Welcome to Wixom Elementary!

Wixom Elementary is characterized by high standards for learning in a caring environment. In 2010-2011, Wixom Elementary served 587 students in grades K-5. Our principal, Alec Bender, worked closely with a staff of 61 to create quality learning opportunities for all students. Our PTA President was Kim Galecki. 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-1990s. 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’s 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 standards 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 two years, 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. “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. Walled Lake Schools participate in a peer review process during which building school improvement plans and District level NCA plans can be shared with and reviewed by visiting teacher/administrator teams.

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.

At Wixom Elementary, the staff chose non-fiction writing as our school improvement focus in the spring of 2007. Writing Committees worked during the last three 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.

Information about the standards which NCA accredited schools must meet can be found at: http://www.advanc-ed.org/districts.

The District/System Accreditation Process is summarized at: http://www.advanc-ed.org/accreditation/district_accreditation/accreditation_process/.

Kindergarten teacher, Alexis Megyesi, worked with her students on writing.
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 2010-11, 6,656 elementary students, or 64%, were represented by parents and guardians who attended parent-teacher conferences. Ninety-eight percent of the parents who attended conferences were parents of male students and 97% of the parents who attended conferences were parents of female students. In 2009-10, our secondary parent participation was 62%.

At Wixom Elementary, our 2010-11 parent participation was 94%, compared to the previous year’s 92%. In analyzing a gender breakdown, there was 94% parent participation for male students and 94% parent participation for female students.

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, 2010. In reading, 90% of our third graders, 93% of our fourth graders, and 93% of our fifth graders met or exceeded the proficient level for the State of Michigan. In mathematics, 100% of our third graders, 96% of our fourth graders, and 94% 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 95% of our fifth graders met or exceeded the proficient level for the State of Michigan. There was a new MEAP writing test administered this year to our fourth graders. Fifty-six percent of our fourth graders met or exceeded the proficient level for the State of Michigan. Writing will continue to be an important school improvement focus at Wixom Elementary.

MEAP scores reported through AER

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2010-2011 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.

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.wlcasd.org.

We also offered 21 college-level Advanced Placement (AP) courses within the high school curriculum. In addition, Walled Lake’s high schools had 37 students enrolled in post-secondary courses during the 2010-11 school year.

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.wlcasd.org.

Graduation rate reported

Walled Lake Schools’ 2009-10 graduation rate, the most current available, is 89.2%. The 2008-09 graduation rate was 87.765%.

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.
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 Camp Casey
- Market Day
- Science Night
- Scrip program
- Box Tops for Education
- Bingo Night
- Reflections program
- Field Day
- Walk-A-Thon to support literacy library and future walking path
- 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
- 3rd Grade Rock and Mineral Museum
- 4th Grade Wax Museum
- Multiplication Baseball Tournament
- Post Office program
- Charity volleyball game
- Field trips: Ford Rouge Factory Tour, Kensington Farm, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Downtown Wixom, Greenfield Village and Walled Lake Outdoor Center
- Fifth Grade Camp
- Art Shows at the Educational Services Center
- Student Council
- Safety Patrol
- Count Your Steps Program
- TEAM Program

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 throughout the year, including the Hospitality House Toy and Gift Drive, sponsoring families for the holidays, the coin collection for the Salvation Army’s Bed and Bread Club and the Volleyball For A Cause fundraiser to benefit Camp Casey.

After School Tutoring Program at the Village Apartments: One of our programs this year was the After School Tutoring Program at the Village Apartments. This program was offered every Monday and Wednesday after school during the second semester 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: The Student Council organized a school-wide coin collection for the Salvation Army’s Bed and Bread Club. A check for $2,007.97 was presented to the Salvation Army during the WJR Radiothon at Oakland Mall in February. The Student Council also raised money to adopt an endangered panda from the World Wildlife Fund, and they presented an Earth Day assembly to help our school earn the Green School designation. Other charitable events sponsored by the Student Council included collecting toys for the Hospitality House’s Annual Holiday Gift Drive and selling Smencils and Weepuls to raise money for Camp Casey.

Student Instructional Planning Process (SIPP): This year we continued the 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 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, which led to the implementation of these innovative practices in the classroom.

Positive Behavior Support Program: The 2010-2011 school year was the third year for the Positive Behavior Support Program at Wixom. We continued to emphasize our three guiding principles of respect, responsibility, and safety. The children learned and reviewed building-wide procedures for all aspects of their school day. We continued the 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 in November in a very special way. We were honored to have Vincent York and the Jazzistry program as “artists in residence” at our school for a week thanks to a grant from Target and sponsorship by the Wixom Elementary PTA. The students learned about the history of music, American history, and African American history through jazz and other types of music. We were proud that our fifth graders sang so beautifully at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration in January!

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. Several of our parents ran our Literacy Library spending countless hours reshelving books and working on the electronic cataloging of our collection. A group of parents served on our Title I Parent Advisory Committee. 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: First grade teacher, Theresa Scussel, was selected as the Teacher of the Year for Wixom Elementary School. The Wixom Elementary PTA presented a PTSA Honorary Lifetime Membership Award for outstanding service to our PTA and school to parent volunteer Carol Hood, and Karen Paul received the Michigan PTSA Distinguished Service Award for her many years of dedicated service to our PTA and school. Our PTA also presented PTSA Merit Awards to Cathy Russsel and Michelle Lyon. In May, kindergarten teacher, Carrie O’Connell, and third grade teacher, Kristen Gauthier, participated along with their students in a unique opportunity with the company that publishes our mathematics program Everyday Mathematics. Mrs. O’Connell and Mrs. Gauthier and their students were videotaped during math lessons by a professional video crew; the videos will appear later this summer on a national staff development Web site for Everyday Mathematics that will be viewed by teachers around the country.

March is Reading Month: Our theme for this year’s March is Reading Month celebration was “Go Blue with Mr. Bender!” 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 over 90,000 minutes by reading a grand total of 392,111 minutes at home. Mr. Bender lived up to his part of the bargain and had his hair and mustache spray painted blue! He then spent the day reading to the students and singing “the blues” as he played the piano.

Wixom Elementary becomes a Green School: Our new Green School Committee planned a number of “Earth friendly” projects this year to earn the designation as an official State of Michigan Green School in May. Our PTA actively supported our Green School recycling plan with the purchase of recycling bins for the lobby of our school for plastic bottles, batteries, printer cartridges, and cell phones. We also began curbside recycling of plastic along with our existing recycling of newspapers and paper. The Student Council also made major contributions to the Green School project by adopting an endangered animal and presenting an Earth Day assembly for the school.
Some fifth graders with all of their gear at the Outdoor Center in March for 5th Grade Camp.

Our Student Council sold “smencils” and horse-shoes to raise money for Camp Casey, a horse camp for children with cancer in April.

Mr. Bender and the Student Council presented our “big check” for $2,000.97 to the Jr. Bed and Bread Club at the Radiothon at Oakland Mall in February.

Two first graders had fun during our PTA Funky Fall Fund Walk in October.

Our Student Council collected toys and gifts for Hospitality House before the holidays.

Two fourth graders in their historical costumes during the 4th Grade Wax Museum.

Band leader, Vincent York, brought the “Jazzistry” Program to our school in November. He is pictured here with some kindergartners from Mrs. O'Connell’s class.
Leadership team oversees the school improvement process

During the 2010-2011 school year, the Wixom Elementary Leadership Team continued to oversee the school improvement process. Second grade teacher, Mrs. Jennifer Mifsud, and fifth 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 2010-2011 school year to do the research for a new strategy within our Writing School Improvement Plan. The new strategy focuses on oral language development, vocabulary development, and guided writing. The three other 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 February-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 third annual Wixom Elementary Data Fair in June 2011.

Our Leadership Team spent several months this year preparing for our second Peer Review Visit which was held in May 2011. Our Visiting Team included Suzanne Cowles, former principal of Keith Elementary, and Jill Segal, Supervisor of the Transportation Department. During the Peer Review Visit presentation, our Leadership Team co-chairpersons and our principal presented our MEAP data in all content areas as predetermined by the Administration and Board of Education. Students are assigned to buildings by specific street address and geographical areas as predetermined by the Administration and Board of Education.

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Our parent representatives co-authored a letter 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.

Wixom Elementary data team:

The Data Team at Wixom Elementary consists of one representative from each grade level. 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.

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.
- Implement the Mathematics Workshop model in order to better meet the needs of all levels of students in mathematics.
- 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.

How students are assigned to the school

Students are assigned to buildings by specific street address and geographical areas as predetermined by the Administration and Board of Education.

Wixom Elementary earned the status of being a Michigan Green School in May 2011. Student Council President Mikey Kilmurray and Mr. Bender received our Green School flag at a ceremony at Oakland Schools.

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

Questions and comments may be addressed to:

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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.