

NCLB Hearing Panel 2006-2007

Final Report of Findings

TeWinkle Middle School

No Child Left Behind Law

The Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law requires Districts to provide assistance to schools that fail to meet their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) after several successive years and to impose increasingly restrictive sanctions when schools continue not to meet AYP.

Background of Student Performance Data:

In 2006, TeWinkle Middle School met 16 of the 25 NCLB/ AYP criteria. The four areas in which TeWinkle did not meet the adequate language arts performance level of 24.4% were: Hispanic Latino subgroup (20.0%), Socio-Economically Disadvantaged (22.1%), English Learners (12.1%), and Students with Disabilities (12.3%). The five areas in which TeWinkle did not meet the adequate mathematics performance level of 26.5% were: Schoolwide (24.9%), Hispanic Latino subgroup (15.6%), Socio-Economically Disadvantaged (17.3%), English Learners (11.2%), and Students with Disabilities (7.4%). TeWinkle was identified as a Program Improvement School Year 3.

In 2005, TeWinkle met 22 of the 25 NCLB/ AYP criteria. The three areas in which TeWinkle did not meet the adequate mathematics performance level of 26.5% were: Hispanic Latino subgroup (18.6%), Socio-Economically Disadvantaged (18.4%), Students with Disabilities (6.3%). TeWinkle was identified as a Program Improvement School Year 2.

In 2004, the criteria for adequate yearly progress were 13.6% for language arts and 16% for mathematics. The state report shows that TeWinkle met 19 of 25 criteria. The two areas in which TeWinkle did not meet the adequate language arts performance were: English Learners (7.9%) and Students with Disabilities (7.4%). The four areas in which TeWinkle did not meet the adequate mathematics performance level were: Hispanic Latino subgroup (12.6%), Socio-Economically Disadvantaged (14.1%), English Learners (9.4%), and Students with Disabilities (7.5%). TeWinkle was identified as a Program Improvement School Year 1.

TeWinkle has consistently not met its mathematics performance targets.

One hundred out of 254 Hispanic students (39.4%) are in general math in 8th grade while 14 out of 75 White students (18.7%) are in general math in 8th grade.

TeWinkle's progress on the Academic Performance Index (API) during the past three years has been up and down, starting with decrease of 5 points in 2004,

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followed by an increase of 36 points in 2005, and a decrease of 10 points in 2006. The net change over the past three years has been an increase of 21 points with a current API of 675.

The Work of the NCLB Hearing Panel

The NCLB Hearing Panel was convened in October 2006 to investigate TeWinkle Middle School's situation, consider the sanctions written into the NCLB law, decide what action is necessary to sufficiently improve the education program based on the finding of facts, and write a final report that includes a rationale explaining (a) the interventions that will be continued and/or (b) any new recommended interventions (at least one of which must be NCLB sanctioned as described in Article 23.1 of the N-MUSD/N-MFT Collective Bargaining Agreement). The methods used included interviewing parents, students, and staff, viewing records, and visiting classrooms. The findings, sanctions, recommendations, and other interventions are based on the conclusions of the panel from its study of the school.

Findings of School Visitation

Through review of all evidence it was determined that:

- Rea Elementary students enter in 7th grade while all other feeder schools enter at 6th.
- There are some pockets of quality collaboration and instruction.
- The 6th grade program functions independently of the 7th and 8th grade programs.
- The 6th grade team works well together.
- Some 7th and 8th grade teachers communicated a negative outlook about their ability to positively impact student performance.
- There is little or no formalized teacher-to-teacher articulation with elementary feeder schools regarding academic expectations.
- The students spoke highly of their teachers and have the perception that teachers want them to be successful.
- Parents spoke highly of the disciplinary and family-friendly changes such as the mandatory tutoring and the Tele-Parent communication system.
- Parents indicate that children have opportunities to be challenged and that the counseling program actively supports students. However, there was a sense that more counselors are needed.
- Parents reported that some teachers see "the cup as half-empty."
- Some classroom environments were un-engaging and unkempt.
- Front office staff did not demonstrate a welcoming environment.

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- Staff reports that the new parent reporting process “Trojan Pride” is working well.
- The school has embraced Challenge Day to address student behavior issues and some staff participated.
- Students like the after-school programs and like the new Instructional Support Period (ISP).
- Students reminded the Panel that it is easier to learn when it is fun.
- Students indicate that more time is needed during passing periods between classes.
- Sixth grade students would like the opportunity to pick their electives and other grade levels would like more electives.
- Parents would like to see a greater emphasis on reading and language arts and indicated a need for improvement in the English Language Development (ELD) program.
- Staff reported several efforts towards positive behavior support through reinforcements such as the “Gotcha” Awards.
- Staff commented about a lack of a comprehensive, school-wide discipline plan with appropriate consequences.
- Some staff commented that there needs to be better communication between staff and administration.
- Some staff commented that there is a lack of trust between staff and administration.
- Some staff commented that a small group of students act out, destroying the academic environment with little or no consequences.
- Staff acknowledges the attempt at collaboration on the part of administration.
- No data was presented to support that early-out Friday has had a positive impact on student performance.
- The legal minimum number of required instructional minutes for TeWinkle is 56,230. In 2005-2006 TeWinkle reported 61,112 instructional minutes and in 2006-2007 they reported 59,112 instructional minutes. The minutes at all other N-MUSD sites are as follows: Ensign – 60,790, CMHS – 65,460, and CDMHS – 65,260.
- During the site visit the Panel observed or heard about many of the positive programs in place to support students. During the Public Appeals Hearing staff reiterated the existence of these programs being implemented.
- Staff communicated they feel that class sizes are too large.
- Staff communicated that solutions were out of their control.

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NCLB Program Improvement (PI) Year 3 Recommended Interventions

The Panel must make a recommendation to implement one or more of the following sanctions:

- X Replaces school staff
 - Implements new curriculum
 - Decreases management authority at school level
- X Appoints outside expert
- X Extends school year or day
 - Restructures internal organizational structure of school

After careful consideration, the panel recommends the following sanctions:

- X Replaces school staff:
 - The Panel gives the District the authority, in accordance with Article 23.4.5 N-MUSD/N-MFT Collective Bargaining Agreement, to replace school staff as deemed necessary.
- X Appoint outside expert:
 - Appoint an outside expert who has had successful experiences with middle school programs to:
 - immediately begin an aggressive process of observation, supervision, and evaluation of all staff with consideration of replacing school staff (classified, certificated, and administrative) as deemed necessary to move the school forward.
 - carefully monitor the ELD programs to ensure that the ELD students are making adequate progress and progressing appropriately within the ELD program, using the District-adopted ELD curriculum and pacing plan in all classes.
 - collaboratively develop a comprehensive school-wide discipline program with appropriate processes, consequences and rewards.
 - review master schedule for optimum student/teacher ratio.
 - examine the effectiveness of early dismissal on Fridays.
 - perform a curriculum and instruction inventory with particular attention to instructional strategies necessary to engage and

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improve the academic performance of the underperforming subgroups.

- institute an ongoing program of staff development to increase student expectations and successes, with particular attention to the underperforming subgroups.
- institute an ongoing program of staff development for increased staff empowerment to improve the school culture.
- work with administration and staff to implement an effective process of collaborative decision making.

X Extend the school year or day:

- Lengthen school day, as soon as possible, to be consistent with the average annual instructional minutes of other three 7th and 8th grade programs within the District which is 63,837. The Panel recommends that the minimum instructional minutes for TeWinkle be 63,800.

Other Recommended Interventions

(Please note: recommendations are not listed in order of importance.)

1. Provide more opportunities for meaningful, on-going, teacher-to-teacher collaboration with elementary feeder schools,
2. Train all staff in a school-wide classroom management/discipline program (i.e. Rick Morris, Lee Canter, etc.). Also, create proactive models to teach severely at-risk students to make better choices (i.e. Life Skills).
3. Make proactive efforts to get more parents involved in Parenting Wisely and the Parent Project through Project ASK.

Rationale for Recommended Interventions

The Panel came away from the TeWinkle study with a clear impression that this is a complex situation. Additionally, through the feedback received at the Public Appeals Hearings, the Panel heard the staff indicate a need for a more in-depth analysis of the TeWinkle educational program. This aligns with our initial recommendation for an outside expert to be appointed for a more comprehensive study of the TeWinkle program. Students at low-performing schools need as much opportunity as possible for academic instruction. Ultimately, these changes will lead to increased student achievement.

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Fiscal Impact

- Outside expert.
- Transportation costs associated with a change of schedule.
- Supervision of students associated with a change of schedule.

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Respectfully submitted by the NCLB Hearing Panel,

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