

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
November 14, 2005	Reflective Questioning	Battle Creek McCamly Plaza Hotel
November 15, 2005	Reflective Questioning	Battle Creek McCamly Plaza Hotel
December 5, 2005	Leadership Institute	Marriott at University Place - East Lansing
January 23, 2006	Collaborating for Students Success - CSS	Marriott at University Place - East Lansing
February 6, 2006	Reflective Questioning	Battle Creek McCamly Plaza Hotel
February 7, 2006	Reflective Questioning	Battle Creek McCamly Plaza Hotel
March 6, 2006	Leadership Institute	Kellogg Center - East Lansing
March 20, 2006	Collaborating for Students Success - CSS	Marriott at University Place - East Lansing
May 1, 2006	Spring Forum	Kellogg Center - East Lansing
June 19, 2006	Collaborating for Students Success - CSS	Traverse City Holiday Inn
June 20, 2006	Collaborating for Students Success - CSS	Traverse City Holiday Inn
June 21, 2006	Collaborating for Students Success - CSS	Traverse City Holiday Inn

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Our Mission
“To assist teachers, students, parents, and community members in their efforts to create true learner-centered schools, using the principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools.”

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MCES reports MEAP results - Pages 4-7.

ESSENTIAL NEWS

High School Redesign Strategies: MCES Change Model

By Patricia MacArthur

Rigor, relationships, and relevancy are at the heart of high school reform. The Michigan Coalition of Essential Schools has a Change Model that addresses these 3 R's and is based on extensive school reform research by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE). CPRE reports four elements are needed for successful school reform: clear ambitious goals matched with the high standards of student achievement, change in instructional practice, intense professional development and accountability that focuses on measurable increases in student learning. MCES works with high schools in each of these four areas.

Clear academic goals based on data serve as the core of the work within the classroom. Breaking Ranks II requires high schools to identify a set of essential learning; MCES helps schools achieve this through curriculum alignment using the standards from the Michigan Framework as a foundational piece. Mike Schmoker's process for action research helps individuals and groups of teachers utilize the Cycle of Inquiry to continually improve the rigor for every student. One of the CES principles is that "the school's goals should apply to all students, while the means to these goals vary as those students themselves vary." This is compatible with Breaking Rank II's recommendation that schools work toward eliminating tracking. The Cycle of Inquiry continually presses teachers to make database decisions, learn and implement research based best practices and be held accountable for improving the achievement of students. It also requires teachers to continually look for and implement the best instructional strategies. Teachers are supported through intense professional development as well as Collaborating for Student Success groups that look at student work.

MCES trains and helps implement Collaborating for Student Success teacher groups. These small professional learning communities examine student work to strengthen classroom instruction in a variety of ways. First of all, teachers utilize the Standards of Instruction and Assessment set forth in the Michigan Curriculum Framework. As teachers look for evidence of these standards in students' work, they are continually studying and receiving professional development in research-based best practice structures and strategies. Using Harvey Daniels and Marilyn Bizar's work on the structures of classrooms as a framework, teachers learn of best practice strategies supported by the work of Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde as well as Marzano. Department grouping is often discouraged in the Collaborating for Student Success groups to encourage integration of curriculum. Use of Essential Question in the development of the curriculum alignment also helps with integration. This integration is also encouraged in Breaking Ranks II which recommends both real world experiences as well as teachers who have a broad base of academic knowledge.

HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN (continued)

MCES uses of the standards of instruction and assessment as well as the Common Principle encourages "principals and teachers to perceive themselves as generalists first...and specialists second"... to promote academic goals.

CES believes that the most essential of its Common Principles is "focus on helping young people learn to use their minds well." To this end, the school with CES support is continually examining through the collection of data how this goal is achieved. The end result of all CES work is to get teachers to focus on student achievement through shared norms and values, collaboration, making practice public, and reflective dialogue.

This is reflected in all of the work set forth in the MCES Theory of Change: creating a student achievement vision, using the Cycle of Inquiry for continual improvement of academic goals, learning and implementing best practice structures and strategies, assessing performance, and involving parents and community in the school.

The MCES Change Model provides a framework for educators to meet the recommendations set forth in Breaking Ranks II. The success is in the support provided through professional development and coaching for high schools to set goals, change instructional practices and hold themselves accountable for the increase of student achievement.

MIDDLE START

Collegial Peer Review

By Nancy Fenton

During this past year, three Middle Start schools - Bendle, Bunker, and Lewiston - were reviewed using a process resembling the School Quality Review, but tailored to meet Middle Start needs. In this process, a team of Middle Start network reviewers visits the school to look for evidence to support the school's question(s) about student learning. Evidence is found during classroom observations, student, staff and parent interviews, student shadowing, and in student work. Following the review, a report is given to the school in which reviewers have cited the requested evidence and generated questions, which prompts the school toward greater improvement.

From Bunker coach, Tracy Nofs', perspective, "The Collegial Peer Review (CPR) gave teachers a chance to broaden and deepen their perspective of the quality of teaching going on in their school. The school portfolio, based on data specific to programs and student achievement, provided teachers and coaches opportunities to focus in on how well the school was addressing its school improvement goals."

Roger Hoekenga, Assistant Principal at Bunker and a reviewer at Bendle Middle School, had this to say: "I was impressed in the knowledge base exhibited by the other members of the review team along with the depth of their commitment to provide as much evidence as possible of the school meeting its goals. The other big piece is that I had more conversations and deeper conversations with educators about instructional practices in the three days of the review than I'd had in my previous thirty years in education."

Joe Panici, a teacher at Bunker said, "Tons of anxiety going into the CPR, tons of things to get ready for the CPR, but when the group was here and we were doing the process...no problem! I was glad to have the team here to give us an 'insight' to our question."

Laurie Mancuso, a Bunker math teacher said, "I was apprehensive going into the process, mostly because I was learning a new curriculum and would have felt better at least knowing that! I feel that the reminders of HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) help me focus the questions I ask my students."

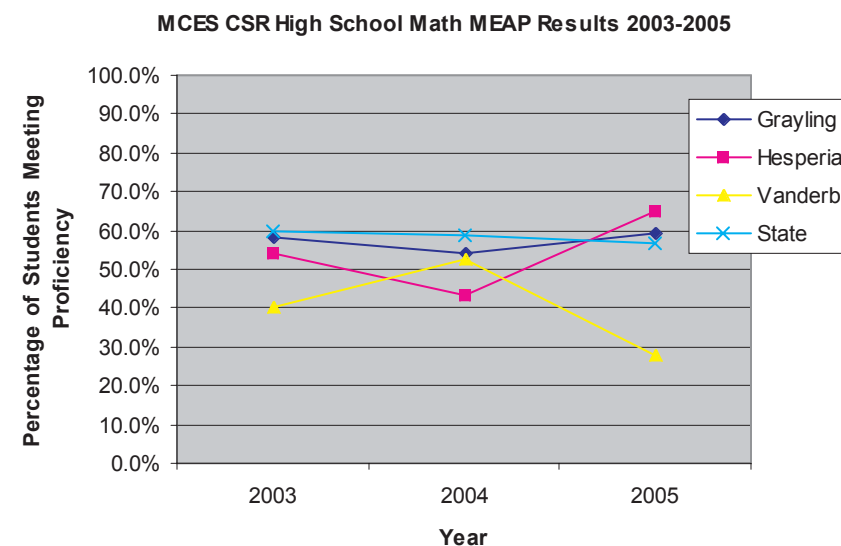
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"I was impressed in the knowledge base exhibited by the other members of the review team along with the depth of their commitment to provide as much evidence as possible of the school meeting its goals."

CSR RESULTS (continued)

High School Results

In math, Grayling and Hesperia increased the percentage of students meeting proficiency by 1% and 11%, respectively. The percentage of students across Michigan achieving proficiency on the Math test decreased 3%, compared to the average decrease of less than 1% for MCES high schools..



CSR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

New Schools, Continuing Schools, and Affirmed CES Schools

By Janett Bundy

Leadership teams representing 11 new schools gathered in August in Traverse City for three challenging days of work to begin their comprehensive school reform journey with the CES model guiding the process. The schools are all recipients of CSR (Comprehensive School Reform) grants awarded last spring. The institute focused on creating and developing professional learning communities, implementing the CES priority principles, and aligning school vision with best practice for teaching and learning. MCES is pleased to welcome: Albion HS, Washington Gardner Elementary, Washington Gardner MS (Albion), Inkster HS, Comstock Alternative HS, Green Meadow Elementary (Comstock), Marquette Elementary (Muskegon), Morton Elementary (Benton Harbor), Wenzel Elementary (Sturgis), Standish-Sterling HS (Standish), and Hope of Detroit Academy. MCES is also providing school reform services for the Middle Start school reform initiative in six middle schools: Shelby MS, Pattingill MS (Lansing), Roosevelt MS (Oak Park), Longfellow MS (Detroit), South MS (Saginaw), and Ricker MS (Buena Vista).

MCES continues the CSR partnership in Hunt Elementary, Wilson Elementary, McCulloch Elementary (Jackson), Covert MS/HS, and Union City HS. MCES is also continuing school reform services as a partner with Middle Start at Fennville MS, Bunker MS, and Steele MS (Muskegon).

Covert MS/HS and Jackson Northeast Elementary recently partnered with Educators for Social Responsibility to focus professional development on creating school and classroom environments that are safe, caring learning communities.

MCES is pleased with the continued commitment in our CES Affirmed schools to highly effective professional development that aligns with CES principles, as well as each school's vision for improved academic excellence.

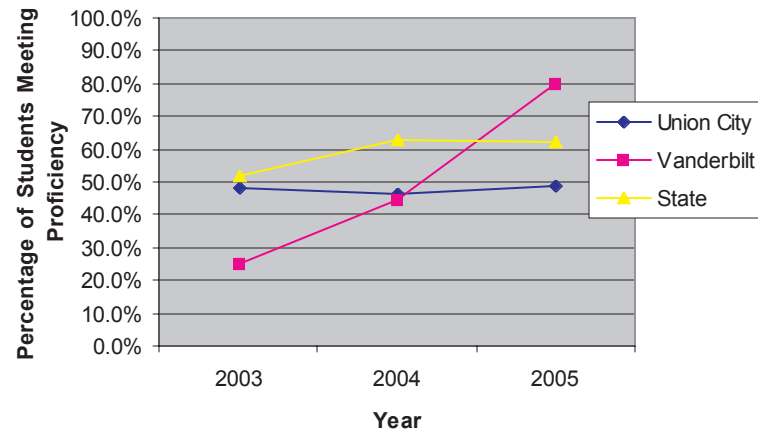
"MCES is pleased with the continued commitment in our CES Affirmed schools to highly effective professional development that aligns with CES principles, as well as each school's vision for improved academic excellence."

CSR RESULTS

Middle School Results

Vanderbilt Middle School made remarkable strides in math increasing the percentage of students reaching proficiency from 25% to 80% over the three years. The percentage of Vanderbilt students meeting proficiency surpassed the state average by 18%.

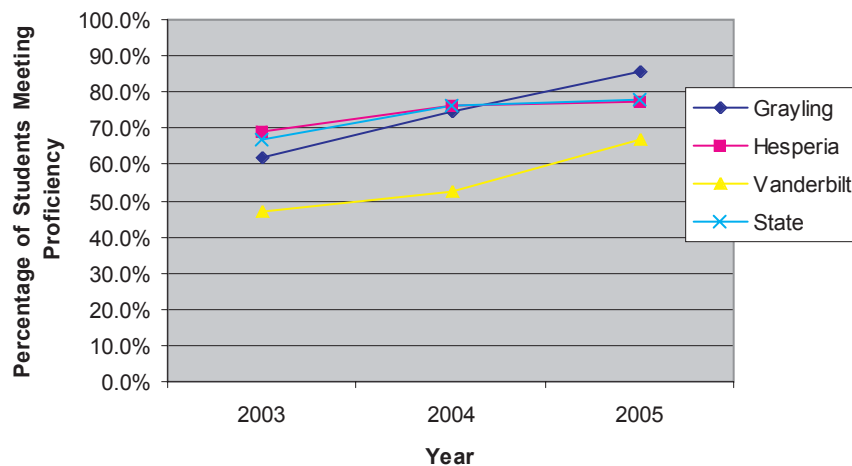
MCES CSR Middle School MEAP Math Results 2003-2005



High School Results

MCES high schools made significant gains on the MEAP reading test over a three-year period. Grayling increased the percentage of students meeting proficiency by 24% between 2003 and 2005 while Vanderbilt increased by 20%. In 2005, the percentage of students meeting proficiency in reading at Grayling High School surpassed the state average. The percentage of students meeting proficiency in Hesperia was less than 1% behind the state reading average in 2005. Among the three high schools completing the CSR grant, the average change over time was 17%, compared to 11% statewide.

MCES CSR High School Reading MEAP Results 2003-2005



STATE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

By Jim Bodrie

High School graduation requirements were the focus of the State Board of Education at a meeting held on October 5th in Lansing. The conversation about high school reform and graduation requirements is taking place across the nation at the state level. Here in Michigan, a new Michigan Department of Education survey shows the need for state schools to have mandatory curriculum requirements. The state's only current requirement for high school graduates is a civics class. Other requirements are left for local school boards to decide.

The recent State Board of Education meeting included discussions and presentations on the following topics:

- (1) What a high school student should know and be able to do
- (2) Removing and/or reducing barriers to high school reform
- (3) High school graduation requirements survey
- (4) Results and comments from interviews with high school students about high school reform

The push for more mandatory and uniform requirements is intended to better prepare Michigan students for college. More importantly, it is intended to better prepare Michigan high school graduates to compete successfully in a global marketplace that is increasingly more competitive.

The state sent information about the survey to public schools and charter schools - a group that included 647 possible respondents. Of those, about 45 percent - 293 high schools - responded to the survey. The results showed that about one-third of responding high schools specifically require algebra. The survey also reveals that districts have widely varied requirements of their high school graduates.

The survey indicates a pattern of graduation requirements including four years of English, three years of math, three years of social studies and two years of science. But a majority of respondents said they do not require a foreign language. More than a third do not require a class in the arts.

Mike Flanagan, Superintendent of Public Instruction said "This survey reaffirms we need to address this issue, while still respecting local control." The State Board of Education will continue to discuss, and is expected to address, the issue of high school graduation requirements at its next meeting on November 15, 2005.

MIDDLE START (continued)

It is important that the schools don't see the review as an end in itself. It is more appropriately part of an ongoing process of inquiry which the school conducts about its work. When a school knows clearly what it is looking for and has a well designed plan to get there, and when they routinely have in place ways to assess their progress, then learning from an external review is the next logical step in guiding their work.

As Tracy Nofs says, "The real work begins after the review is completed. It is critical that all staff engage in ongoing discussions about how they plan to use the information gained for follow-up in planning and implementation. All school improvement is ongoing. We learn. We make changes. We assess those changes. We make improvements. We have seen how important the Collegial Peer Review is in this process." With one year left in their Middle Start CSR grants, Bendle, Bunker, and Lewiston will continue to improve learning for each and every student.

"MCES high schools made significant gains on the MEAP reading test over a three-year period."

"...in Michigan, a new Michigan Department of Education survey shows the need for state schools to have mandatory curriculum requirements."

CSR RESULTS

MEAP Scores for MCES/CSR Schools

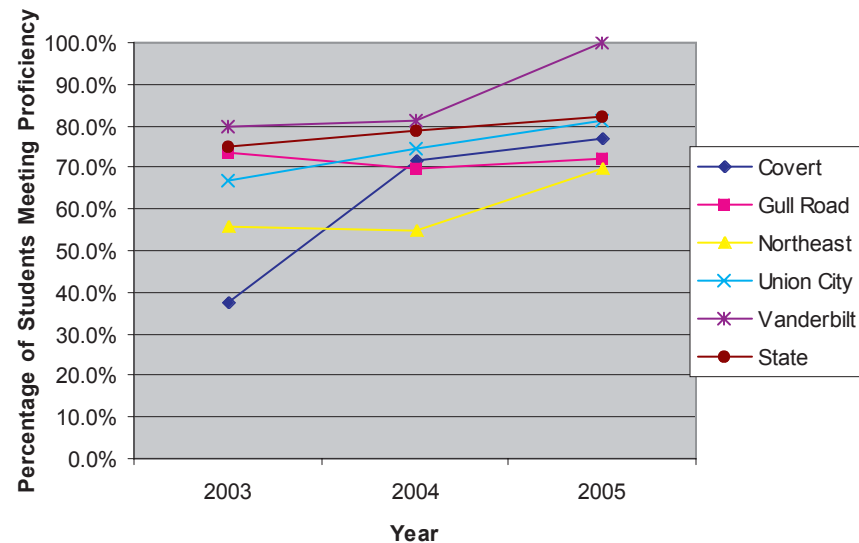
The Michigan Coalition of Essential Schools Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) efforts showed significant increases on MEAP results in the schools that began implementing the model in 2003 and completed the affirmation process in 2005. Between Year 1 and Year 3 of the grant, MCES schools showed large increases over a three-year time period, particularly in reading and math. These schools, serving students K-12, qualified for Comprehensive School Reform grants based on the high percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch.

MCES CSR schools generally showed significant improvements over time on both the reading and math MEAP tests. In addition to making great strides in increasing the percentage of students reaching proficiency within their buildings, the majority of MCES CSR schools also began to close the gap between their schools and the state percentage of students achieving proficiency on the MEAP reading and math tests.

Elementary School Results

In the five elementary schools that completed the grant, the average increase of students meeting proficiency on the reading test between 2003 and 2005 was 17%. Across the state of Michigan, the percentage of students meeting proficiency only increased 7%. Covert Elementary School had an especially high increase of students meeting proficiency on the reading test from 38% of the students achieving proficiency in 2003 to 77% meeting proficiency standards in 2005, an increase of 39%. By 2005, the percentage of students meeting proficiency on the MEAP reading test at Union City Elementary School was only 1% less than the state average of students meeting proficiency. Furthermore, 100% of Vanderbilt's 4th grade students reached proficiency in reading by 2005 thus surpassing the state average.

CSR Elementary School Reading MEAP Results 2003-2005

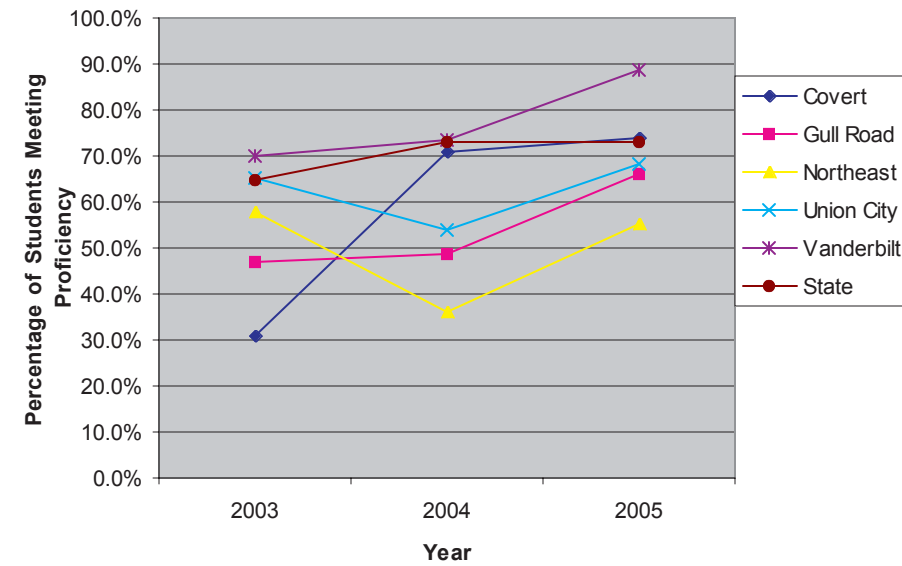


"The Michigan Coalition of Essential Schools comprehensive school reform efforts showed significant increases on MEAP results in the schools that began implementing the model in 2003."

CSR RESULTS

The percentage of students meeting proficiency on the math test in the state of Michigan increased by 8% at the elementary level while MCES elementary schools doubled that by having an average increase of 16% across all five schools over the three-year period. Covert Elementary School, Gull Road Elementary School, and Vanderbilt Elementary School showed significant gains on the math test. The percentage of students meeting proficiency increased respectively by 43%, 19%, and 20%, in those schools. By 2005, the percentage of students reaching proficiency at Covert and Vanderbilt surpassed the percentage of students reaching proficiency across the state in math. Covert demonstrated an astonishing increase of 43% of the students meeting proficiency in math, truly closing the achievement gap between its students and the state average.

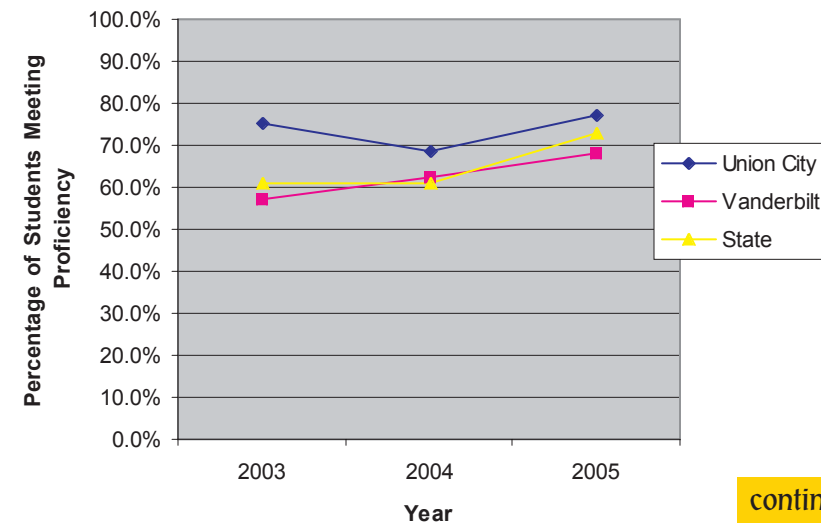
CSR Elementary School Math MEAP Results 2003-2005



Middle School Results

Both of the middle schools completing the CSR grant in 2005 made increases on their MEAP results. Union City Middle School surpassed the state average of students meeting proficiency in reading all three years of the grant. By 2005, the percentage of students meeting proficiency on the MEAP reading test at Vanderbilt Middle School was only 5% less than the state average of students meeting proficiency.

MCES CSR Middle School Reading MEAP Results 2003-2005



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"MCES elementary schools doubled (the State math proficiency) by having an average increase of 16% across all five schools over the three-year period."