

## **School Improvement Team Minutes**

**Date: March 17, 2009**

**Time: 3:00-4:00**

**Location: Conference Room**

**Attendance: Cathy K., Mike L., Jake F., Theron M., Donnalee E., DeeAnn B., Diane W., and Elena W.**

Today: We finished organizing the Interim Report. During the next few weeks, we will edit.

### **Questions for the Interim Report:**

- a. **What significant changes or developments have affected the school since the last visit?**

#### **Change in administration:**

In July of 2009, Timpanogos High School received its third principal since its 1996 inception. Theron C. Murphy returned to Timpanogos High School after three years as principal at American Fork Junior High. Prior to American Fork Junior High, Mr. Murphy spent four years as an assistant principal at Timpanogos.

Mr. Murphy's knowledge and understanding of the school's direction, personnel, facility, community, and existing school culture has been of great value as he has articulated the school's future direction.

A renewed sense of energy, commitment, and vision has come with the change in administration. A focus on building leadership capacity, developing high performing teams, creating a sense of "Team Timpanogos," and tending to a "healthy" culture by weeding out toxic attitudes and behaviors have provided a renewed sense of purpose and direction. Additionally, there has been a concentrated effort to create a "student friendly" environment that promotes school pride, highlights tradition, and communicates its history.

#### **Building Leadership Capacity**

In the book *Learning by Doing*, it states, "The creation of a *guiding coalition* or leadership team is a critical first step in the complex task of leading a school" (Dufour et. al 15). Among many others, Illinois's Adlai Stevenson High School has validated that assertion. Stevenson's culture of shared leadership has produced phenomenal results, including proficiency scores in the top 1% of Illinois high schools in all subject areas as well as gains in their already excellent ACT scores from each of the past nine years.

The leadership structure implemented at Timpanogos this year is intended to build leadership capacity among the faculty. In his previous role as Principal of American Fork Junior High, Mr. Murphy developed the proposed structure—All school improvement initiatives and efforts are guided by the collaborative efforts of two leadership teams that work cohesively under the direction of an Executive Leadership Team (consisting of school administrators and three to four teacher leaders). This executive team ensures all efforts in the school are focused on student learning. The team serves as a model Professional Learning Community (PLC) for all teams at Timpanogos High School.

Two teams of teacher leaders assist the Executive Leadership Team. The first team, *Instructional Leadership*, consists of eleven departmental instructional leaders. These instructional leaders oversee effective use of collaboration time by working and learning together. DuFour's three questions guide their PLC work. The second team, *School Improvement*, consists of eight teachers who focus on the school improvement cycle (data profile, mission, vision, values, and goals, desired results for student learning, focus groups, departmental analysis, and the school's action plan). This team uses the components of the school improvement (accreditation) cycle to bring together all stakeholders in achieving high levels of learning for all students. Together these teams of teacher leaders serve as a guiding coalition for all school improvement initiatives and efforts.

Additionally, a Management and Operational (M&O) Team, consisting of one member from each departmental team, oversee the management and operational items for their team. This includes, but is not limited to, the following items: budgetary items, supplies, policies and procedural issues.

Two-deep leadership in each departmental team, and a clear division of responsibilities between both leaders (instructional leader and the M&O rep)\*, allows each leader to focus purely on their area of responsibility. It also increases communication between teachers and administration and provides opportunities for teachers to be involved in the decision-making process.

\*The THS leadership structure is posted on the school website at <<http://timpanogos.alpinedistrict.org/School%20Improvement/THSLeadershipStructure.pdf>>

### **High Performing Teams**

Structured collaboration among faculty and staff started with our PLC in 2006 and teams meet each Monday following school for one hour. Teams are organized around curriculum areas and have both an Instructional and M&O Leader. The PLC examines progress in achieving desired results for student learning as an entire school and in specific content areas. Much of our work in these collaborative teams focuses on the goals of clearly identifying desired results for student learning for all courses and programs, of creating quality assessments to determine their progress toward these goals, and of analyzing the data collected by these assessments. Currently PLC teams are creating, implementing, and analyzing common assessments for several courses in their content areas.

Each instructional leader has been given the challenge and stewardship to instill and develop characteristics of high performing teams. Instructional leaders meet monthly to share and learn together. Leaders have been introduced to the necessary fundamental or foundational pillars to ensure high levels of learning for all students. Under the direction of each instructional leader, departmental teams are expected to lay the foundation for student success.

A guaranteed and viable curriculum is priority one in laying the foundation. Teams are working together to create power standards for each class that will be posted on the school website to inform students and parents of the most essential learning guaranteed to take place.

Another foundational pillar is quality assessment and data analysis. During the 2007-2008 school year, a strong effort was made by the professional development team to introduce Rick Stiggins' Five Keys to Quality Assessment. Whether teams are working toward creating common assessments or toward developing their own personal assessments, their awareness and understanding of good quality assessment is essential. Teams are expected to create common assessments that are tied to their power standards or unit learning targets and then assess the results of these assessments.

Instructional leaders have also been introduced to the importance of developing and holding one another accountable to team collective commitments that guide their attitudes and behaviors.

### **Team Timpanogos**

One-on-one interviews conducted in early April by Mr. Murphy and an electronic survey e-mailed to faculty in July of last year pointed to the need for increased unity and a greater sense of "Team." Many efforts have been made this year to create a sense of unity and a feel of "Team Timpanogos," beginning with a Team Timpanogos baseball jersey that was purchased for each of 118 faculty and staff members. All jerseys have a number one placed on the back along with the last name of each member and a "Team Timpanogos" logo on the front. This small but impactful idea set the tone for the year among faculty and students.

### **A Healthy Culture**

Common sense tells us the sky is the limit for any team or organization that focuses and channels its energy and efforts on what it "can do," instead of what it "can't do." To ensure a healthy culture at Timpanogos High School, "We will look for opportunities to celebrate our successes, allow for humor, spark creativity,

give everyone a voice, communicate openly and honestly, lead by example, unite, and collaborate on the ‘right thing.’” The above-mentioned quotation that was created by THS faculty hangs in our hallway as a reminder to each one of us of the collective commitment we’ve made to protect our culture. It is also our individual responsibility to assess our own attitudes and behaviors and “weed out” anything that might be counterproductive to a high performing organization.

### **A “Student-Friendly” Environment**

There has been a strong effort made to create a student-friendly environment at THS—one that celebrates tradition, promotes pride, recognizes success, and one in which the school’s history is captured—a place where students call “home.”

New additions have been added to both the inside and the outside of the facility. Some of these additions include: banners along the outside main entrance, student photos displayed in the cafeteria, and traits and quotations placed in the hallways by the National Honor Society. Benches, pub-tables, and patio tables are next in line to help create a place where students call “home.”

### **Leveled Reading Library**

The Leveled Reading Library serves those students identified by the English teachers and counselors as reading below grade level. Additional students from the Special Education program, the ELL program, and the ESL programs will also benefit from the implementation of this program.

Currently the Leveled Reading Library collection consists of approximately 350 books. The reading level of selected books is 2.0 to 6.0. New books will be added as funds are made available. It isn’t currently in use, but, by the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year, it should be functioning completely.

This year the decision was made to automate the collection. Software and a barcode scanner were purchased for a stand-alone station which will be housed in the Leveled Reading classroom. Students will now be able to locate books by title, subject, and reading level. These skills taught will develop transfer knowledge so as the students progress they will be able to locate books in the THS Media Center. By automating the collection, accountability for purchased books is also achieved.

### **Technology at THS**

Technology at Timpanogos has changed over the last three years. Currently we have 160 computers in general computer labs, 259 computers in CTE classes, 24 computers in eMint labs, and 12 in miscellaneous locations. This does not include teacher/staff computers. Since teachers can now view the various lab schedules online, lab usage has increased. Previously certain departments only used certain labs. If that lab was already scheduled, they didn’t have any options. Now a teacher may schedule any of the available labs.

In addition to PowerSchool, many teachers now have websites that students and parents may access. Students can find their class assignments, updates, and links to important information. UTIPS is a common tool now used for student testing. Students using UTIPS will often makeup their tests/quizzes during lunch, before, or after school. Other technologies which are being used in the classrooms include: scanner, digital camera, digital video, DVD/VCR, audio enhancement systems, blogs, graphing calculators, multimedia projectors, podcasts, electrophoresis, centrifuge, microscopes, 3D printer, and a plotter.

### **Methods of CRT Testing**

Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, all CRT tests have been given online at THS. Most school labs are occupied with testing for most of the school days during the state testing window. Makeup testing is more easily accomplished with online tests, so the participation rate is slightly higher than with paper/pencil testing.

### **Changes in School Demographics**

Enrollment has been stable over the past three years, but is expected to decline to slightly over 1200 students in the next three to four years. Hispanic students represent a growing segment of the student population, increasing from 9% in 2004-2005 to 13% in 2008-2009. Though the figures show a decline in

the number of students receiving free and reduced lunch, the difference is accounted for in criteria and reporting method changes. The number of low income students in the THS population has remained constant.

Measure	Item	05	06	07	08	09
Total Enrollment	<b>Enrollment</b>	1467	1520	1432	1431	1440

#### **Ethnicity**

% Caucasian		87%	86%	85%	85%	83%
% Hispanic		9%	10%	12%	11%	13%

% Free/Red Lunch	<b>Low Income</b>	29%	29%	29%	17%	17%
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#### **Using Data to Improve Student Intervention**

Timpanogos High School has always had a Student Success Team (SST) comprised of the THS administrative and counseling teams. Beginning in 2008-2009, in order to answer these three questions:

1. Who are the students who are not learning? (Identify), 2. Why are these students not learning? (Assess), 3. How are we going to help them?(Intervene), 4. How do we know if we are helping them? (Monitor/Evaluate), this team employed a systematic method of student placement in interventions. A comprehensive database was created, compiling large amounts of key information about all students into one user-friendly spreadsheet. Essential demographic information, credit earned, credit attempted, GPA, attendance patterns, and relevant test scores are all included. The list is then easily filtered according to specific placement criteria for each available intervention. Addressing Defour’s question # 3, “What do we do when students are not learning or achieving?”, students are systematically identified for timely and directive placement in the correct interventions. The Student Success Team then reviews the placement list, student by student, to achieve the best possible intervention situation for each individual student.

Before implementing the placement process, the intervention classes currently offered at THS were carefully reviewed and refined. The purpose and content of these classes were defined, and placement and exit criteria described. Some adjustments were made to current classes, and two new interventions were created: Guided Study Hall and Credit Recovery Study Hall. To determine student response to interventions, baseline data has been collected for students placed second semester of 2008-2009 and progress will be tracked throughout the remainder of the school year.

The SST met with teachers, counselors and administrators who were involved in current intervention classes and defined the expectations and criteria for entrance ie; GPAs, CRT scores, attendance and student characteristics, etc. Students were then placed in the appropriate intervention classes based on these criteria. They are now tracking these students every three weeks to determine the success of the intervention classes.

In the past, a student’s placement in one of Timpanogos’ intervention classes could be based on numerous factors.

- Who their counselor is
- Who their administrator is
- How involved/supportive are their parents
- Teacher recommendation

Many students were falling through the cracks. Also, intervention classes didn’t appear to be a successful as hoped. Students with varied needs were all “dumped” into generic study hall classes, or often misplaced in tutorial classes.

The defined interventions are Algebra Tutorial, Geometry Tutorial, UBSCT Math, UBSCT English, Guided Studies, Credit Recovery Study Hall, Athletics Study Hall, Advanced Study Hall, Why Try, ESL 1, ESL 2, ESL 3, ESL Sheltered English 10 and 11.

### **Latinos in Action**

THS has started an initiative known as Latinos in Action (LIA). It is designed to foster academic goals and leadership skills in order to break down cultural barriers in education. Latinos in Action are required to keep a high standard of conduct and must maintain a 2.0 GPA to stay in the class.

The students in Latinos in Action have been involved in service such as working at the Provo Latin American Festival and providing interpretation at Parent Teacher Conference. They also go to neighboring elementary and junior high schools every other day to tutor younger Latino children in school work and in literacy. This experience alone has empowered LIA members to see the great strength they can bring to children as these kids see examples of successful Latino students. The teachers they work with at the other schools all say what a great job they do and what an example they are to the younger children. Many of the LIA students have expressed the importance they feel as they are part of this group. Also, they have been working hard to keep their grades up to stay in the program. The word is spreading among their friends and we are hoping the other Latinos who are struggling will feel motivation to succeed so they can join this prestigious group.

In a journal entry about their feelings about LIA earlier this year, one student wrote, “I simply want to help others; the way I’ve been helped. [I want to] give back to the community that has helped me in abundance.”

### **Extended High School Summer Program**

After a successful pilot year, the Extended Year High School program will once again be offered by Alpine School District with classes being offered at Mountain View and Lehi High Schools. The first block runs June 1—June 19 and the second block June 24—July 16. The program is open to all current 9th, 10th and 11th grade students in the district. Our goal is to include all students and have more schools participate than last year. We also want to see more of our enrichment courses fill at a higher rate. Some of the changes implemented this year include starting earlier in the summer, providing more classes held in the morning and including science classes. Enrichment classes were also scheduled so students could take both sections of a class in one block, if desired. Classes teaching high school and college success skills are also being offered, unique to this year’s extended program. The high school success class will help students in 9th grade get ready for high school by teaching them study skills, reading, writing and other attributes needed to succeed at the high school level.

Last year, over 1,500 students participated between the two locations with nearly 100 courses offered and over 475 credits earned. This program allows students to take classes that will either lead to credit recovery or acceleration to graduation. Last year’s participants had an astounding passing rate of 97%. By participating in the extended program, students have the opportunity to complete required or elective classes during the summer, which will open periods during the school year for additional classes or will allow early graduation. This also allows students the opportunity to make up credit. Each block lasts three weeks with two make-up days; students may attend one or both blocks. Cost to students is minimal: \$25 fee per class. A student may take up to three classes per term, earning .25 credit for each class. Class times vary between 7:50 a.m. and 2:15 p.m. to allow flexibility in scheduling.

### **Include THS stats**

#### **b. What changes, modifications, or updates have been made to the school's action plan?**

None. A leadership structure has been put into place, which involves a monthly meeting that oversees and updates the action plan.

**c. What progress has been made to implement the school's action plan since the last visit?**

**Goal #1: Develop/implement standards of respect and of responsibility—**

As a result of the accreditation process, each focus group determined that an attendance policy at Timpanogos High School was necessary. An attendance committee was created, which consisted of parents, teachers, students, an administrator, and a school counselor. The committee created a survey that was distributed to parents, faculty, and students to verify the need of an attendance policy for Timpanogos High School. From this process a school philosophy was created. The philosophy is stated below:

High expectations for school attendance improve academic achievement, graduation rates, responsibility, respect, school climate, and school safety. The THS community believes attendance issues are a parent-student-school responsibility, which involves all three entities working together to resolve attendance concerns. Listed below are the objectives of the THS Attendance Policy:

1. To provide students with successful learning experiences in each class
2. To teach responsible behavior by encouraging students to be accountable for their attendance
3. To support parent efforts in promotion of student attendance
4. To provide a safe, effective, and uninterrupted learning environment for each student

Statistical data shows from the 2005-2006 year to 2007-2008 there was an average decrease of 8.73 absences per student and an average decrease of 7.69 tardies per student.

Additionally, graduation rates since the inception of the attendance policy have increased from 82% to 90%. There is no statistical data to either prove or disprove that the increase is directly linked to the attendance policy. However, increased attendance certainly is a contributing factor to the increase in graduation rates.

Each student and parent has played a major role in the success of the attendance policy. They have had to refocus on the importance of being in class each day. Equally important, there has been a great effort on the part of the teachers to make each day meaningful with the ultimate goal that every student can learn and be successful. Although statistical data for atmosphere is impossible to measure, teachers, students, and parents have commented on the effectiveness the attendance policy has created. Students running to class, cleaner hallways, and a more concerted effort to arrive on time all have provided for a more positive atmosphere that is more conducive to learning.

**Goal #2: Competency—**

The desired result of student learning is that students will be competent in every area of their educational experience and make annual progress toward the goal of excellence. Understanding by Design (UBD) is a curriculum design strategy through which individual teachers build coordinated curricula to reach our goal. Teachers involved in this program look at answer these three questions of learning: what do we want students to understand, know, and do; how will we know if they understand, know, and can do; and what learning activities best help students achieve these learning targets. Our training in UBD began in 2003 and has been ongoing with groups of 10-15 teachers each year through 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008. Currently, 41 of 62 (66%) of our teachers have participated in this intensive professional development program. Training takes place during the summer and fall of each school year and is funded through THS School Community Council resources. This investment in curriculum development is a vital tool in helping THS achieve the Alpine School District goal of a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all our students.

**Goal #3: Involvement of stakeholders—**

For the first twelve years that Timpanogos High School existed, there were three “traditional” parent/teacher conferences held per year. These conferences were all held in the gymnasium with the first conference lasting 6 hours and the second and third conferences lasting 4 hours each for a total of 14 hours. Teachers were compensated for two seven-hour days.

Two years ago, after our accreditation visit, we organized a committee including an administrator, teachers, parents and students to look at how we could improve parent/teacher conferences. The committee researched best practices nationally and in our district. We determined to have one “traditional” conference to begin the year and then to have two student-led conferences that would be held in the students’ A2 classrooms. Parents were still able to visit any teachers in their classrooms.

One purpose of the student led conferences was to promote student learning. Research showed that student- led conferences could be a powerful tool to help students with their learning. They give students critical skills for self-directed learning by having them articulate what they know, what they need to improve and how to set goals. Students would need to collect evidence or proof of their learning, to think through and self-evaluate areas of strength, as well as areas they needed to improve, and to set goals for future learning. Involving students and parents in the assessment and evaluation processes would also give them ownership in their learning. The practices of self-reflection, tracking and sharing their learning and goal setting should increase student motivation to do well. Student-led conferences should accomplish three goals:

1. Celebrate and promote learning
2. Increase communication skills
3. Increase commitment to be a self-directed life-long learner

For various reasons there did not seem to be much buy-in for the student-led conferences from students, parents or teachers. There were some great successes that first year but student-led conferences as a whole were not very successful.

This year we held our “traditional” first conference in the gym. We made some adjustments to the student-led conference format and held them again in individual classrooms for the second conference. We decided to return to a traditional conference in the gym for our third conference this year. Because our administrative team is confident that student-led conferences do have a positive impact on student achievement, we will continue to educate our students, teachers, and parents about the benefits of these conferences and will continue to hold one student-led conference every year.

#### **Goal #4: Writing—**

This goal has not been addressed collaboratively at this point in our school improvement efforts.

#### **d. How has progress to implement the school's action plan impacted student achievement?**

#### **Goal #1: Stakeholders will develop and implement standards of respect and responsibility for all THS community members (i.e. attendance, electronic devices, etc. )**

Attendance Policy created and implemented

#### **Goal #2: All teachers will be trained in and implement Understanding by Design (UBD) strategies.**

Understanding by Design (UBD) training  
Power Standards, Unit Targets, and Quality Assessment implementation

(Get info. from Bonnie Jennings on Pre-Cal)

(Get info. from Michelle business team)

(Get info. from Donnalee)

#### **Goal #3: Involvement of all stakeholders in the educational process will be increased.**

Presence of SCC at in-service meetings (info. needed)

End-of-school survey (info. needed)

### **THS Website**

We have a few core things that we wish to accomplish with the THS website. First, we see the website as an important communications and PR tool for the school. It is important for THS to have a professional face, something that parents, students, and teachers feel represent the school on the world wide web. Along these lines, we want the website to be an effective medium for communication between the school and its patrons.

To accomplish this, parents can get information from the website about everything from ARC to calendar events. Students can get announcements from teachers as well as academic resources such as documents, PowerPoints, and assignments.

For the near term, we want to get all department pages updated and provide a place for parents and students to get a snapshot of each department. Each department has a webmaster whom will create department pages with a photo of each teacher, an email link, and a link to individual teacher web pages. The department page will also contain a section for announcements and a section for general academic resources (i.e. internet links, etc.). Eventually, we want all teachers to have web pages of their own, which will have announcements, instructions, and links to assignments.

Again, the THS website is and will continue to be an important communication tool and will progressively become a more important part of our school culture.

### **Goal #4: Writing will be emphasized across the curriculum. Students will have opportunities to write in each of their classes.**

This goal hasn't been addressed school-wide.

- e. **Since the last full-team visit, what progress has been made on the implementation of the DRSLs including development of indicators, explicit instruction, common assessments, etc.?**

Currently, we have indicators. However, they haven't been revisited or addressed.

#### ***Competence:***

a. Collaboration meetings help meet course competencies because they are creating power standards as well as common and quality assessments. These power standards will be available on the school website and on teacher websites by the end of the school year 2008-2009.

#### ***Communication:***

a. Although communication is a DRSL, specific efforts have not been made to implement its indicators. We need to revise them.

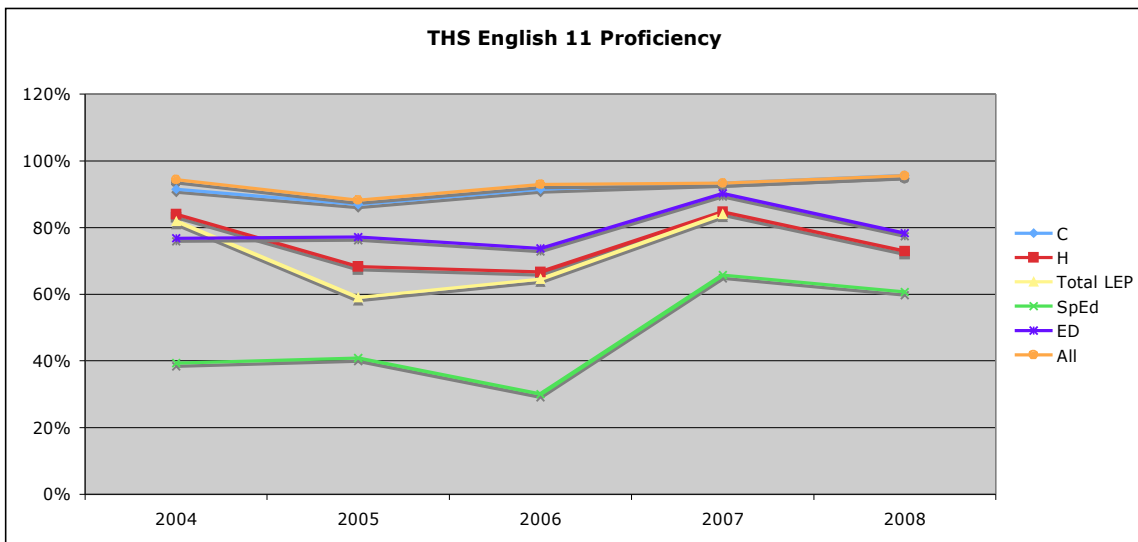
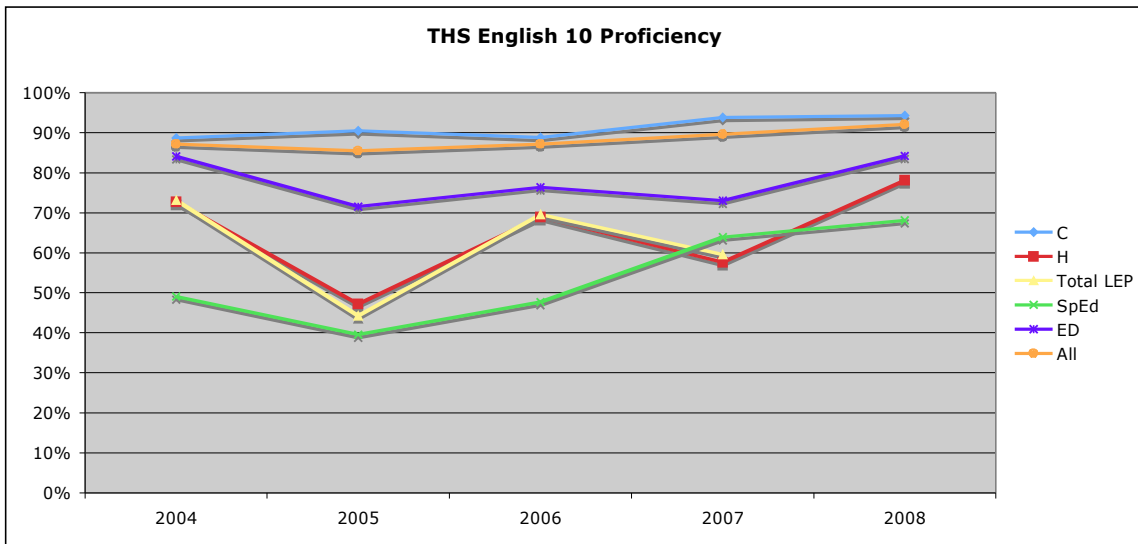
#### ***Character:***

- a. Attendance Policy implemented.
- b. Wolf PACK club created to increase school spirit and good sportsmanship.
- c. Region Sportsmanship Summit hosted at the school
- d. Service projects increased
- e. Student recognition increased
  - o Pride of the Pack
  - o Display cases
- f. School pride video segments added
  - o Littering
  - o Backpack in the lunch room

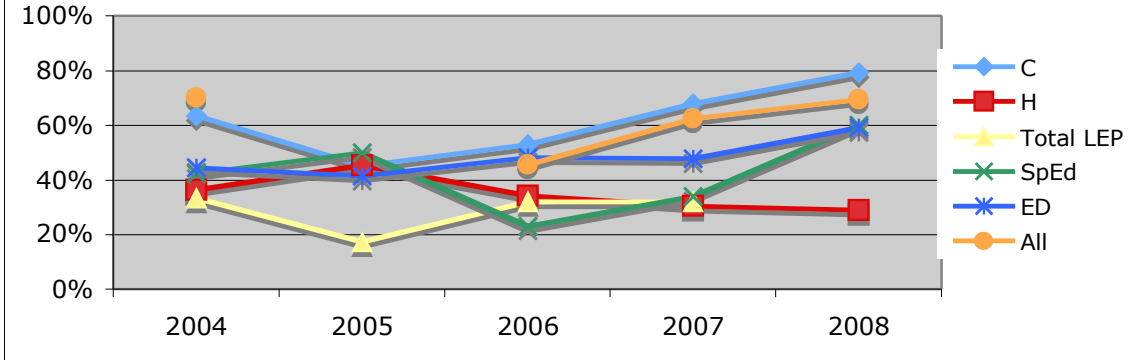
**f. What progress has been made on the major recommendations of the Visiting Team?**

- We started revisiting the action plan
- We have not refined the DRSLs or their indicators
- We have implemented an attendance policy and tracked attendance. We have not used the data to correlate with student achievement
- We continue UBD training
- We collect and disaggregate data, primarily for CRT testing

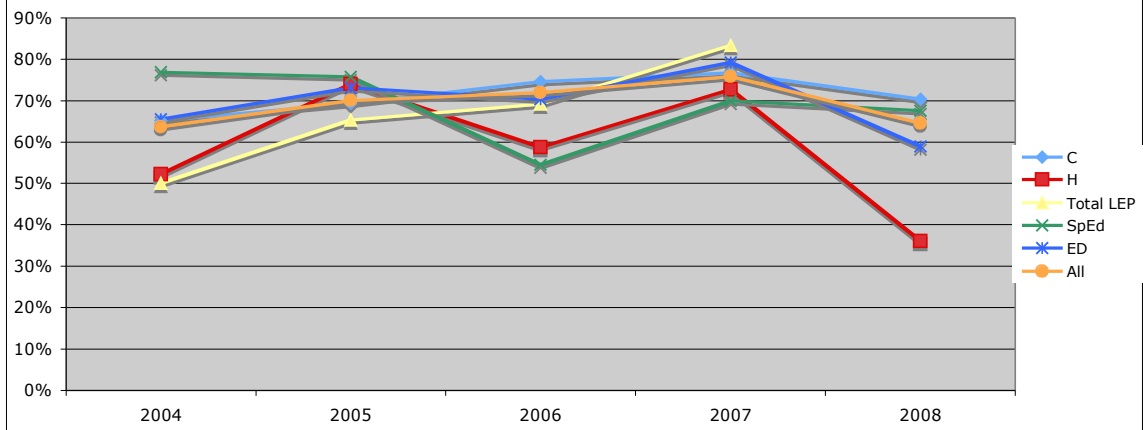
CRT data has been disaggregated to better identify who is and who is not learning. In most subjects, the data shows a strong positive trend toward proficiency for special education students over the past several years. The trends are less clear for Hispanic, LEP, and economically disadvantaged students. Small sample sizes in algebra and geometry, and in the subgroups, lead to more dramatic variation in proficiency percentages than in the population as a whole.



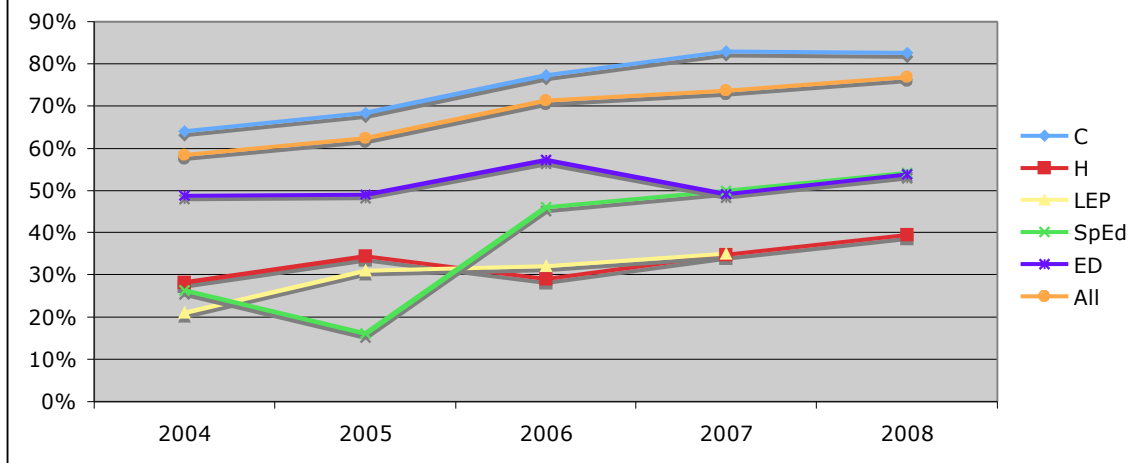
### THS Algebra Proficiency

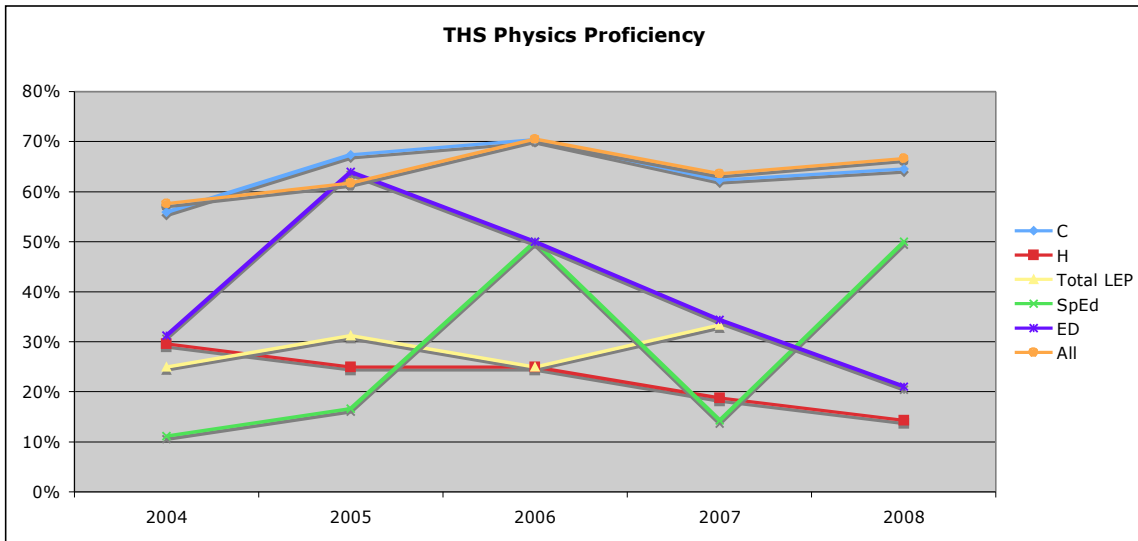
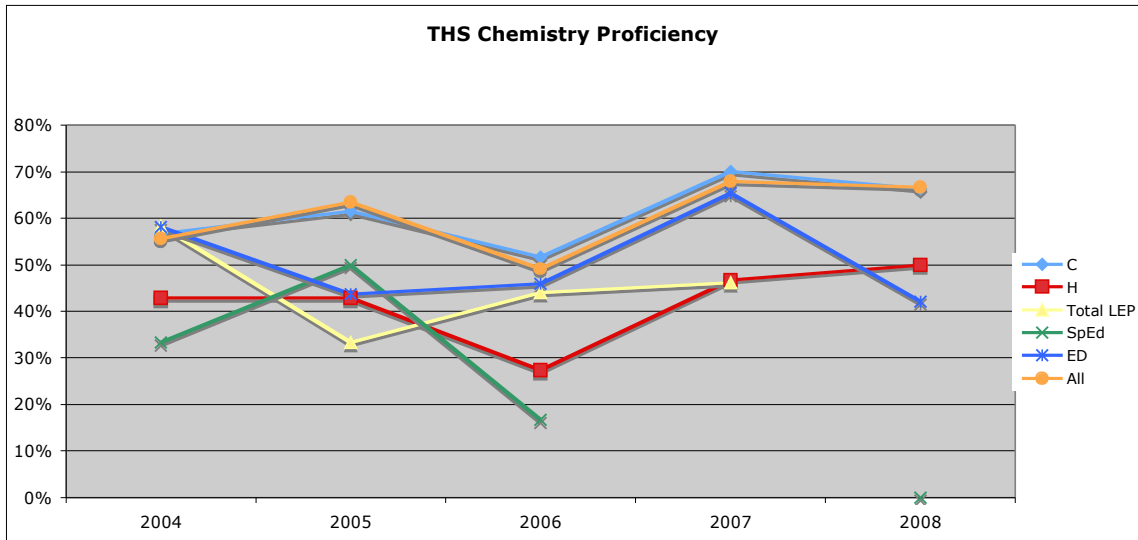


### THS Geometry Proficiency



### THS Biology Proficiency





**g. What organizational growth activities based on the major recommendations of the Visiting Team have been undertaken at the school?**

**h. How has progress on the recommendations of the Visiting Team impacted student achievement?**

Logically, student achievement has improved due to UBD training and to the attendance policy. However, because of the number of variables, we don't have data to support these assumptions. There has not been much progress with the recommendations.

Steve Jackson, a UBD trainer and a member of the Executive Leader Team says, "Student achievement is clearly the focus of both Understanding by Design training and Professional Learning Communities; in fact, they are the only reason for their existence. Nevertheless, it is difficult to directly attribute recent improvements in student success at THS to either of these two programs alone. We measure our participation in the programs, products created through them, and have a sense that they are really making a difference for our students. We are committed to their purpose and excited about the impact they will continue to have in helping students."