

**DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLAN
for
LITTLETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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PERFORMANCE GOALS, ANALYSIS OF DATA, AND
ACTION PRIORITIES FOR 2004
READING

I. Performance Goals

A. AYP Goals

1. **Yes:** The District met state 2003 AYP goals for elementary district population and the subgroups of Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, White, Limited English Proficient, and Students with Disabilities. AYP goals were achieved for district middle school population and all subgroups with the exception of Students with Disabilities. AYP goals for district high school population and all subgroups were achieved, using the Safe Harbor provision for the subgroup of Students with Disabilities.
2. **No:** The 2003 AYP goals were not achieved at the middle school level for the subgroup of Students with Disabilities. The goal for 2004 is to increase middle level reading performance of 65.14 percent partially proficient, proficient, and advanced by 8.47 percent to reach the state AYP benchmark of 73.61 percent.

B. Other District Goals

1. **Goal #1:** The 2004 district goal is to achieve one year's growth in one year's time for the total population as demonstrated by cohort group performance of proficient or advanced on CSAP.
2. **Goal #2:**
District-wide, 53 percent of the students scoring at the 95th percentile and above on the verbal section of the CogAT test administered to 3rd and 5th graders scored Advanced on the CSAP reading exam. The goal for 2004 is to increase the percentage from 53 percent to 63 percent.
District-wide, 55 percent of the students scoring at the 95th percentile and above on the verbal section of the CogAT test administered to 7th graders scored Advanced on the CSAP reading exam. The goal for 2004 is to increase the percentage from 55 percent to 65 percent.
3. **Goal #3:** The goal for Students with Disabilities at elementary level is to reduce the 26.7 percent of students in the unsatisfactory category to 20 percent by 2004; at the high school level, to reduce the 30.9 percent of students in the unsatisfactory to 23.9 percent by 2004.

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Reading**

4. **Goal #4:** The district goal for the Limited English Proficient subgroup is to increase by 5 percent the number of students scoring proficient or advanced at each level: from 30.7 percent to 35.7 percent at elementary; from 18.7 percent to 23.7 percent at middle; and from 15.5 percent to 20.5 percent at high school by 2004.

II. Analysis of Data and Description of Action Priorities for 2003-2004**A. AYP Goals****1. Subgroup: Middle School Students with Disabilities****a. Analyze Data**

Students with Disabilities demonstrate a pattern of performing approximately 40 percentile points or more below overall district scores on CSAP. Comparable data are not available using ITBS scores, as the exemption rules for these students are different on the ITBS. Each student's progress is tracked through an Individual Educational Plan (IEP), and typically progress is made on annual goals. However, IEP goals are based on the student's developmental level and may not be focused toward grade-level curriculum. As the CSAP reading test is composed of expected grade-level items, students are being presented with the need to respond to items for which they may not have received instruction. It is expected that this is a significant factor contributing to current performance levels. In addition, special education teachers are sometimes more versed in teaching students compensatory strategies than in teaching students how to read, especially at the secondary level. Another factor likely influencing student performance in reading is the lack of reading materials in the content areas that accommodate various levels of ability. Consequently, students do not have adequate opportunities to practice and improve reading skills specific to grade level essential learnings.

b. Describe Action Priorities

- The district will initiate a plan to define essential grade level learning objectives. This will provide special educators a path for moving Students with Disabilities more quickly to grade-level curriculum in reading when feasible.
- Special education staff will be provided staff development in proven strategies for instruction to students demonstrating below grade level skills.
- The district disaggregation subcommittee will continue to investigate areas of discrepant performance, potential reasons, and recommended responses.
- General and special educators will be provided information on typical characteristics of Students with Disabilities as a reference for instructional planning.

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Reading

- Alternative service delivery models, in addition to current effective models and instructional practices, for special education will be explored for possible implementation, including models to maximize instructional time and effectively collaborate with general education staff.
- A focus on non-linguistic representation, a strategy particularly helpful to students with processing difficulties, will be emphasized in district staff development.
- Staff development in multi-sensory approaches to reading will be continued and expanded for general and special education staff.
- Provide funds and coordinate purchase of leveled materials to meet the needs of students with varying reading abilities, beginning with middle school and adding other levels as funds allow.
- A half-time instructional coach specializing in assistance to at-risk learners will support general and special educators in implementing proven instructional strategies, including differentiated instruction.

B. Other District Goals

1. **Goal #1:** The 2004 district goal is to achieve one year's growth in one year's time for the total population as demonstrated by cohort group performance of proficient or advanced on CSAP.

a. Analyze Data

Seven years of CSAP data in reading demonstrate a consistent pattern of strength in reading with students achieving one year or more growth in one year's time. In addition, data from ITBS given at grades 3, 5, and 7 show that students meet or exceed their predicted scores in reading and generally perform 20-25 percentile points above the national average. Scores from the American College Test (ACT) given to all 11th graders also show reading performance consistently above both state and national averages.

b. Describe Action Priorities

- Continue to develop deep alignment of taught and tested curricula through analysis of CSAP item maps and released items.
- Continue current Early Intervention program for grades K-3.
- Establish a literacy committee to develop recommendations for a literacy framework for grades 4-8 that incorporates best practices from research.
- Provide funds and coordinate purchase of leveled materials to meet the needs of students with varying reading abilities, beginning with middle school level and adding other levels as funds allow.

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Reading

- Continue support to classroom teachers from instructional coaches in implementing effective reading instruction practices.
- Implement revised language arts curriculum that more clearly distinguishes the reading strands of purposes, process, and elements.

2. Goal #2:

District-wide, 53 percent of the students scoring at the 95th percentile and above on the verbal section of the CogAT test administered to 3rd and 5th graders scored Advanced on the CSAP reading exam. The goal for 2004 is to increase the percentage from 53 percent to 63 percent.

District-wide, 55 percent of the students scoring at the 95th percentile and above on the verbal section of the CogAT test administered to 7th graders scored Advanced on the CSAP reading exam. The goal for 2004 is to increase the percentage from 55 percent to 65 percent.

a. Analyze Data

Littleton Public Schools expects elementary and middle school students who score at the 95th percentile and above on the verbal section of the CogAT test to score Advanced on the CSAP reading exam.

Trend data hovering around 50 percent confirms a discrepancy in performance. Given the overall high performance of students in Littleton on the CSAP reading exam, this is even more perplexing. The performance level is also significantly different from the performance in math, adding another puzzling factor. Possible reasons why students might not be performing at the Advanced level may include a lack of understanding of their characteristics as verbally advanced learners, grouping practices, access to accelerated curriculum, involvement in appropriately challenging literature materials, and exposure to instructional strategies that engage them in the learning process.

b. Describe Action Priorities

- Implement staff development plans around:
 - Characteristics of verbally advanced learners.
 - Literature selections with language that is rich, varied, accurate, precise, complex, and exciting; open to multiple interpretations; and cognitively challenging.
 - Shared inquiry method through Junior Great Books training.
 - Socratic Seminars.

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Reading

- Use district literacy support to infuse critical thinking skills into the Language Arts curriculum.
 - Provide information on individual g/t student CSAP scores to school sites.
 - Implement grouping and acceleration practices that move students into the next grade level curriculum targets.
- 3. Goal #3:** The goal for Students with Disabilities at elementary level is to reduce the 26.7 percent of students in the unsatisfactory category to 20 percent by 2004; at the high school level, to reduce the 30.9 percent of students in the unsatisfactory to 23.9 percent by 2004.

a. Analyze Data

Analysis at the elementary level and high school level reveals issues similar to that described for middle school. In addition, while special education teachers at the elementary level are more likely to have strategies for teaching students to read, there is a question about whether scheduling patterns at the school sites provide sufficient additional or coordinated instructional time in reading for Students with Disabilities. At the high school level, the significant requirements for difficult content reading in course work result in dilemmas for students who have very weak reading skills. The course material may be too difficult for independent reading, yet modifications to assignments depends upon both the availability of comparable content materials at a lower reading level and the ability to satisfy course requirements while differentiating instruction.

b. Describe Action Priorities

- All action priorities described in section II-A-1-b apply to Goal #4.
- Review data on general and special education reading schedules at the elementary level to determine if instructional time needs modification.
- Provide funds and coordinate purchase of leveled materials to meet the needs of students with varying reading abilities, beginning with middle school level and adding other levels as funds allow.
- Provide staff development in using rich and engaging literature selections while also instructing in specific reading skills.

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Reading**

4. **Goal #4:** The district goal for the Limited English Proficient subgroup is to increase by 5 percent the number of students scoring proficient or advanced at each level: from 30.7 percent to 35.7 percent at elementary; from 18.7 percent to 23.7 percent at middle; and from 15.5 percent to 20.5 percent at high school by 2004.

a. Analyze Data

CSAP data on English Language Learners indicate that test performance of this subgroup tends to decline going from grade 3 to grade 10. It is expected that the increasing expectations for content related vocabulary on the CSAP contribute to this pattern. Vocabulary skills for this subgroup are typically quite discrepant from the general population. Literacy assessment data for the primary grades show stronger performance, and English Language Learners (ELL) who start kindergarten in LPS and stay through grade 3 perform at or near grade level. At the secondary level, particularly high school, ELL students tend to seek out peers from the same culture and by isolating themselves, they have less opportunity to informally improve vocabulary skills. In addition, many secondary ELL students have interruptions or gaps in the continuity of their school experiences.

b. Describe Action Priorities

- The district will initiate a plan to define essential grade level learning objectives. This will provide English-as-a-Second Language teachers a path for moving ELL students more quickly to grade level curriculum in reading.
- Continue reading instruction emphasis on vocabulary and strategies for comprehension.
- Examine assigned reading materials to determine if the literature is sufficiently diverse to engage culturally different students.
- The district disaggregation subcommittee will continue to investigate areas of discrepant performance, potential reasons, and recommended responses.
- A continued focus on nonlinguistic representation and sheltered English will be used in staff development on developing student vocabulary and English language proficiency.
- A half-time instructional coach specializing in assistance to at-risk learners will support general and special educators and ELL teachers in implementing instructional strategies.
- The district ESL facilitator and director of secondary education will work with high school staff on strategies to reduce the isolation of ELL students.

**PERFORMANCE GOALS, ANALYSIS OF DATA, AND
ACTION PRIORITIES FOR 2004
WRITING**

I. Performance Goals**A. AYP Goals**

NA

B. Other District Goals

1. **Goal #1:** To improve the average performance of our students in writing by more than one year's growth in one year's time on the writing portion of the CSAP by 2005.
2. **Goal #2:** To increase the percentage of male students districtwide performing at proficient or above on the CSAP writing test in 2005 from 62 percent to 74 percent while at the same time sustaining the performance of female students.

II. Analysis of Data and Description of Action Priorities for 2003-2004**A. AYP Goals**

NA

B. Other District Goals

1. **Goal #1:** To improve the average performance of LPS students in writing by more than one year's growth in one year's time on the writing portion of the CSAP by 2005.

a. Analyze Data

While LPS students generally perform at higher levels than students in Colorado and across the nation, continued improvement is expected. Additionally, it is a concern that writing scores are significantly lower than reading scores. Some LPS schools show more consistent growth in writing than other schools. It is evident that students continue to struggle in areas such as grammar and conventions, paragraph writing, fluency, and vocabulary. The new student assessment management system will provide data to examine performance at a greater depth than ever before. There is also more knowledge and rationale for effective writing strategies than has been previously available to improve writing instruction. However, while constructs for writing instruction and assessment are in place in all schools, there is not full and consistent implementation across the

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Writing

district. Therefore, the district is still moving toward effective assessment of student writing and the ability to diagnose problem areas. There is also indication that a higher standard is appropriate and necessary on curricular writing strands to improve student performance.

b. Describe Action Priorities

- Continue to provide focused and on-going staff development in exemplary writing process practices, focused feedback, and conferencing.
 - Monitor and support implementation of effective writing process and practices.
 - Study the instructional priorities used by schools that are performing at high levels and expand those practices to other schools.
 - Focus on integrating writing across the curriculum.
 - Focus on a district-wide ethic of high and progressive expectations related to student writing from grade level to grade level.
 - Facilitate the understanding and use of writing exemplars, curricular area writing prompts, and common rubrics that have been developed.
 - Define a process or system for regular review of student writing at each school.
 - Begin guided practice of the revised curriculum and provide staff development for effective instructional strategies around the revised curriculum.
2. **Goal #2:** To increase the percentage of male students districtwide performing at proficient or above on the CSAP writing test in 2005 from 62 percent to 74 percent while at the same time sustaining the performance of our female students.

a. Analyze Data

The discrepancy in performances between boys and girls on the writing portion of the CSAP averages 16 percent from grade 3 through grade 10 and widens as students progress from grade to grade, with a peak difference of 24 points at grade 8. Boys tend to perform better when asked to write short, technical responses, rather than more elaborate and descriptive writing. Schools indicate that they are finding that literature and writing topics presently used curricularly and instructionally are not engaging or of interest to boys. At present, there is indication that there are limited materials available to effectively address these issues of interest and engagement. Schools are beginning to realize the

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Writing**

importance of this issue, but it has not been an area of specific instructional focus in the past. While boys show a reluctance to write and demonstrate significant weakness in a number of mechanics and conceptual areas related to writing, there is little evidence that instruction is differentiated to better meet the learning needs of boys.

b. Describe Action Priorities

- Continue to raise awareness of the issues around the performance of boys through staff development activities in key district groups.
- Develop courses for credit to support staff study of the writing needs of boys that must be addressed to improve performance.
- Work with the Library Media Council to develop more effective resources for boys.
- Continue more in-depth analysis of the data and the development of grading practices that more accurately track progress or lack thereof.
- Monitor school-based initiatives around the issue of the gender gap in writing performance.

**PERFORMANCE GOALS, ANALYSIS OF DATA, AND
ACTION PRIORITIES FOR 2004****MATH**

I. Performance Goals**A. AYP Goals**

- 1. Yes:** The District met state 2003 AYP goals for elementary, middle, and high school populations. Goals were met for subgroups of Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, White, and Students with Disabilities at the elementary level; and for the subgroups Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, White, and Limited English Proficient at middle school and high school. The goal for 2004 is to sustain or improve performance in these areas.
- 2. No:** The 2003 AYP goals were not achieved for the middle and high school levels for the subgroup of Students with Disabilities. The goal for 2004 is to increase middle level math performance of 50 percent partially proficient, proficient, or advanced by 9.51 percent to reach the state AYP benchmark of 59.57 percent; to increase high school level performance of 29.34 percent by 17.66 percent to reach the state AYP benchmark of 47 percent.

B. Other District Goals

- 1. Goal #1:** The 2004 district goal is to achieve one year's growth in one year's time for the total population as demonstrated by cohort group performance of proficient or proficient or advanced on CSAP.
- 2. Goal #2:**

District-wide, 83 percent of the students scoring at the 95th percentile and above on the quantitative section of the CogAT test administered to 5th graders scored Advanced on the CSAP math exam. The goal for 2004 is to increase the percentage from 83 percent to 90 percent.

District-wide, 74 percent of the students scoring at the 95th percentile and above on the quantitative section of the CogAT test administered to 7th graders scored Advanced on the CSAP math exam. The goal for 2004 is to increase the percentage from 74 percent to 81 percent.
- 3. Goal #3:** The goal for Students with Disabilities at elementary level is to reduce the 31.54 percent of students in the unsatisfactory category to 24.54 percent by 2004.

Performance Goals, Analysis Of Data, And Action Priorities For 2004
Math

4. **Goal #4:** The district goal for the Limited English Proficient subgroup is to increase by 10 percent, the number of students scoring proficient or advanced at each level: from 31 percent to 41 percent at elementary; 13.7 percent to 23.7 percent at middle, and 2.5 percent to 12.5 percent at high school by 2004.

II. Analysis of Data and Description of Action Priorities for 2003-2004**A. AYP Goals**

1. **Subgroup:** Students with Disabilities: middle and high school levels.

a. Analyze Data

Students with Disabilities demonstrate a pattern of performing approximately 40 percentile points below overall district scores on CSAP. Comparable data are not available using ITBS scores, as the exemption rules for these students are different on the ITBS. Each student's progress is tracked through an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and typically, progress is made on annual goals. However, as noted in the analysis section for reading, IEP goals are typically based on the student's developmental status rather than based on grade-level curriculum objectives. In addition, at the high school level, students are often placed in basic skills classes that may not include grade level content. Consequently, when responding to CSAP test items, students may be encountering material for which they have not received instruction. This gap in instruction, as compared to CSAP expectations, tends to grow over time and likely is a significant factor in CSAP test scores. An important characteristic of CSAP math is the amount of reading and writing required to solve math problems. A large number of students with IEPs have disabilities in these areas, which affects their performance on the math test. In addition, because of the struggles these students have with math, teachers may avoid assigning more complex word problems and, therefore, students do not get sufficient practice in math thinking with teacher feedback.

b. Describe Action Priorities

- The District will initiate a plan to define essential grade level learning objectives. This will provide special educators a path for moving Students with Disabilities more quickly to grade-level curriculum in math when feasible.
- District staff development will incorporate a particular emphasis on math vocabulary instruction, non-linguistic representation to understand math concepts, and hands-on approaches to math instruction.
- Special education staff will be provided staff development in proven strategies for instruction to students demonstrating below grade level skills.

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Math**

- The district disaggregation subcommittee will continue to investigate areas of discrepant performance, potential reasons, and recommended responses.
- Alternative service delivery models, in addition to current effective models and instructional practices, for special education will be explored for possible implementation, including models to maximize instructional time and effectively collaborate with general education staff.
- Use support from instructional coaches to emphasize the need for students to explain their answers when providing math instruction for all students.
- A half-time instructional coach specializing in assistance to at-risk learners will support general and special educators in implementing proven instructional strategies, including differentiated instruction.

B. Other District Goals

1. **Goal #1:** The 2004 district goal is to achieve one year's growth in one year's time for the total population as demonstrated by cohort group performance of proficient or advanced on CSAP.

a. Analyze Data

There is less historical data on CSAP math, however, the cohort group performance shows a decline as students move to higher grade levels. This district profile parallels the state CSAP performance. Questions have been considered about the benchmark for proficiency established by the state as data on CSAP math performance do not correlate well with other assessment measures such as ITBS, ACT, and SAT math. However, other reports, such as the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), which compare U.S. performance with other countries, indicate students in the U.S. do not fare well in math achievement when compared to students in other countries. While reasons for lower performance require further investigation, it is likely that there are multiple contributing factors, which may include: learning expectations as determined by district curriculum, knowledge of instructional strategies, course sequence and choices at secondary level, and math background and experience of teachers. The current LPS math curriculum, written prior to the state establishing grade level benchmarks for the math standards, is expected to be a likely factor. Comparison of the district curriculum with state benchmarks, as assessed by CSAP, shows a need for improved alignment. Current misalignment may be contributing to a mismatch of math instruction to the assessed standards.

Performance Goals, Analysis Of Data, And Action Priorities For 2004
Math**b. Describe Action Priorities**

- Continue to develop deep alignment of taught and tested curricula through analysis of CSAP item maps and released items.
- The District math curriculum will be reviewed and revised to align with math content standards benchmarks, following a research and investigation phase to determine potential curriculum and instruction issues that require attention.
- Study secondary course structure and sequence to determine potential relationship to assessment results.
- Use support from instructional coaches to emphasize the need for students to explain their answers when providing math instruction for all students.
- Grade 5-6 and 8-9 articulation meetings between math teachers will be continued to ensure appropriate sequence of instruction and placement of students.
- CSAP item maps will be used with schools to identify areas where greater instructional focus is needed.
- District staff development will emphasize strategies to improve math vocabulary.
- Continue development work on grade 5 and 6 math assessments to include expectations for math reasoning and writing.

2. Goal #2:

District-wide, 83 percent of the students scoring at the 95th percentile and above on the quantitative section of the CogAT test administered to 5th graders scored Advanced on the CSAP math exam. The goal for 2004 is to increase the percentage from 83 percent to 90 percent.

District-wide, 74 percent of the students scoring at the 95th percentile and above on the quantitative section of the CogAT test administered to 7th graders scored Advanced on the CSAP math exam. The goal for 2004 is to increase the percentage from 74 percent to 81 percent.

a. Analyze Data

Littleton Public Schools expects elementary and middle school students who score at the 95th percentile and above on the quantitative section of the CogAT test to score Advanced on the CSAP math exam. Trend data consistently shows a higher number of students with a strength in math as there are in reading as measured by the CogAT test. While the expectation is for 100 percent of the students to score at the advanced level on CSAP, the math data is closer than

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Math

the reading data to meeting that goal. Early indicators at elementary sites where the *Everyday Mathematics* series is being used to support the math curriculum with advanced math students are very promising. At one building, 100 percent of the students scored at the advanced level, at another 93 percent. Possible reasons why students might not fully meet the mark may include a greater need for clarity of definition/identification of mathematical promise and a greater emphasis on incorporating higher-level thinking into curriculum and instruction.

b. Describe Action Priorities

- Study the instructional priorities used by schools where g/t students are performing at the highest levels, and expand those practices to other schools.
- Develop criteria for evaluating math materials for advanced learners prior to district selection.
- Implement staff development around:
 - Reasoning and problem solving in mathematics.
 - Pattern investigation problems.
 - Non-linguistic representations and advanced spatial tasks.
 - Abstract problems and ideas.
 - Selected response writing in mathematics.
- Examine math materials for advanced learners at the middle school level.

3. **Goal #3:** The goal for Students with Disabilities at elementary level is to reduce the 31.54 percent of students in the unsatisfactory category to 24.54 percent by 2004.

a. Analyze Data

Analysis at elementary level regarding math proficiency for Students with Disabilities results in similar observations as noted in section II-A-1-a in describing issues at middle and high school level, although the gap between students with IEPs and overall grade 5 scores decreased by six percentile points from 2002 to 2003.

b. Describe Action Priorities

- Action priorities described for middle level and high school level will be applied at elementary level.

4. **Goal #4:** The district goal for the Limited English Proficient subgroup is to increase by 10 percent the number of students scoring proficient or advanced at each level: from 31 percent to 41 percent at elementary; from 13.7 percent to 23.7 percent at middle, and from 2.5 percent to 12.5 percent at high school by 2004.

**Performance Goals, Analysis Of Data, And Action Priorities For 2004
Math****a. Analyze Data**

While the performance of English Language Learners is less discrepant from the overall district results in math than in reading and writing, the difference ranges from 30 to 51 percentile points. As previously noted, the CSAP math test requires extensive use of reading and writing skills in order to respond to test items. The language skills of ELL students hamper their ability to demonstrate math knowledge and skills. Specifically, their difficulty with math vocabulary likely negatively impacts their scores.

b. Describe Action Priorities

- The District will initiate a plan to define essential grade level learning objectives. This will provide ESL teachers a path for moving students with language difficulties more quickly to grade level curriculum in math.
- ESL teachers will be provided staff development that emphasizes math vocabulary instruction and non-linguistic representation to understand math concepts.
- The district disaggregation subcommittee will continue to investigate areas of discrepant performance, potential reasons, and recommended responses.
- Use support from instructional coaches to emphasize the need for students to explain their answers when providing math instruction for all students.
- A half-time instructional coach specializing in assistance to at-risk learners will support general and special educators in implementing instructional strategies.

**PERFORMANCE GOALS, ANALYSIS OF DATA, AND
ACTION PRIORITIES FOR 2004
CURRICULUM**

I. Performance Goal

District-wide, 75-85 percent of students will achieve a grade of "C" or better in each subject area.

II. Narrative

The district-wide goal of 75-85 percent of all students achieving grade level learning targets as defined in the district curriculum by achieving a grade of "C" or better requires a common system of grading and collecting data on grades. At this point minimal progress has been made in being able to determine district-wide results. As a result, this goal will continue as stated.

A pilot project in 2002-2003 using an electronic grade book system revealed numerous problems. There is not a full understanding of the requirements of a standards-based grading system. A considerable range of differences exists among teachers about those things that are considered when grading student work. In addition, understanding and expectations of "grade level" work require further development.

Priorities in 2004 will be on professional development in standards-based grading practices and definitions of "grade level" achievement. Staff work in this area will revolve around the book *Transforming Classroom Grading* by Robert Marzano. The electronic grade book pilot will be put on hold until common understandings and agreements are achieved.