- Multiplication Baseball Tournament
- Post Office program
- Charity volleyball game
- Field trips: Ford Rouge factory tour, Kensington Farm, Cranbrook, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, downtown Wixom, Greenfield Village and Walled Lake Outdoor Center
- Fifth Grade Camp
- Art Shows at the Educational Services Center
- Positive Behavior Support Assemblies
- Student Council
- Safety Patrol
- Wolf Report newspaper published by students
- Count Your Steps Program
- DARE Program
- Lakes Area Youth Assistance Awards

Giving Back to the Community:
Wixom families and staff members have once again generously donated their time and resources to a variety of charitable causes including: Hospitality House Toy and Gift Drive, sponsoring families for the holidays and the Volleyball For A Cause fundraiser to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

After-School Tutoring Program at the Village Apartments:
One of our new programs this year was the After School Tutoring Program at the Village Apartments. This program was offered every Monday and Wednesday after school in the clubhouse at the Village Apartments complex. Students in grades 1-5 who needed extra help received small group instruction in reading, writing and mathematics from Wixom teachers. In addition, National Honor Society students from Western High School offered homework help. Parent presentations on how to help your child at home were offered in English and Spanish.

Student Council:
Student Council organized a school-wide coin collection for Dick Purdan’s Radiothon for the Salvation Army Bed and Bread Club which feeds the hungry and the homeless. The Student Council officers presented the money during the WOMC Radiothon at Oakland Mall in February. Wixom Elementary raised a total of $2,627.69, which was the largest amount collected by any school in the Radiothon. As a result, WOMC thanked the students in our school by visiting the school with prizes for all of the students along with a school-wide pizza party.

Student Instructional Planning Process (SIPP):
This year we implemented the new district-wide Student Instructional Planning Process (SIPP) at Wixom Elementary. Each grade level analyzed student achievement data to identify at-risk learners. Then the grade level teams developed small group classroom interventions that were targeted to meet the needs of our at-risk learners. The progress of the students was monitored throughout the year. If individual students were still struggling, individual intervention plans were developed.

Teacher to Teacher Project:
The Wixom Elementary third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers took part in three half-day literacy workshops. The teachers learned about the best practices for setting up Reader’s and Writer’s workshops in the classroom. Then they spent time observing a teacher who had fully implemented these practices in her classroom. These workshops allowed teachers to exchange ideas with their colleagues, and this led to the implementation of these innovative practices in the classroom.

Positive Behavior Support Program:
The 2009-2010 school year was the second year for the Positive Behavior Support Program at Wixom Elementary. During monthly assemblies the students learned about our three guiding principles of respect, responsibility and safety. The children learned building-wide procedures for all aspects of their school day including the classroom, the cafeteria, the playground, the hallway and the bus. We implemented new Positive Acknowledgement Tickets this year to recognize students who are successfully following our school guidelines. Once a week several students were chosen to appear on our video, “Wixom TV News,” to share examples of classmates who demonstrate respect, responsibility and safety.

Multicultural Education:
We celebrated Diversity Week at Wixom in November which was highlighted by a kick-off assembly with presentations by 15 students about their cultural background. Hundreds of students created “Pizza-Me” projects about their family’s cultural background which were displayed around the school as well as at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration in January. We were proud that our fifth graders sang so beautifully at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration!

Parent Involvement:
We are proud to have an active group of volunteers who support our instructional program. Parents, grandparents and community volunteers worked with small groups of students in all subject areas throughout the year. Parent volunteers coordinated and held a school-wide Variety Show performed both at Wixom Elementary and on stage at Walled Lake Western High School. We also have two parents who serve on our School Leadership Team. These parents act as liaisons between our School Leadership Team and our parent community.

Staff Members and Parents Receive Special Recognition:
This year kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Michelle Black, was selected as the Elementary Teacher of the Year for the Walled Lake Consolidated Schools. She was honored at a special ceremony at Oakland Schools in May. Fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Margaret Bankus, was honored by the Wixom Elementary PTA with the Michigan PTSA Honorary Life Membership Award for outstanding service to our PTA and school at the PTSA Council Awards Ceremony in May. Second grade teacher, Mrs. Lindsay Johnson, received the Walled Lake Schools’ Local Hero Peacekeeper Award at the Board of Education meeting in June to recognize her leadership role in starting the Positive Behavior Support Program at Wixom. Parent volunteer, Mrs. Martha Vargas, received the Walled Lake Schools’ Friend of Diversity Award at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration in January. Mrs. Vargas volunteered throughout the year for our After-School Tutoring Program as our liaison for Spanish speaking parents.

March is Reading Month:
Our theme for this year’s March is Reading Month celebration was “If you read the time... Mr. Bender will do the time!” The students did lots of at-home reading during the month of March as a result of Mr. Bender’s challenge. He challenged the boys and girls to read a grand total of 300,000 minutes at home during the month of March. It turned out that the students beat his challenge by almost 80,000 minutes by reading a grand total of 379,535 minutes at home. Mr. Bender lived up to his part of the bargain and spent the day in “Jail” wearing a Cat In The Hat costume as he read Dr. Seuss books to the students and answered their mail.

The students beat Mr. Bender’s At-Home Reading Challenge in March and he had to spend a day “in jail” wearing a Cat in the Hat costume.
Leadership team oversees the school improvement process

During the 2009-2010 school year the Wixom Elementary Leadership Team continued to oversee the school improvement process. Second grade teacher, Mrs. Jennifer Mifsud, and third grade teacher, Mrs. Cathy Russel, served as the co-chairpersons of the Leadership Team. Other members of the team included representatives from every grade level, representatives from different content areas, our principal, Mr. Bender, and two parent representatives, Mrs. Mary Larsen and Mrs. Martha Vargas.

Our Writing Committee met on a monthly basis during the 2009-2010 school year to plan the staff development activities focusing on the three major strategies within our Writing School Improvement Plan. We utilized many of the instructional strategies from books written by Regie Routman and Barry Lane in our staff development sessions. The three major strategies within our Writing School Improvement Plan include: effectively writing to a prompt; effectively revising writing pieces; and students taking ownership and accountability for their own writing through conferencing and the utilization of rubrics.

The Leadership Team coordinated the SMART Goal process at our school. We have two building-wide writing SMART Goals which we are using to measure the success of our Writing School Improvement Plan. In addition, each of our grade level teams wrote short-term SMART Goals for the improvement of student achievement in writing for two cycles from November-January and January-May. Data was collected and analyzed for both of these cycles. Grade level teams and content area teachers presented their SMART Goal strategies and results at the second annual Wixom Elementary Data Fair in June 2010.

Our Leadership Team spent several months this year preparing for our first Peer Review Visit which was held in March 2010. Our Visiting Team was co-chaired by Suzanne Cowles, principal of Keith Elementary, and Jill Segal, Supervisor of the Transportation Department, and it included seven educators from around the school district. During the Peer Review Visit presentation, our Leadership Team members presented our writing school improvement plans, our building-wide SMART Goals, information on the progress of building a Professional Learning Community at Wixom Elementary, information about our new Data Team and the first two years of our writing school improvement data. We were pleased to report that all students and all of our subgroups demonstrated significant growth on the district writing assessments. With the data that we had collected over the first two years of our plan as of March 2010, our building-wide results demonstrated a growth of 23.5% on the district spring writing assessments.

However, we noted a significant achievement gap with lower writing scores from student groups such as Economically Disadvantaged students, African American students and Limited English Proficient students. We also noted that there is an achievement gap by gender with boys scoring lower than girls on writing assessments especially in grade 4 and grade 5. The Leadership Team will focus on developing strategies to improve the writing achievement of all of the above-noted student groups during the 2010-2011 school year.

Our parent representatives co-authored two letters with Mr. Bender to our Wixom families about our school improvement focus on writing, the importance of reading aloud to your child and plans for at-home writing and reading over the summer.

Data team formed at Wixom:
During the 2009-2010 school year a new Data Team was formed at Wixom Elementary. The primary responsibilities of the Data Team are to access and analyze electronic data on student achievement. Data Team members utilized data from our school district’s Mastery Manager system to prepare reports for each grade level team to analyze. In addition, Data Team members helped to prepare the reports on our building-wide writing SMART Goals for our Peer Review Visit in March 2010.

Challenges We Face

▶ Meet students’ needs including the special needs of our bilingual students.
▶ Continue to develop and implement our school improvement plan focusing on writing.
▶ Develop in-classroom strategies to close the achievement gap in writing for different subgroups in our school.
▶ Provide more support for academically at-risk students by building stronger connections with our parent community.
▶ Provide training for parents on ways they can work with their children at home on academics and other skills.
▶ Continue to increase MEAP scores.
▶ Continue the development of instructional practices within the Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop model.
▶ Continue the process of building a Professional Learning Community (PLC) as defined by Richard DuFour’s model.
▶ Continue to develop and implement our Positive Behavior Support program.

Our fifth graders presented their musical, “The Blue and the Gray” in March under the direction of music teacher, Ms. Leigh Emmett.

Tyler Beck had fun creating shapes at PTA Science Night in November.

Wixom Elementary School’s Annual Report is published each year and distributed to parents and local residents.

Questions and comments may be addressed to:
Mr. Alec Bender, Principal
Wixom Elementary School
301 N. Wixom Road
Wixom, MI 48393
Phone: 248-956-3400
FAX: 248-956-3405

Nondiscrimination Policy

In compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans with Disability Act of 1990, it is the policy of the Walled Lake Consolidated School District that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, age, disability, height, weight, political belief, military service, marital status or genetic information be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination during any program or activity or in employment. For information contact the District Compliance Officer, at 248-956-2023.