Intercoastal High School School Improvement Plan

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**Introduction**

**Current Conditions**

Intercoastal High School is a public school that provides services for students from ninth to twelfth grade in an urban community. This community is made up of low socioeconomics with about 78% of the student population on free and reduced lunch. IHS needs immediate remediation, the first apparent deficit is a community of trust. This school has undergone many changes with two new first year administrators. Furthermore, all the stakeholders seem to have a deflated view of student success, which has led to a decline in student achievement and behavior.

According to the data from 2009-2011, our results have declined in every area (with the exception of reading proficiency increasing 8% according to state assessments). Math (10%), science (5%), and writing (18%) proficiency percentages decreased. The percentage of students making learning gains in both math and reading decreased according to state assessments. Enrollment increased by almost 1,000 students, yet attendance decreased by 7% and the graduation rate has decreased by 16%. Behavioral referrals increased by nearly 300. Suspensions for drugs almost doubled, while suspensions for fighting more than doubled.

**School Structure & Demographics**

Intercoastal High School serves families in the community with students in ninth to twelfth grade. The current enrollment is 3,118 students. The student demographics of our school consist of 25% Black, 5% Hispanic, and 70% Caucasian. The academic environment for students includes the class size of twenty six in academic courses and thirty-five in extra-curricular courses such as Art, Music, and Physical Education.

The staff consists of 142 teachers with 94% of the teachers having four or more years of experience in teaching. Currently, 13% of the teaching staff is teaching outside of their area of certification. The administration team consists of a first year principal, 10 year experience facilities assistant principal, two year experience curriculum assistant principal and a first year student services assistant principal.

**Data Describing Needs to Be Addressed by School Improvement**

State assessments and school-wide interviews that have been gathered over a three year period of 2009-2011. These information sources have revealed great areas of need in our school that must be addressed in this school improvement plan. These areas of need range from behavior to academic concentrations.

**Student Behavior and Safety**

Currently the morale of the Intercoastal High School community has deteriorated, which is supported by the recent staff and parent survey data. IHS leadership team has observed an increase in behavioral referrals and suspensions from drugs and gang violence activity. This data projects the evidence of low school morale among students. Student behavior and safety is a crucial need to be addressed to be addressed by the leadership team. A safe school environment is physically secure, which includes buildings and grounds that are clean and hazard-free, a campus that is well monitored, and no physical violence or physical bullying; and psychologically safe, without discrimination, emotional bullying or unhealthy social pressures which have a negative psychological impact on students and can inhibit their ability to flourish and learn.

**Research & Reading**

IHS leadership team has detected a need to focus on reading and research. 42% of our students are at a level of proficient or higher. A trend of decline of 6-14% has been recognized on both standardized reading assessments. Furthermore, reading is directly related to math as many high school assessments depend heavily on reading skills to perform critically thinking. We believe this need will not only affect reading directly, but student's math achievement as well.

**Communicate Effectively**

IHS leadership team has noticed a significant drop in the percent of proficient students in writing, which is now at an all-time low of 66%. The leadership team decided to focus on communication skills as a school wide improvement goal. Communication is the cornerstone for all other subjects; however, it is suffering the most. To communicate effectively in our global society it is vital to improve writing, speech, listening, visual art, media productions, and performance skills.

**Develop of Action Plans**

In order for our school improvement plan to be successful, we needed to create a new mission statement. Through the development of our new school mission statement, we will provide IHS with a common purpose and vision to unite the faculty, staff, students, and the entire community. Therefore, we gathered many stakeholders to be involved. The stakeholders involved in the development of the mission statement and school improvement plan were 1) School Principal, 2) Assistant Principal (Facilities), 3) Assistant Principal (Curriculum), 4) Assistant Principal (Student Services), 5) Literacy/Writing Coach, 6) Math/Science Coach and 7) Community Partners. The leadership team met to assess and implement interventions aligned with the school improvement plan. This mission statement will function as our guide in our decision making process, for student achievement, as we cross-reference this statement with current data. From these two sources, we will develop our goals, performance targets, goal objectives, activities, indicators of success, time line and responsible parties to ensure this school improvement plan is successful to produce change in achievement for students at Intercoastal High School.

**School Improvement Plan**

**Mission Statement**

After gathering the responsible parties above, we created the school-wide mission statement to revamp the purpose of the school. The mission statement in this school improvement plan will be the basis for decision-making. Intercoastal High School members will strive to establish this mission statement as a unifying element of our school's embraced diversity. Our mission, “Education which inspires all to their highest potential” was formed by the stakeholders present in the Intercoastal High School community.

**Identification and explanation of the key words included in the mission statement.**

Each word was hand-picked by the stakeholders of the school to demonstrate our vision for the school. The first word, **education**, is the utmost purpose of the school to ensure we provide whatever services possible to produces quality education for all those who are a part of the Intercostal High School community. The second word, **which**, describes a call of all community parties asking for education to be provided by the following instructions to follow. The third word, **inspires**, calls for all avenues of education that is provided for the Intercoastal High School community should create an urge inside of someone to seek out learning educational practices on their own. Fourth, **all** refers to everyone attached to the Intercoastal High School community who should experience the desire or urge to learn. Fifth, **to**, states a personal commitment of motion in the direction of learning. Sixth, **their**, speaks of learners taking ownership of their learning. Seven, **highest**, describes our desire for achievement. Eight, **potential**, refers to the ability for everyone to learn.

**Belief and Value Statements**

The school leadership team believes that the IHS community involves all stakeholders including students, faculty, support staff, administration, board members, and parents. We believe that learning best occurs in a setting that fosters both physical and emotional well-being. We believe IHS education should intellectually challenge all students and promotes personal excellence through active, collaborative and creative thinking; individual growth; and development of the skills and integrity necessary to become productive members of society. We believe that personal responsibility is not simple fulfillment of duties, but acceptance of the consequences of choices and actions. IHS academic integrity, commitment, and attendance policies reflect this value. We value ethical decision-making including making decisions without infringing upon the rights of others. This value is essential in the formation of a safe, respectful and supportive learning environment where all can be inspired to reach their highest potential.

**Trends in the Data**

Intercoastal High School administration and teaching staff changes have created a decline in adult expectations of student achievement demonstrated by the data gathered through the recent staff and parent survey. IHS leadership team has observed an increase in behavioral referrals and suspensions from drugs and gang violence activity. Behavior Referrals have increased by more than 20% (5857 to 6149). Suspension for drugs increased almost 200 in just one year. The jump went from 289 to 476 (2010-2011) and then 507 in 2012. Suspensions due to fighting more than doubled in 3 years (210 to 428). The graduation rate dropped 11% in the first year (87% to 76%) and then another 5% from 2011-2012 to 71%. This data projects the evidence of low school morale among students and as a result decreased student attendance. The data on Student Attendance has averaged a 3.5% drop over three years (87%-80%), indicating our first goal should address student behavior.

IHS leadership team has detected from the data a need to focus on reading. Only 42% of our students are at a level of proficient or higher in reading. A trend of decline of 6-14% has been recognized on both standardized reading assessments.

The school data displayed a need for improvement in writing because of a significant drop in the percent of proficient students in writing now at an all-time low of 66%. The leadership team decided to focus on writing and communication skills as a school wide improvement goal. Communication is the cornerstone for all other subjects; however, it is suffering the most. To communicate effectively in our global society one needs to include writing, speech, listening, visual art, media productions, and performance.

IHS’s mission statement needs to evolve to be congruent with our savvy school leader’s vision and the goals our leadership team developed. Through the development of our new school mission statement, we will provide IHS with a common purpose and vision to unite the faculty, staff, students, and the entire community. These data trends will act as cornerstones to our school improvement plan to bring about student achievement.

**Potential Solutions**

The list of three goals statements on which to base the school improvement action plans.

The goal statements we believe effectively address our three highest need areas are based on data accumulated over the past three years. Our data was acquired from three different sources. The first source, supplying the support data for our goals, was a climate survey taken by the teachers. The second set of data, which is the foundation for our three goal statements, was the state assessment data. The third set of data, also supporting our goal statements, was a school survey of administration. Below are the three goals developed from these sources of information:

* IHS will improve student behavior.

Student behavior will be improved through three identified solutions:

1. Students will share values.

2. Students will demonstrate personal responsibility.

3. Students will exercise ethical decision-making.

* IHS will improve student writing.

Student writing will be improved through three identified solutions:

1. Students will communicate ideas effectively in writing.

2. Students will increase usage of vocabulary in writing.

3. Students will learn how to publish written works.

* IHS will improve student reading.

Students reading will be improved through three identified solutions:

1. Students will increase reading comprehension skills.

2. Students will recognize purpose of text.

3. Students will be able to relate ideas from text to prior knowledge and experiences.

**Specific Objectives, Activities, and Responsibility to Fulfill School Improvement Plan**

**Goal 1 – Improve Student Behavior**

In order to improve student behavior, we have recognized our deficit areas to be student values, personal responsibility and ethical decision-making. We have decided to implement various activities to address these concerns. We will create a committee of administrators, teachers, parents, and students to formulate values and decide on policies regarding behavior. Once our behavior expectations have been established, we expect that our staff, students, and parents will adhere to the policies in place. We believe the responsibility for behavior modification lies primarily within our students, who must have the support of their parents, school administration, and teachers.

*Students will Share Values*

Our first objective for our student’s is that they will share positive values. We plan on teaching values through a variety of activities. Team building activities designed by the students to create school-wide rules and expectations will be our first priority. As a follow up activity, students will create and design school-wide positive behavior posters to encourage the use of the newly formed shared value behavior plan. Finally, students will be expected to complete 100 hours of community service to graduate in an effort to foster community relations.. We believe that by getting our faculty and parents to support these shared values, our students will be successful, productive citizens.

*Students will Demonstrate Personal Responsibility*

Our second objective for our students is to promote personal responsibility. In order to accomplish this, students will be expected to be responsible for their education through the support of administration, teachers, parents and counselors. Students will show responsibility by taking an active role in creating their next year’s schedule which will be discussed, reviewed, and finalized by their counselor. Students will also be held accountable for maintaining a GPA of 2.0 to remain eligible for sports. In addition, students will participate in peer mentoring sessions to promote their improved student behavior. We feel that teaching our students personal responsibility will promote a sense of community among them as well as our faculty, administration, and parents.

*Students will Exercise Ethical Decision-making*

Our third objective for improving student behavior is to influence our students to make ethical decisions. Our students will practice making ethical decisions for the school by participating in student government either by holding an elected position or simply by being an active voter. Another way that they will practice ethical decision-making is by regularly attending school. Lastly, our students will demonstrate pride in their campus by involving themselves in a green effort to keep it clean. We believe that by improving ethical decision-making skills in our students, we will help them become first class citizens.

**Goal 2 – Improve Student Writing**

Our writing scores have dropped to an all-time low of 66% proficient or higher. Our focus will be on encouraging multiple avenues of student writing and publishing student work regularly. We will do this by helping students to communicate ideas effectively, increase usage of vocabulary, and learning how to publish written work. We will create a writing leadership team, consisting of administrators, teachers, parents, and students, to develop school wide goals and activities for the year. Once our writing goals and activities are implemented, we believe that our students will become more successful writers.

*Students will Communicate Ideas Effectively in Writing*

Our first objective for improving student writing is educating our students to communicate their ideas effectively through writing. We plan to encourage this through school-wide creative writing contests, seeking out scholarships for creative writing, and sponsoring a creative writing night for our students to showcase their work. We believe that teaching students to communicate their ideas effectively in writing is an integral part to their future writing success.

*Students will Increase Usage of Vocabulary in Writing*

Our second objective for improving student writing is to promote proper usage of sophisticated vocabulary. We will accomplish this by exposing our students to advanced vocabulary words of the week that will be advertised on morning announcements and our school website, creating a vocabulary blog for students to interact with the vocabulary, and by having teachers offer incentives for demonstrating proper usage of newly acquired vocabulary words. We feel that this acquisition of sophisticated vocabulary will prove to be invaluable in achieving future writing success.

*Students will Learn How to Publish Written Works*

Our third objective for improving student writing is to encourage the publishing of written work. The hope of the leadership team is that students will publish work to be showcased at an authors and poet’s night, write articles about school events for the local newspaper, and create digital storybooks to share with local elementary school children. Overall, students publishing written work will increase writing skills through the editing process and self-reflection they will exhibit when displaying their writing.

**Goal 3 – Improve Student Reading**

While our reading scores have improved, they are still at an unacceptable level of 42% proficient or higher. Our objectives for improving reading are increasing comprehension, recognizing purpose of text, and relating ideas from text to prior knowledge experiences. Our reading leadership team, consisting of administrators, teachers, parents, and students, will develop school wide goals and activities for the year geared to elevate our students’ current reading skills. As soon as our reading goals and activities have come to fruition, we believe that we will foster in our students a general love for reading.

*Students will Increase Reading Comprehension Skills*

Our first objective is to increase reading comprehension skills. We plan to accomplish this by having our teachers engage students in multiple recall activities designed to test for comprehension of a given text. Through these activities we should see a marked improvement in reading comprehension skills. Additionally, we plan to implement the use of Reading Plus, a web based program proven to increase reading fluency and comprehension. Finally, our school will participate in a school wide cross-curricular Continuous Improvement Model that calls for mini comprehension lessons at the beginning of each period daily and to be followed up with a mini comprehension assessment at the end of each week. We believe these efforts will aid in the development of reading comprehension skills school wide and that our students will be more successful on their next formal reading assessment.

*Students will Recognize Purpose of Text*

Our second objective to improve student reading is to help students recognize purpose of text. We will do this by teaching our students to analyze different written work, to use Venn Diagrams to compare and contrast a variety of writing styles, and to participate in Literature Circles to explore and share a variety of genres. With the implementation of these activities, our students will increase proficiency in identifying purpose of text and thus improve overall reading.

*Students Will be Able to Relate Ideas From Text to Prior Knowledge and Experiences*

Our third objective to improve student reading is to teach our students the benefit of making connections to prior knowledge as they read. By using thinking maps for weekly lessons, utilizing 21st century learning projects, and hosting a cultural family night to kick off a unit on cultural diversity, we believe that our students will become proficient in using background knowledge. Having parents participate in the education process will help students make the connection between home experiences and school learning.

**Conclusion**

**Improvement Plan Visibility**

The process for developing the school improvement plan will have a high degree of visibility and be seen as an open process. Parents are involved in planning, as part of the leadership teams created to develop goals and activities. They are active participants during the planning and implementation process of the school improvement plan. In addition, parent involvement is encouraged and welcomed during the implementation process and in the activities throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to show support for their students at school sponsored family events to celebrate literacy including the Authors and Poet night, Creative Writing Showcase and the Cultural Family night. Finally, parent participation is encouraged in the support of improving student behavior. We have included our parents in actively supporting our students shared values, demonstrating personal responsibility, and ethical decision-making. Overall, the process will be transparent and participation of all stakeholders will be imperative to the success of the program.

**Reflective Statement**

This assignment has provided our leadership team with an opportunity to understand the steps needed in collaboratively developing a school improvement plan. It is necessary for savvy leadership to evaluate the diverse factors that affect a school's success. A savvy leader will create a leadership team to assist in evaluating current data and developing goals and strategies to influence student achievement. This savvy leadership team will then incorporate the entire Professional Learning Community to aid in the implementation of the school improvement plan.

Table 1.

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| Goal #1: | Improve Student Behavior |  |
| Performance Target: | 10% decrease in behavior referrals, suspensions-drugs, and suspensions-fighting. Compared to last year's numbers. Increased graduation rate of 10% of last years. |  |
| Objectives | Activities |  |
| 1. Students will share values. | 1. Team building creating school-wide rules and expectations 2. Students will create and design school-wide positive behavior posters 3. Students will do 100 community service project hours to graduate |  |
| 2. Students will demonstrate personal responsibility. | 1. Students will create their next year's schedule and review with counselor 2. Students will maintain a GPA of 2.0 to remain eligible for sports 3. Students will engage in peer mentoring |  |
| 3. Students will exercise ethical decision-making. | 1. Students will participate in student government 2. Student's will practice ethical decision-making by regularly attending school 3. Student's will practice ethical decision-making by taking pride in their school and helping to keep it clean |  |
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| Goal #1: Indicators of Success | Time Lines | Responsibility |
| Committee Formed to Forulate Values | Year 1, Quarter 1 | Administration, Teachers, Parents, Students |
| Policy and Values developed | Year 1, Quarter 2 | Administration, SAC, and Teachers |
| Staff, students, and parents use policy and values | Year 1, Quarter 3 | Teachers |
| Administrative Evaluation | Year 1, Quarter 4 | Administration |
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|  |  |  |
| Goal # 2: | Improve Student Writing |  |
| Performance Target: | Increase Writing by 10% from 66% to 76%. |  |
| Objectives | Activities |  |
| 1. Students will communicate ideas effectively in writing. | 1. School-wide creative writing contests. 2. Scholarship promoted writing contests. 3. Creative Writing Night |  |
| 2. Students will increase usage of vocabulary in writing. | 1. Vocabulary words of the week advertised on announcements & website 2. Blogs set up for vocabulary of the week 3. Teacher incentives for proper usage of vocabulary |  |
| 3. Students will learn how to publish written works. | 1.Family Author Night - Share published works 2.Students write articles for use in local newspaper 3.Create digital story books to share with local elementary school |  |
|  |  |  |
| Goal #2: Indicators of Success | Time Lines | Responsibility |
| Create a writing leadership team. | Year 1, Quarter 1 | Administration, Teachers, Parents, Students |
| Leadership team develops school wide goals and activities for the year. | Year 1, Quarter 2 | Administration, SAC, and Student |
| Staff, student involvement in the goals and activities for the year. | Year 1, Quarter 3 | Teachers |
| Administrative Evaluation | Year 1, Quarter 4 | Administration |
|  |  |  |
| Goal #3: | Improve Student Reading |  |
| Performance Target: | Increase reading by 10% from 42% to 52%. |  |
| Objectives | Activities |  |
| 1. Students will increase reading comprehension skills. | 1. Recall activities 2. Reading Plus Program 3. Weekly CIM Mini Assessments |  |
| 2. Students will recognize purpose of text. | 1. Analyze different written works 2. Venn Diagrams 3. Literature Circles |  |
| 3. Students will be able to relate ideas from text to prior knowledge and experiences. | 1.Use Thinking Maps for weekly lesson 2.Use 21st century learning projects 3.Cultural family night to kick off a unit on cultural diversity |  |
|  |  |  |
| Goal #3: Indicators of Success | Time Lines | Responsibility |
| Create a reading leadership team. | Year 1, Quarter 1 | Administration, Teachers, Parents, Students |
| Leadership team develops school wide goals and activities for the year. | Year 1, Quarter 2 | Administration, SAC, and Student |
| Staff, student involvement in the goals and activities for the year. | Year 1, Quarter 3 | Teachers |
| Administrative Evaluation | Year 1, Quarter 4 | Administration |
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References