

2019-20 School Improvement Plan Little Cedars Elementary School Snohomish School District #201

Administrative Team – Lew Dickert and Sam Hanson
Leadership Team – Meredith Spinner, Cory Rogers, Ellen Young, Nicole Leo, Amy Hubbard, Christy Generous, Caitlin Vansteel, and Emily White

Introduction

“Little Cedars Elementary. Serving our community since 2007”

The 2019-2020 school year marks the thirteenth year of service to students and their families in the Little Cedars Community attendance area. The Glacier Peak class of 2020 will include the first group of students to begin their formal education as kindergarten students at Little Cedars in the fall of 2007. This is significant in terms of educational cycles. This summer, about one hundred Glacier Peak Graduates will have started their educational journey at Little Cedars. As a result of the hard work of Little Cedars staff and students we have established an identity for our school that emphasizes *the whole child* as we embrace the work of educating children in our community. We have found that the attention to the impact of the growth and transition at Little Cedars has nurtured a vibrant and healthy culture of professionals working as servants to our profession. We are embracing the developments of our work and thoroughly enjoying our community and students.

Little Cedars was opened under the leadership of Becky Brockman and Sam Hanson in the fall of 2007. Mrs. Brockman, and Mr. Hanson guided the growth and evolution of Little Cedars for the first seven years. I was fortunate to join the Little Cedars staff, as principal, in the fall of 2014. This is my sixth year in this assignment, and my thirty-second year as an elementary school administrator. I afraid that I will never tire of this work. The challenges of this work are daunting, but the process is rewarding. It is truly a pleasure to work in the Snohomish School District, and to *co-lead* this wonderful group of educators with our Assistant Principal, Sam Hanson.

Little Cedars Elementary School is in the southern region of the Snohomish School District. Bordered to the west by the Everett Schools, and to the east by the schools of Monroe. Little Cedars is part of the *feeder pattern* that sends students to Valley View Middle School for 7th and 8th grade, prior to concluding the thirteen-year process at Glacier Peak High School. Our enrollment has been slowly declining since I began at Little Cedars. We have been graduating 6th grade classes that are significantly larger than the kindergarten classes we are enrolling. In 2014/15 we had 767 students. 2015/16 enrollment dropped to 707. We stayed near “700” students in 2016/17 and 2017/18. In 2018 we dropped to “682” students. This year

we are at approximately 673 students. The trend seems like natural attrition as kindergarten enrollment has slowed down.

Currently, just under 675 students attend our school. Approximately “sixty-five” staff members serve in a variety of certificated and classified positions. Approximately 50% of the staff have come to LCE during my principalship. As a result of; hiring, retiring, class size reduction, career/family transitions, and transfers, we welcome somewhere between “three to five” new staff members each year. This dynamic requires a blend of sharing the original vision of Little Cedars with new staff and combining the efforts of all staff to gently shift the focus and vision of our school, to reflect current initiatives and respond to changing needs in our student population. With this in mind, we decided that we would refresh our norms for working together and revisit the instructional and student-centered agreements we require to offer a coherent program for academic and social/emotional growth. This year we spent valuable time, at our *all-staff retreat*, revisiting and revising our norms for working together and reestablished agreements for instructional and student management practices.

Little Cedars is in a wonderful position to embrace the challenges and professional growth required to fully prepare our students for life, work, and higher education. This year’s School Improvement Plan (SIP) will outline our specific goals for the current school year. Some of the goals are extensions of work that we have begun in prior years. Others are reflective of our response to district initiatives for Tier 1 instruction, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Technology, and Student Achievement. This document details how we will approach each goal, and how we will measure our success/progress.

We would like to thank our District Leaders and the Snohomish School Board for their balanced attention to the “technical” and “human” elements of our work while guiding our district forward in a manner that preserves the unique and wonderful aspects of our organization by prioritizing relationships and collaboration. The document explaining our, “Three-Year Academic Priorities and 2018-2019 Major Initiatives” has helped shape our current School Improvement Plan (SIP)

Demographics and Profile:

The demographic, programmatic and socio-economic information below continues to illustrate a subtle shift in the Little Cedars community. However, the measurable elements of our demographic are largely stable, and consistent. Our demographic composition places Little Cedars in a group of “comparable” schools that research on School Improvement has suggested to have *excellent capacity* for significant student growth in academic areas for our students. We have crafted this plan in a further attempt to access that opportunity.

Demographics and Special Programs:

Despite the fairly “homogenous”, “middle class” appearance of our demographic, our student population is a wonderfully diverse collection of personalities and divergent needs. Little Cedars is “home” to the Snohomish southern region’s, district-managed, Connections Program. “Connections” is a special education program of “thirteen” significantly involved/challenged

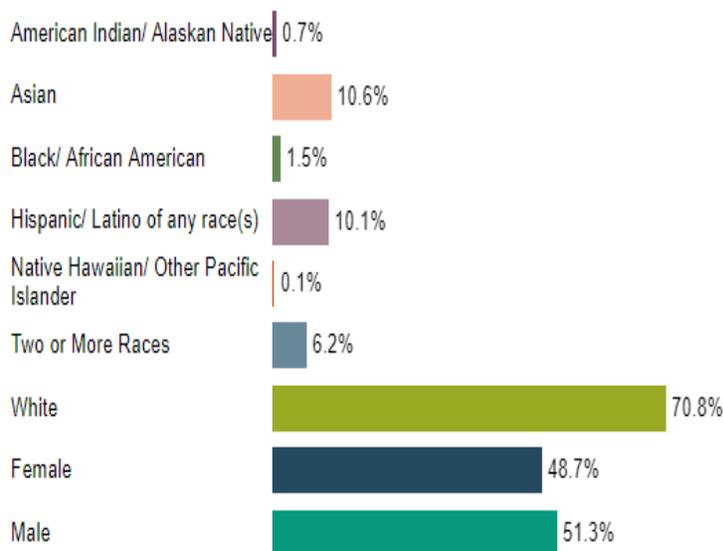
(usually diagnosed with some degree of autism) learners that have been assigned to our program to receive SDI support in social/emotional and behavioral areas. The goal is to address the concerns through SDI and integrate into general education classes.) Clearly, some of them require some unique programming, guidance and instruction to thrive on our campus. We embrace that part of our work because all students are precious, to all of us. Our special education staffing has been unstable over the last three years. We currently have our third Connections teacher in that three-year period. Our Learning Center Staffing has included five different teachers in the same window of time.

It should be noted that we are acutely aware of a trend toward more complex issues of mental health, social-emotional and behavioral issues in our students. Statistically, we are working with an increasing number of children who can be considered to be impacted by “trauma”. A portion of our School Improvement Plan is dedicated to the work that comes from managing a large population of students and the logistics that come with our enrollment. The current trend we are experiencing is that each year, the percentage of students with more complex social/emotional/ behavioral needs is increasing. From what we are hearing, this is more widespread, and seems to be an evolutionary dynamic. That dynamic has influenced our planning for instruction and interventions.

Statistical Breakdown of Demographics (Supplied by Teaching and Learning)

Little Cedars Elementary School

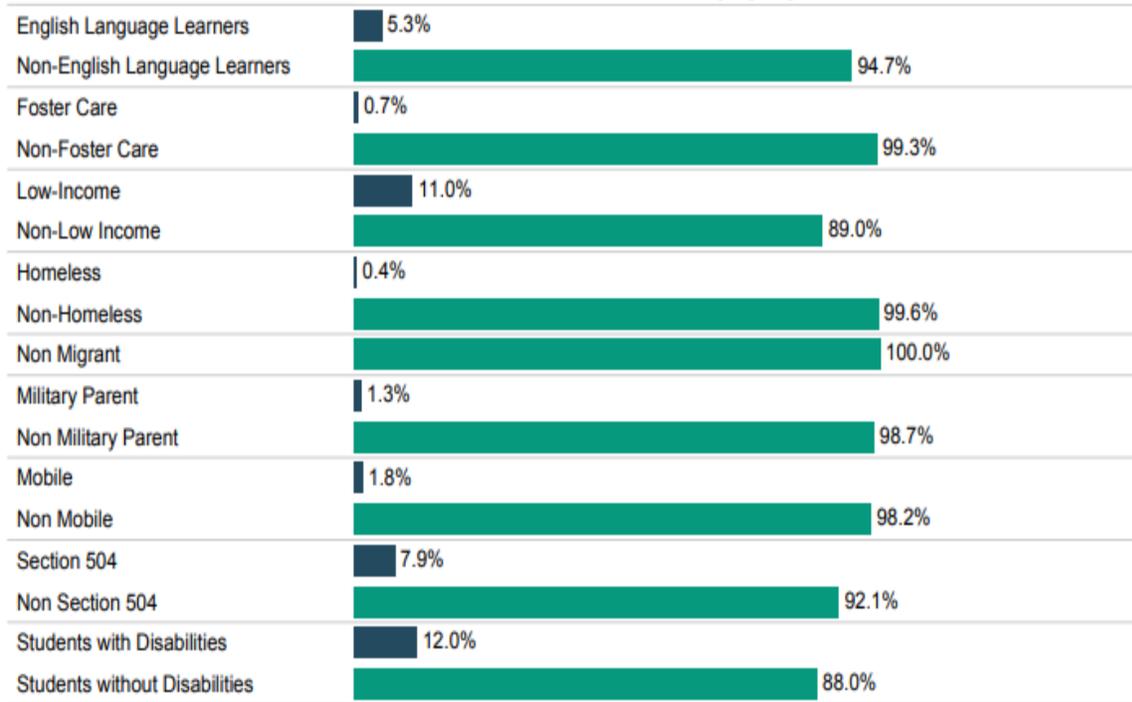
2018-19



The school year begins on different days for different school districts. The first business day in October is used as the enrollment count date for all schools and districts in Washington state.

Little Cedars Elementary School

2018-19



Organizational Growth and Outcomes

Little Cedars' Place Among High Performing Schools:

We continue to identify and implement opportunities to expand our overall effectiveness in relationship to the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*, and to support professional development that is articulated in the criteria for effective instruction outlined and detailed, by the Danielson Framework for teacher evaluation (T-PEP) and the AWSP Evaluation Framework for administrators in the State of Washington. The Characteristics of effective Schools and the "Crosswalk" to the criteria by which we guide our work are listed below. The highlighted areas are ones that are directly targeted for administrators in the AWSP rubric for our 2019-2020 School Improvement Plan.

**Nine
Characteristics of
High Performing
Schools**

**Eight Criteria of Teacher
Evaluation in Washington State**

1	High Standards and Expectations for All Students	(Criterion 1) Centering instruction on high expectations for student achievement
2	Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Aligned with State Standards	(Criterion 2) Demonstrating effective teaching practices
3	Clear and Shared Purpose	(Criterion 3) Recognizing individual student learning needs and developing strategies to address those needs
4	Supportive Learning Environment	(Criterion 4) Providing clear and intentional focus on subject matter content and curriculum
5	Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning	(Criterion 5) Fostering and managing a safe, positive learning environment
6	Family/Community Involvement	(Criterion 6) Using multiple student data elements to modify instruction and improve student learning
7	High Levels of Collaboration and Communication	(Criterion 7) Communicating and collaborating with parents and school community
8	Focused Professional Development	(Criterion 8) Exhibiting collaborative and collegial practices focusing on improving instructional practice and student learning
9	Effective School Leadership	

Data from 2018-2019:

In 2018-2019, we continued to analyze data around the intervention strategies that we have practiced. In general terms, intervention have taken place more inside the classroom, but much has still been performed by a staff member other than the classroom teacher. We see some gains, but we agree that we need to take the next PD steps to adjust the instructional practices and materials in our classrooms to support our teachers in their efforts to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of more of our students within the classroom setting.

Our Tier One (Universal) instruction will be a focus as a result of our work together last year. Teams have only just started to plan cohesively and utilize information about student learning to plan instruction and interventions as grade level teams.

Our LAP program made a significant difference in student growth of identified students this year. We continued to serve those students (K-4th) through an “in-class” model. We have also continued to transition our Resource Room (special education) model to include “in-class” support wherever it was possible. Due to the sudden and drastic increase in behavioral and social-emotional goals in our IEPs, this has presented quite a struggle. We have had to revision some of this work.

In 2019, we hired one classroom teacher, a Resource Room (Special Education) teacher, a Connections (Special Education) Teacher, and a .6 FTE Music teach. ALL great additions to our school!

We are back on a positive path toward connected instruction between “general” and “special” education services. We are in the process of revisiting our special education model to better meet the needs of staff and students. A pure “inclusion” model has not been successful due to some of the more *extreme* students that we were trying to support. We recognized the need for a more formalized approach to teaching the social skills critical for students to participate more successfully in our learning environments. That work is a large part of this year’s plan. Having traits taught was a good start, but we also need specific instruction (2nd Steps), and targeted support for staff and students in the form of social stories, and deeper understanding of our students.

Our growth in Reading and Math, as evidenced by SBA and STAR data indicate that we are holding our achievement at a steady level, but when cohorts of students are analyzed, over a four-year period we see more progress in ELA than Math. This caused us to ask questions about math curricula, fidelity, and practices. We have also acted on those needs as evidenced in this plan.

I have included a “five-year” data display of our SBA journey since 2015. We are analyzing cohort performance and instructional effectiveness to determine our professional development needs for staff.

SBA data is just one of the several data points we are using to evaluate/reevaluate our instructional program and help us identify successful practices (including interventions) to use as we plan for instruction. Currently, grade levels develop their own common assessments to accurately identify student learning and student growth levels. BAS, STAR and Interim Assessments are also used.

LCE teachers meet regularly as a staff and in grade level/program teams to discuss the learning needs and performance levels of their students. These teams are supported by peers, building level, and district administration. They assist in developing and implementing remedial and enrichment strategies for students. We incorporate formative information gained through classroom assessments into our instructional decisions.

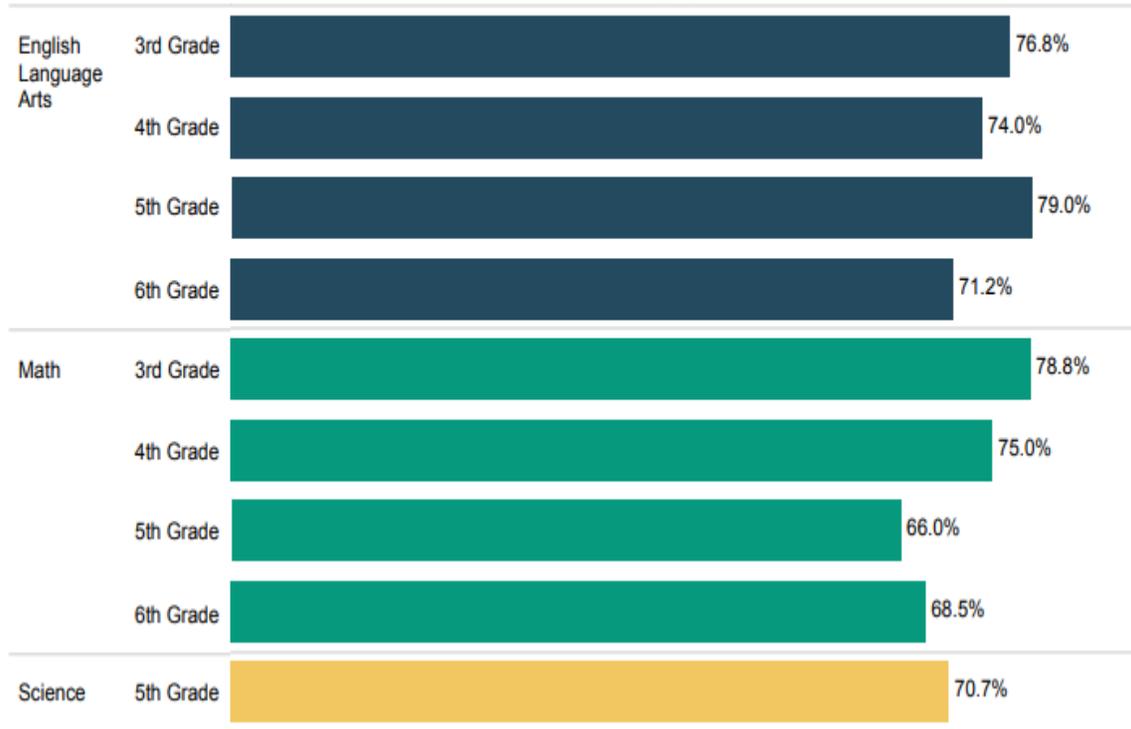
We are focusing our instructional conversations on purposeful planning for our “universal” lessons. That topic is an area of emphasis in our cycle of classroom observations. We plan to see a cross section of Math, Literacy, SEL, and specialized lessons this year. Sam Hanson and I frequently confer about our observations and strategize to develop supports for our teachers.

Student Learning Information and Data Used to Develop Goals and Monitor Progress was supplied by OSPI and uploaded by TLS.

Little Cedars Elementary School

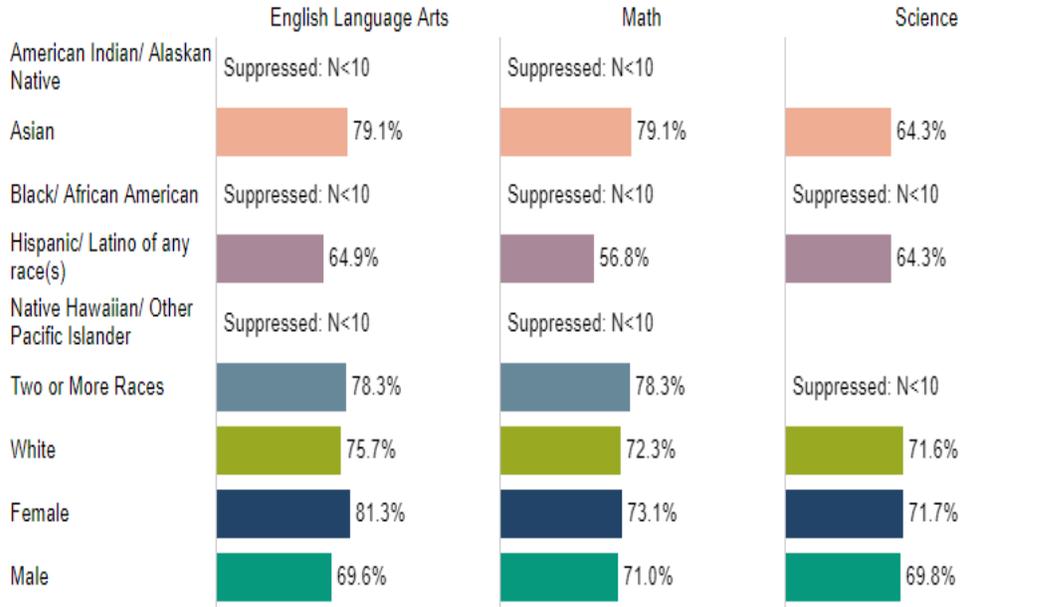
2018-19

General



Percent of Students Meeting Standard by Subgroup

**Little Cedars Elementary School
2018-19**



**Little Cedars Elementary School
2018-19**

	English Language Arts	Math	Science
English Language Learners	Suppressed: N<10	Suppressed: N<10	Suppressed: N<10
Non-English Language Learners	75.8%	72.6%	70.4%
Foster Care	Suppressed: N<10	Suppressed: N<10	Suppressed: N<10
Non-Foster Care	75.2%	72.0%	71.4%
Homeless	Suppressed: N<10	Suppressed: N<10	
Non-Homeless	75.3%	71.9%	70.7%
Low-Income	67.4%	67.4%	60.0%
Non-Low Income	76.0%	72.5%	71.9%
Non Migrant	75.1%	72.0%	70.7%
Military Parent	Suppressed: N<10	Suppressed: N<10	Suppressed: N<10
Non Military Parent	75.2%	72.0%	70.2%
Section 504	60.5%	53.5%	Suppressed: N<10
Non Section 504	76.8%	74.1%	71.0%
Students with Disabilities	31.9%	38.3%	Suppressed: N<10
Students without Disabilities	80.7%	76.3%	73.3%

Little Cedars Elementary SBA Data Display May 2015 through May 2019

SBA Test	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
ELA 3rd	69%	70%	70%	75%	77%
ELA 4th	64%	71%	70%	74%	74%
ELA 5th	61%	67%	71%	73%	79%
ELA 6th	67%	63%	71%	72%	71%
Math 3rd	70%	78%	77%	83%	80%
Math 4th	61%	68%	69%	68%	75%
Math 5th	52%	67%	67%	70%	66%
Math 6th	62%	60%	68%	61%	68%
Science 5th	58%	77%	79% MSP	75% WCAS	71% WCAS

*Follow data across rows, compares the different cohorts and the same teachers

**Follow data down diagonally, compares the same cohort and their ability through the years.

***Science test changed to the WCAS in the Spring of 2018.

Organizational Growth and Outcomes From our work in 2018-2019

The administrative team, Guiding Coalition, Leadership Team, School Culture/Climate Committee and Teaching/Support Staff at Little Cedars are invested in producing and implementing this School Improvement Plan. The process for gathering information about our student and staff performance that will help us be more aware of our instructional practices and the resultant impact on student learning drives our work.

We made great strides during 2018/2019 in our focus on our instructional practices. The addition of a coherent and articulated approach to Curricula has been a fundamentally sound leadership move in our organization. Materials such as: Fountas and Pinnell Classroom (K-3), Being a Writer (K-6), Recommitting fidelity to Bridges Math (K-5), 2nd Steps (SEL K-6), Committing to Common Instructional and Student Relationship strategies and emphasizing a Tiered approach to the Academic and Social instruction for all students has made our professional development opportunities/needs crystal clear.

Our decisions for the SIP for 2019/2020 are data informed, relevant and important to the continued professional growth of staff AND the enhancement of student learning for all LCE students.

We are striving to embrace a “common instructional language” for us to utilize as we continue to improve our use of the “workshop model of instruction” to facilitate the GRR model of purposeful instruction. That, along with information about our current practices has graphically illustrated our need to provide for common Academic and Social/emotional/behavioral targets.

That work is supported by our continued focus on the attributes of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) approach to instruction, intervention, remediation, and assessment strategies.

The expansion of “teacher leadership” at Little Cedars continues to be an area of great pride for our staff. This year I can confidently state that we have an established “teacher leaders” on each of our grade level, specialist, and special education teams. I attribute this to our purposeful effort to continue to reassign several staff per year to a different assignment in an effort to restructure our teams, with teacher leadership potential and collaborative spirit in mind.

It is still our belief that the core values of our work need to be represented in every group of employees at Little Cedars. Seven of our teachers have participated in the collaboration with UW Bothell’s “Teacher Leadership” project in Snohomish. The addition of the LLSS position in each of our elementary schools has greatly accelerated the pace, and effectiveness of our instructional growth as a staff. Kudos to our LLSS- Caitlin Vansteel for keeping the literacy needs of staff and students in the forefront of our work.

The primary goal of our School Awareness/Improvement/Growth Plan is to provide a focus for adults and students to work toward. We have carefully considered this work, and because of the restructuring of our time on Friday afternoons, we are able to plan for more time to discuss key efforts to promote professional growth and increase student learning. Our goals this year reflect the direction of our organization and the specific needs of our building.

Little Cedar’s 2019-20 School Improvement Plan Goals

Based on LCE and District Initiatives, our 2019-20 School Improvement Plan has the following goals:

District Aligned Goal:

1a) 100% of LCE certificated staff will engage in professional development, pre-observation and post-observation discussions on the topic of Tier 1 instruction. Our classroom observation cycles, as well as a portion of our building and district based professional development will be centered on how our planning and delivery of Tier 1 instruction is a fundamental part of the successful implementation of our district’s MTSS implementation focus.

This will be measured by time spent observing instruction in our classrooms. Specifically, Literacy and Math instruction. Sam and I have selected the evidence of teacher planning and instructional decisions (moves) that we will be talking about with teachers and looking for in the lessons we observe. We found a tool used by the Madison Metropolitan school District (Wisconsin) to share with teachers as examples of “elements” and artifacts of the planning and preparation for Tier 1 instruction. This work is taken directly from the work of Charlotte Danielson and correlates well with our components and criteria for instruction in Domain 1.

1b) In support of the District focus on MTSS, our grade level and work teams will conduct a self-assessment of the “functioning level” of their Professional Learning Community (PLC). The self-assessment will establish the baseline from which our teams will select the steps they will take to progress to the next level, or two, of the functioning of effective teams. Professional development, articles Sam and I selected on PLCs, Teacher Leadership strategies, Guiding Coalition work and our LLSS will help guide this work.

This goal will be measured by a self-evaluation in the spring of 2020 to reassess our grade level, and work, team’s *level** of PLC effectiveness using a tool designed by Graham and Ferriter, that established, *The Seven Stages of a Professional Learning Team.**

These goals are selected to move our staff closer to more effective Tier 1 instruction. Evidence of this work will be visible in:

- Classroom Observations and discussions with teachers
- Less formal referral for Tier 3 interventions
- Move evidence of Guided Instruction in support of Tier 1 instruction
- More students meeting instructional targets in Daily and “Team Designed” Unit of instruction measures
- Access for all learners to Tier 1 Instruction
- Tier two interventions that are specifically targeted to influence student learning

2019-20 Building Specific Goals for Little Cedars

Building Specific Goal #1

LCE instructional staff will make specific and Intentional efforts to employ math practices. As an extension of our district goal we will be working to provide a more coherent articulation of Math instruction by agreeing to use the adopted material (Bridges) as our primary curriculum for grades K-5, tier 1, math instruction. In looking at our student performance on STAR and SBA measures we recognize a gentle, but consistent decline in the performance of our students in the area of math.

Our theory is that while our students are competent in computation, they seem to have trouble with the conceptual and performance task elements of math assessments. By aligning our tier one instruction across a grade level, and articulating that effort from grade to grade, we believe that we will be able to see more evidence of grade level teams planning for tier one instruction and developing more systematic tier two intervention strategies for our students. We also plan to invite Allison Hintz to one of our Friday afternoon PD sessions this year. Her work in helping teachers utilize math practices was recommended by Brad Portin, UW Bothell.

We plan to measure this goal through an informal curriculum audit of the materials being used for math instruction in our building. This will be supported by requesting that one of the two

“formal” observations we do in each of our classrooms be featuring a math lesson. We will also be monitoring the trend in our STAR and SBA data. We will also add a third data point of an SBA Interim test in early February of 2020. (SBA Data Display documenting this trend is included on page 12.)

Building Specific Goal #2

In August of 2019 our staff agreed that we needed to take steps to provide a more comprehensive and universal level of instruction and support for our students in the area of SEL (social-emotional learning). As a result, we created a building goal to support staff and students with a comprehensive plan to coordinate the efforts to promote Social Emotional Learning and promote a clear set of expectations for all students and staff. We also felt that we needed to reach fundamental agreements for:

- Our work together- Revise and update our norms
- Student Expectations for common areas
- Adult supervision commitments
- Universal SEL instruction in all classrooms using 2nd Steps Materials
- Intervention Model (RTI/MTSS) to address behavioral/academic and Social Emotional Learning
- Personalize the hallways and common spaces of Little Cedars with artifacts of “welcome” and “belonging”

This goal was selected because of the challenges we are facing with the increase in our student population of students with significant challenges in their Social Emotional Learning behaviors. Our summer workshop (Aug. 13, 2019) with Joe Nigel was attended by over 80% of our classroom staff. His message influenced our decision to make this work a priority at Little Cedars.

In addition, all staff/students will continue to participate in the “Building wide” Emphasis on “Eight” specific academic/social/behavioral Traits (Selected by our staff) for students to learn, rehearse, and apply in life, learning, and work. An Instructional plan for Intentionally Teaching the traits has been developed, and we will invest time in emphasis of a different trait, each month. (The Work is guided by our School Culture and Community Committee and supported by our ASB student leadership.)

- September- Self Awareness
- October-Compassion
- November/December- Gratitude
- January-Cooperation and Teamwork
- February-Integrity
- March- Respect
- April- Accountability and Responsibility
- May/June-Perseverance and Grit

Building Specific Goal #3 Technology

Little Cedars will focus on selected “core” technology standards*, identified by grade level, age appropriateness, readiness, and student needs. The support, PD and access will be led by our building level DLL team of Caitlin Vansteel and Emily Schenck.

Little Cedars’ K-6, Proposed 2019/2020 Tech Goals (attached) will be validated by our Leadership Team and taken to our staff for input. The plan is designed to create an articulated and cohesive vision for technology use, instructional application and will be supported by professional development efforts during the winter and spring.

*Snohomish School District’s Primary and Intermediate Educational Technology Scope and Sequence Document (Spokane, Auburn) District DLLs are finalizing the scope and sequence.

Technology Tools Used to Support Little Cedars’ SIP Goals

Assessment:

- Skyward
- Homeroom/Data Dashboard
- ESGI Reading only
- Uploading BAS Assessments into Data Dashboard.
- SBA administration and preparation
- SBA Interim Tests
-

Collaboration:

- Microsoft 365
- SMART Notebook
- Digital Learning Leaders (Emily Schenck and Caitlin Vansteel)
-

Parent engagement:

- Skyward Family Access
- Homeroom
- Canvas (Eventual source of classroom and school information.)
- District/school websites and social media
- School Messenger/School Connects
- Email and List serve

Professional development:

- Microsoft 365
- Canvas
- Hello ID
- SMART Notebook
- Typing Agent Implementation
- Teacher Ready Cohorts

- Cart incorporation into instructional practices
- “Tech in Five” (Provided by DLLs in staff meetings)

Summary

The process for developing authentic, meaningful goals that reflect the current reality and project a vision for our work together with LCE students is critical to providing a plan for support of our students and staff. Making time that can be dedicated to “thinking forward” and reflecting on our efforts is crucial. I am convinced that the *process* of setting goals together is required for this document to be vital. With that in mind, the leadership group listed on the cover of this document set about the task of establishing a process for that work.

We began this work last spring with an assessment of the academic, social/emotional levels of our students. It was evident that we needed to look at three specific areas:

1. Tier One Instruction as a basis for developing an RTI/MTSS approach to instruction and systemic intervention.
2. Social Emotional Learning strategies for Tier one and Tier two instruction/support (Including Trauma Informed Practices) (Coherent, Common Practices)
3. Assessment and development of our horizontal work in teams and vertically, across the grade levels (Coherent Instruction)

We then assessed the staff needs for professional development and deepening our relationships. The work began at our August 2019 retreat and is continuing as we support our initiatives with professional development and instructional support for classroom teachers.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lew G. Dickert
Principal of Little Cedars Elementary School

Action Plan

Activities	Lead Person	Others	Timeline		Resources we will need/use	Our plan for monitoring effectiveness	Character or criterion addressed
			Start	End			
<p>Make specific and intentional efforts to employ math practices.</p> <p>Provide a more coherent articulation of Math instruction by agreeing to use the adopted material (Bridges) as our primary curriculum for grades K-5, tier 1, math instruction</p>	Principal/Assistant Principal	Grade Level Team	September 2019	June 2020	Bridges Math Resources	<p>Informal curriculum audit of the materials being used for math instruction in our building</p> <p>Formal observations featuring a math lesson</p> <p>Monitoring the trend in our STAR and SBA data</p>	1, 2, 3, 5
<p>Reach fundamental agreements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our work together- Revise and update our norms • Student Expectations for common areas • Adult supervision commitments • Universal SEL instruction in all classrooms using 2nd Steps Materials • Intervention Model (RTI/MTSS) to address behavioral/academic and Social Emotional Learning • Personalize the hallways and common spaces of Little Cedars with artifacts of “welcome” and “belonging” 	Principal/Assistant Principal	LLSS Grade Level Team	September 2019	June 2020	2 nd Step Materials	<p>Teacher participation in “Building wide” Emphasis on “Eight” specific academic/social/behavioral Traits (Selected by our staff) for students to learn, rehearse, and apply in life, learning, and work</p> <p>Development of an Instructional plan for Intentionally Teaching the traits</p> <p>Invest time in staff meetings each month of a different trait, each month</p>	1, 3, 4
Select “core” technology standards, identified by grade level	Principal/Assistant Principal	DLL LLSS	September 2019	June 2020	2019-2020 Proposed Building	Monitor age appropriateness, readiness and student needs	3, 4

		Grade Level Team			Tech Goals	Primary and Intermediate Educational Technology Scope and Sequence Document	
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