

Spring Lake Park Yesterday  
**EDUCATION TODAY**  
School District 16 Tomorrow

High Expectations, High Achievement For All. No Excuses.



**Spring Lake Park School District 16**  
Curriculum, Instruction,  
and Student  
Performance  
**Accountability**  
**Report**  
for 2004-05



[www.springlakeparkschools.org](http://www.springlakeparkschools.org)

**What's Inside?**

- Why are there so many days of testing? How does it impact classroom instruction?
- Adequate Yearly Progress requirements met in 179 of 180 subgroups measured
- Many significant gains made in reading and math in grades 3, 5, & 7
- New Beginnings elementary grade level configuration producing desired results for student learning
- Elementary academic teams 1st, 2nd in the nation
- What are those teachers doing? Do you ever wonder what happens on the days your kids don't come to school?
- Meeting the needs of the next generation: Task Force will recommend comprehensive facilities improvement plan

## Monitoring student progress and improving instruction through “Assessment For Learning”



**At the beginning of each new school year teachers face a room of new students eager to learn.**

**The challenge? Teach them the important information they need to learn.**

To teach students the important information they need to learn, teachers must continuously work together to align their instruction with the intended curriculum and assessed curriculum.

Teachers use a variety of assessment data to monitor progress and individually adjust their instruction to meet the needs of each and every student. Yes, it's a lot of work; important, necessary, and effective work.

The Spring Lake Park School District has been working to build a strong comprehensive assessment program balancing “Assessments for Learning” and “Assessments of Learning.”

These assessments are used to produce far more informed and effective instruction and help gauge the effectiveness of our curriculum and programs throughout the district.

“Assessments for Learning” are *formative assessments* that happen while learning is occurring. They are used to diagnose student needs, plan instruction, and provide students with feedback they can use to improve their work.

An example of this would be an assessment given during a unit to measure student progress towards the identified learning targets so that the teacher can modify instruction accordingly.

“Assessments of Learning” are *summative assessments* used to sum up achievement at a particular point of time. These occur *after* learning has happened.

These assessments are used to measure achievement status at a point in time for the purpose of reporting and accountability.

For example, unit tests and the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) are examples of Assessments of Learning. The results of unit tests are used to identify grades reported to parents on report cards.

The results of the MCAs are reported to the state and are used as an accountability measure for schools across the state as part of the “No Child Left Behind” law.

People often ask why the district has so many different assessments and how they impact classroom instruction.

The variety of assessments are important because they answer different questions for a variety of users.

To help understand the different assessments in Spring Lake Park Schools, go to page 3 and see the assessment chart we use. It provides an overview—including this year's schedule—of the assessments used throughout the district.

By creating a strong assessment program that balances Assessments of Learning and Assessments for Learning, Spring Lake Park Schools shows its commitment to continually monitor student progress and improve instruction.

**People often ask why the district has so many different assessments and how they impact classroom instruction.**

## Assessments are used to produce informed and effective instruction

*Dark shading: state testing Light shading: school district assessments No shading: optional or school-level tests*

Assessment	Grades	Purpose	Dates Assessed
Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) MCA—Reading MCA—Math MCA—Writing	3-8 & 10 3-8 & 11 5&10	To evaluate instruction against the Minnesota State Standards in Language Arts and Math	Reading and Math—Weeks of April 24 and May 1 Grade 10 Writing—January 31
Basic Skills Test (BST) BST—Reading BST—Math BST—Writing	9-12 for students who have not passed Reading or Math  Current 8th graders will take the MCA-II/GRAD in grades 10 & 11	To assure students have the basic skills needed to graduate from high school	Grades 9-12 students who have not passed: Reading—February 7 Math—February 9 Grade 12 students who have not passed: April 4-6
Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) Reading Math	2-8 2-8	To examine student growth and performance over time	Fall testing— September 19-October 7 Winter testing—January 17 - 31 Spring testing—May 8 - 26
Star Early Literacy	Kindergarten and 1	To analyze early literacy skills	September, November, February, April
Curriculum Based Measures (CBM)	2	To establish baseline reading levels that can serve as comparison points for charting student progress through the reading curriculum	September, November, February, April
District Math Assessments	K, 1, 2	To examine student growth and performance over time	September, November, February, April
Sight Word Lists	1, 2	To examine student growth and performance over time	September, November, February, April
EXPLORE	8	To assess achievement, career interest and study skills	November 29
PLAN	10	To assess achievement, career interest and study skills	October 25
Star Reading	Available to grades 1-8	To assess student reading level	Varies
Unit Tests	Elementary and Secondary	To assess student performance on the curriculum	Varies
Other classroom assessments	Elementary and secondary	To monitor and adjust classroom instruction. Also used to help students see where they are in their learning	Varies
Advanced Placement Tests	10 ,11, 12	To provide the opportunity to earn credit or advanced standing at most of the nation's colleges and universities	May
ACT/SAT	11, 12	College Admission Test	Throughout year

## District 16 meets all No Child Left Behind's AYP requirements, significant gains made on state tests



**Adequate Yearly Progress requirements met in 179 of 180 subgroups measured**

**Many significant gains made in reading and math in grades 3, 5, and 7**

### Significant gains in test results

Spring Lake Park School District 16 is encouraged about the academic progress being made throughout the district. Some highlights and explanations are provided here:

■ *District 16 accomplished all Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements as measured in 2004-05 as part of No Child Left Behind (NCLB).*

■ *When requirements are reviewed by schools as well, there are 180 separate*

*measures. Across the district, requirements were met in 179 of 180 subgroups.*

■ *District 16 is seeing academic gain across all subgroups and achievement levels in reading and math in grades 3, 5, and 7.*

This is a tribute to the work our teachers, principals, and support staff have engaged in for the past couple years.

At the elementary level we improved the number of students demonstrating proficiency in reading and/or math by better than 20% in a number of schools.

It is important to note that this achievement is improving across the spectrum of students.

There are gains within subgroups, and students who have already met proficiency are demonstrating ever greater achievement with greater numbers of students moving from level three, which demonstrates proficiency, to levels four and

five, the top two achievement levels.

Finally, the Minnesota Basic Standards Tests (BST) results, a graduation examination taken by 8th grade students across the state, were the highest we have ever had.

### MCA? No Child Left Behind?

Minnesota's accountability plan applies to all public schools. Each year, Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) are given to students in reading, math, and writing. All schools and districts are expected to show Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) towards meeting required participation and proficiency levels on state assessments.

The MCAs were given in grades 3, 5, 7, 10, and 11 during the 2004-2005 school year. Beginning in the 2005-06 school year these tests will be taken by all students in grades 3-8, as well as 10 and 11.

For the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability plan, progress is measured for all students in the categories of American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Black (non-Hispanic), Hispanic, White, Limited English Proficiency, Special Education, Free/Reduced Price Lunch, Entire Student Population of School or District.

For more information about the NCLB requirements for participation, proficiency, attendance, and graduation

please contact the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Accountability at 763-785-5524, or go to [www.springlakeparkschools.org](http://www.springlakeparkschools.org).

### Will my child have to pass the Basic Skills Test (BST)?

The BSTs are reading, math, and writing tests that students who entered grade 8 in 2004-05 or earlier must pass to receive a diploma from a public high school. Reading and math tests were first administered to these students in grade 8 and the writing test in grade 10. Students can re-take any of these tests twice each year and three times in grade 12.

Students entering grade 8 in 2005-06 or later do not take the BST, but will take the MCA-II/GRAD (Written Composition in grade 9, Reading in grade 10, Mathematics in grade 11). They must obtain a satisfactory score on each of these tests to graduate from a public school in Minnesota.

### More information?

Please read on in our annual report, or check our website to find more information regarding results specific to the various levels.

### School Information Report

A School Information Report is a document that provides an overall picture of a school and its results on assessments over time. If interested in one of these reports, call 763-785-5524

## Framework for the Future, created with community help, guides planning

The District 16 "Framework for the Future" was initially created during the 2003-04 school year by a group of 30 parents, community members, and district staff. It has since been used to guide all planning in the district.

A citizen-staff Strategic Framework Advisory Council reviews progress made towards identified strategic directions, as well as identifies emerging community needs and desires.

This results in the Framework for the Future being a living document that is frequently revisited and revised to provide a continuing focus on needs and emerging needs. It provides a focus—a measurable focus—for the coming years.

*A condensed version of the Framework for the Future follows:*

### Our Purpose Statement

*This is what we expect, this is what we strive for every day:*

High Expectations.  
High Achievement.  
For All.  
No Excuses.

### Our Values

- All learners have an inherent value and can learn and develop into contributing members of society.
- Hope in the future drives our present interactions and planning.
- We will provide an environment and culture of:
  - shared responsibility;
  - innovation;
  - valuing and respecting others;
  - integrity and honesty;
  - collaboration; and
  - accountability
- Education influences and contributes to a healthy community.

### Our Vision for the Future

*How do we want people to describe our district in three to five years?*

An ACCOUNTABLE, CREDIBLE school district as reflected by:

- High levels of achievement by all students
- Purposeful alignment of resources, structures and systems

A school community that demonstrates a CULTURE OF SUCCESS through:

- A secure and accepting environment
- Innovation and progressiveness
- A community focused on rigorous, purposeful learning for all

A school community that demonstrates SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMITMENT through:

- A capacity for deep collaboration
- A fostering of bold and shared leadership throughout the district on rigorous, purposeful learning for all

### Our Primary Goal

*To achieve our Vision for 2008, the District must focus on this primary goal:*

- Student assessment results will be among the state's best and will show no significant differences between any student groups.

### Our Strategic Directions

*Members of our school community can expect to see the following, beginning in 2004-05:*

- Fully fund and implement facilities utilization plan to enable the District Purpose and Vision
- Assess, design and implement Middle and High School academic program and services to meet the District goal of all graduating students prepared for success in society and the next chosen level of learning
- The District will formalize and encourage the creation and

sustaining of *innovation* to enable success

- District resources will be prioritized and restructured to enable prioritized curriculum and program development for continuous improvement in the learning for all students
- The District will work with the community to develop a shared understanding, awareness and support through communications, connections, and conversation

### Our Success System

*will be measured by...*

- High Student Performance and Achievement
- High Performing Staff
- Family and Community Communications, Connections, and Partnerships
- Safe, Supportive, and Welcoming Environment
- Governance
- Effective Resource Management

Staff, parents, and community members have developed an Accountability Scorecard, with success indicators within each of the areas above.

### Advisory Councils for the School Board

Two councils, the Strategic Framework Advisory Council and Systems Improvement Advisory Council, meet throughout the year to facilitate the work of the Framework for the Future for the School Board. A part of the School Board's planning process for the District is to engage the public and community for its valuable input.

Members of the community are able to share their views and provide collective and individual recommendations to the School Board and administration for their consideration in planning and decision-making.

*Please see the back page for more information about these Advisory Councils.*

## ***New Schools, New Friends, New Beginnings: New 2005-06 Elementary***



**In the fall of 2003, we had 25 elementary sections--affecting 715 students--above our desired class size ceilings. In 2004 there were 24 sections--affecting 652 students--above the ceiling.**

**This fall, in 2005, there are zero elementary sections over the class size ceilings and zero students that are negatively affected.**

In September 2005, after two years of research and study, sharing with and listening to the community, District 16 made the switch from four K-5 elementary schools to three K-3 schools (Woodcrest Elementary, Kenneth Hall Elementary, and Park Terrace Elementary) and one grades 4-5 school (Westwood Elementary).

The new configuration was judged by a citizen-staff committee to most successfully meet the criteria set by the School Board to help ensure success and high achievement for all learners. The decision-making criteria included:

- *enhancing student achievement*
- *achieving class size equity and fairness*
- *becoming more financially efficient*
- *achieving equity in support services*
- *achieving equity, enhancing school programs*
- *creating similar school populations*
- *flexibility to respond to changing enrollments*
- *achieving long-term solutions*
- *number of and ease of school-to-school transitions*
- *transportation implications*

Prior to the School Board's November 2004 vote to reconfigure, Board Chairman Jim Amundson said, "We wouldn't have gone down this road if we didn't see the possibility of real and viable and meaningful results. I'm in favor of any configuration that provides the best possible environment for learning."

He added: "We want to get better every year, and we will get better every year. I truly believe that this new configuration will improve our school district and the academic achievement of all students."

Following the Board decision, the district developed a transition plan based on the input of staff and parents, to address student needs; staff needs, ideas, and concerns; and parent and community ideas and concerns.

The resulting Transition Plan had 15 task forces and work groups, with staff and/or parent membership, to ensure a smooth transition.

These groups worked throughout the winter and early spring on transition areas including student and family transitions, teaching and learning core support, curriculum and instructional materials, media materials, classroom placement, transportation, technology support, and the moving process.

The transition process and the upcoming 2005-06 school year at the elementary level became known as "New

Schools, New Beginnings, New Friends."

***Since the beginning of the 2005-06 school year, Superintendent Don Helmstetter has made a number of observations based upon the changes:***

■ As a district, we knew there would be challenges in this transition process and we spent a lot of time planning and preparing for the start of school.

We wanted it to work perfectly, just as all parents and students did, and we *are* seeing some very good results.

■ Our class size ceilings are better than they have been in well over a decade. Even though enrollments have grown at every grade level, this fall, for the first time, the district was able to quickly and efficiently provide appropriate staffing in classrooms to accommodate that growth in an equitable and proactive manner. This is a very positive result of New Beginnings.

In the fall of 2003, we had 25 elementary sections (affecting 715 students) that were above our Board's desired class size ceilings, and in 2004, there were 24 sections (affecting 652 students) that were above that ceiling.

This fall, 2005, there are zero elementary sections over the class size ceilings and zero students that are negatively affected.

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## *grade level configuration produces positive, desired results*

■ Our kindergarten enrollment, which has been higher than 307 only once in the past twenty years, has reached 354. In fact, on September 1 and 2, we registered 14 new kindergarten students.

■ Another positive result of decisions made in our New Beginnings elementary reconfiguration is that elementary students are receiving the most equitable levels—ever—of art, physical education, and music at each of the schools.

■ Teachers have already enjoyed the opportunity for grade level professional learning community training, and they'll use their mutual planning time together to address student needs and teaching strategies.

■ According to former state demographer Hazel Reinhardt, our district will see an enrollment growth of over 400 students at the elementary level and nearly 400 more students in the secondary schools.

This growth has already begun and will reach the 800-student increase within 6-10 years, Reinhardt says.

The growth is largely reflected in the development areas in the northern section of our school district, but we're seeing it in other areas as well.

Our enrollment in September 2004 was 1,885 elementary students and in September 2005 we have 1,964 students enrolled in our elementary schools—an increase of 79

students from last September and over 100 students since last June. Even without adding our Learning Alternative Community School enrollment, our student enrollment grew from 4,106 to 4,307 between last September and this September.

Last spring, we projected 300 kindergarten students and by August 13 we indeed had 302. But, by September 7, the number of kindergarten students rose to 352 and it is still growing.

We projected last year that reconfiguration would create classroom balance, lower class size ceilings, and provide more effective use of elementary teachers. We believe that all of this has occurred and our feedback from parents, teachers, and staff has also been extremely encouraging.

Many of the reconfiguration's changes, made to benefit student learning and achievement, are achieving the desired results. While the administration is pleased with this, it is obviously our students and teachers who benefit most.

At a Board meeting in September, Assistant Superintendent Jeff Ronneberg compared our present number of teachers and staffing with what would have been needed to maintain the same class size ceilings, balance, and equity based on last year's configuration. The difference is significant.



■ In last year's configuration, we would have needed an additional five teachers. Multiply these five teachers by an average teacher salary and benefits figure and the district would have spent an additional \$250,000.

■ Based on the enrollment growth that occurred over the summer, we absolutely would *not* have been able to maintain our previous K-5 boundaries. If we had, Woodcrest Elementary, as one example, would have greatly exceeded its building capacity with 644 students.

■ Boundary changes, therefore, would have been necessary and, as we demonstrated last fall, that would have impacted many students and families and would have had a huge impact on our transportation budget.

The growth within our school district, while very positive, is not without its issues. Classroom space is reaching its limit and this is among the many issues being

addressed by the citizen-staff Facilities Utilization Study Task Force that will make recommendations to the School Board for a major facilities improvement plan.

We've emphasized "*New Beginnings*" this fall, and it looks as if we indeed have a very good beginning to this new school year. Anything new creates excitement—and sometimes a little anxiety, but we believe it's a "new beginning" of a new era of quality programs, services, and outcomes that appropriately reflect our district's purpose.

**Not including our growing Learning**

**Alternatives**

**Community School, student enrollment**

**grew from 4,106 to**

**4,307 between last**

**September and this**

**September.**

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: Adjusting instruction to enhance student learning



Teachers work together to continuously align their instruction with their learning targets, and use a variety of assessments to monitor student progress and adjust instruction to meet student needs accordingly.

At the beginning of each new school year, elementary teachers face a room of new students eager to learn.

In order to ensure high levels of learning for each student teachers need to work together to continuously align their instruction with their learning targets, and use a variety of assessments to monitor student progress and adjust instruction to meet student needs accordingly.

Below you will find brief descriptions of the types of assessment teachers engage in to improve student learning.

### The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs)

are one measure of a complex system — a snapshot in time — on one achievement test

The **Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments** are a state standardized assessment, in the areas of reading and math, that all third and fifth grade students take each spring.

This assessment is part of the Federal No Child Left Behind accountability legislation. Student results are reported by proficiency level by the State. Levels 1 and 2 demonstrate achievement below proficiency or grade level, while levels 3, 4, and 5 demonstrate grade level proficiency or greater.

District 16 also conducts a deeper analysis of MCA results than is provided by NCLB, which simply compares, for instance, this year's 5th graders to last year's.

An example of the deeper study conducted by the district involves examining progress made from 3rd to 5th grade, as well as progress made on specific elements of the test. This analysis is not provided or considered by the State, and that is not taken into account by the NCLB system.

Our elementary MCA results demonstrate signs of significant improvement, and we are encouraged by these. However, the district also uses a number of additional ongoing assessments to measure student learning.

For example, students take a computerized assessment, the **Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)**, three times a year in grades 2-5.

The MAP measures student progress in reading and math. The scale used to measure progress is called the RIT scale. It is used to chart a student's progress over time.

MAP assessments are important to teachers because they let them know where a student's strengths are and if help is needed in a number of specific areas.

A particular strength of the assessment is that it identifies expected growth targets for individual students, as well as each school, based upon where students scored on the assessment in the spring of the previous year.

In addition, **Common Assessments** are developed by grade level teachers to measure student progress towards identified learning targets. The teachers work collectively to study individual and group results on these common assessments, and adjust accordingly to meet the individual needs of each learner.

Spring Lake Park uses a set of **local primary assessments** to monitor individual reading and math progress throughout the school year. Reading assessments include graded sight word lists, CBM (fluency assessment), and phonemic awareness and phonics assessments.

In the spring of 2005, students in kindergarten and first grade started to take the Star Early Literacy Assessment. This computerized assessment provides teachers with timely information on students' phonemic awareness, phonics, and other early literacy skills.

### Highlighting Key Indicators of success:

#### MCA Testing: District 3rd Graders

##### Reading

■ 2005: 73% in levels 3, 4 or 5 (up from 66% in 2004)

##### Math

■ 2005: 70% in levels 3, 4 or 5 (up from 64% in 2004)

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: Significant test score gains, impressive results

### MCA Testing: District 5th Graders

#### Reading

■ 2005: 76% in levels 3, 4 or 5 (up from 76% in 2004, 68% as third graders in 2003)

■ 2005: 70% in levels 4 & 5 (up from 62% in 2004)

#### Math

■ 2005: 80% in levels 3, 4 or 5 (up from 73% in 2004, 69% as 3rd graders in 2003)

■ 2005: 70% in levels 4 & 5 (up from 58% in 2004)

### Local Primary Assessments

■ 96% of the first grade students and 92% of second grade students reached mastery on graded word lists, demonstrating significant progress towards our goal of all students as readers by the end of third grade.

■ On the second grade fluency assessment, 110 words per minute was set as the goal; the district average was 114 words per minute.

■ Twenty-six elementary students best in the nation with perfect scores in four recent national academic Olympiads.

■ 2nd grade academic team 1st in nation, 2003 National Social Studies Olympiad. 2nd grade academic team 1st in nation, 2003 National Geography Challenge. 3rd grade academic team 2nd in nation, 2003 National Social Studies Olympiad

### Measures of Academic Progress

■ All grade levels exceeded the district growth target in reading and math on the Measures of Academic Progress

### At a glance: academic progress by school

#### Woodcrest Elementary

*Made AYP in reading for all 9 subgroups, and in math in 8 out of 9 subgroups*

■ Woodcrest Elementary had exceptional results, including a better than 20% gain in percentage of students demonstrating proficiency at the third grade level.

■ In the fifth grade, the percentage of students in the top two levels (levels 4 and 5) improved by 10% in both reading and math.

■ While one subgroup at Woodcrest did not meet AYP in math (it missed by the narrowest margin possible) we are pleased to report that the individual students within this subgroup have demonstrated improvement and learning individually on our local assessments.

#### Park Terrace Elementary

*Made AYP in 2005 for all 18 subgroups*

■ We are excited to report the overall improvement demonstrated at Park Terrace, especially dramatic improvement gains that were



witnessed by the 5th graders since 2003.

#### Kenneth Hall Elementary

*Made AYP in 2005 for all 18 subgroups*

■ The fifth grade cohort made outstanding gains from third to fifth grade.

#### Westwood Elementary

*Made AYP in 2005 for all 18 subgroups*

■ Very positive and consistent improvement in achievement was demonstrated at Westwood Elementary in 2005. The percentage of students in the top two achievement levels improved a great deal since 2003 and 2004.

2nd grade academic team 1st in nation, 2003 National Social Studies Olympiad.

2nd grade academic team 1st in nation, 2003 National Geography Challenge.

3rd grade academic team 2nd in nation, 2003 National Social Studies Olympiad

## SECONDARY SCHOOLS: Ensuring that all are learning and progressing



Westwood Middle School, Spring Lake Park High School, and Learning Alternative staff are focused on preparing all learners for their years beyond the Spring Lake Park Schools.

The School Board has identified a clear goal for our secondary schools – ensuring that all learners are “college ready” at graduation, and are prepared for higher education if they so desire.

In order to ensure this high level of learning for each student, teachers and staff work together to:

- *continuously align their instruction with their learning targets,*
- *use a variety of assessments to monitor student progress, and*
- *adjust instruction to meet student needs accordingly, providing a system of interventions to support students who are struggling and extending the learning of those who are doing well.*

However, teachers cannot do this work on their own.

An effective system of support needs to be in place that facilitates student success. This is being addressed by the work of our Continuous Improvement

Task Forces, one at Westwood Middle School and another working at Spring Lake Park High School. Below you will find brief descriptions of the work of these task forces, as well as the types of assessments teachers engage in to improve student learning.

### Secondary Assessments

The gains in test results at the secondary level are encouraging. These gains were consistent on MCAs, the Minnesota Basic Skills Test (BSTs), and local assessments.

### Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments MCAs

are a state standardized assessment, taken by all students in the State, in the areas of reading and math. At the secondary level, this test was taken by all students in grade 7 in reading and math, reading at grade 10, and math at grade 11.

This assessment will also be taken in reading and math in grades 6 and 8 during the 2005-2006 school year.

Student results are reported by proficiency level by the State. Levels 1 and 2 demonstrate achievement below proficiency or grade level, while levels 3, 4, and 5 demonstrate grade level proficiency or greater.

District 16 also conducts a deeper analysis of MCA results than is provided by NCLB, which simply compares, for instance, this

year’s 10th graders to last years.

An example of the deeper study conducted by the district involves examining progress made from 5th to 7th grade, as well as progress made on specific elements of the test.

This analysis is not provided or considered by the State, and that is not taken into account by the NCLB system.

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) are one measure of a complex system — a snapshot in time — on one achievement test.

Our MCA results demonstrate signs of significant improvement, and we are encouraged by these. However, the district also uses a number of additional ongoing assessments to measure student learning.

**Minnesota Basic Skills Tests (BST)** are administered at the middle school and high school level and measure whether a student has learned the basic skills needed to live and work in today’s society.

The Basic Skills Tests ensure no student graduates from a Minnesota public high school without essential competencies in reading, mathematics and writing.

Tests in reading and mathematics are first given in

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## SECONDARY SCHOOLS: Ensuring that all graduates are college-ready

the 8th grade, and a written composition test is first given in the 10th grade. Students have multiple opportunities to pass these tests before graduation. This test will no longer be given in 8th grade, but will instead be part of the MCAs in the future.

For example, students take a computerized assessment, the *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)*, three times a year in grades 2-8, and we are piloting it this year at Spring Lake Park High School.

**Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)** measures student progress in reading and math. The scale used to measure progress is called the RIT scale. It is used to chart a student's progress from year to year.

MAP assessments are important to teachers because they then know where a student's specific strengths are and if help is needed in a number of specific areas.

**Common Assessments**, in addition, are developed by teachers within departments to measure student progress towards learning targets. These common assessments are assessments for learning, which are used by the teachers on an ongoing basis throughout the year to inform instructional and programmatic decision-making.

**Demanding courses predict top ACT scores.** The ACT test is one of two

college admission tests used to measure college-bound students' performance.

Spring Lake Park High School offers a variety of **Advanced Placement (AP)** courses. Colleges and universities across the country recognize the academic rigor of the AP courses students take while in high school.

Applicants with AP coursework and scores above 2 receive advance standing and credit from the institutions to which they apply.

Advanced Placement Course offerings at Spring Lake Park High School include opportunities in Physics, English Literature, Calculus, Economics, Spanish, History, Psychology, and Chemistry.

### Highlights: Key Indicators of Success

#### Westwood Middle School

■ *Made AYP for 2005 in all 18 subgroups*

The outstanding gains in test results at Westwood Middle School are exciting. These gains were consistent on MCAs, the Minnesota Basic Skills Test (BSTs), and local assessments.

The Westwood Middle School staff focused on these areas during the 2004-05 school year and the results reward the hard work. Again, the focus is not on the test, but the learning targets the district has for students.



#### Reading

■ 2005 MCAs: 77% levels 3, 4, 5 (up from 67% in 2004)

■ 2005 BSTs: 85% passed (up from 83% in 2004)

#### Math

■ 2005 MCAs: 74% levels 3, 4, 5 (up from 66% in 2004)

■ 2005 BSTs: 76% passed (up from 69% in 2004)

The Minnesota Basic Standards Test (BST) results were the highest we have ever had, and it is the first time we surpassed the state average in reading and math.

#### Spring Lake Park High School

■ *Made AYP for 2005 in all 18 subgroups*

Spring Lake Park High School met all AYP requirements in reading and math. In addition, students had better than 90% had better than 90% proficiency on the writing test.

#### Reading

■ 2005: 84.3% levels 3, 4, 5 (in 2004 it was 86.6%)

#### Math

■ 2005: 75.4% levels 3, 4, 5. Spring Lake Park High School was identified as a four-star school, indicating results in the top 25% in the state

#### Advanced Placement

In 2004-2005, 287 Advanced Placement exams were administered to Spring Lake Park High School students. Of those, 58%, scored a 3 or higher, earning college credit for the subject being tested.

We will continue to focus on increasing the number of students who are taking AP courses, while at the same time increasing the percent of students receiving a 3 or higher.

In 2004-05, Spring Lake Park High School had:

- 10 "AP Scholar with Distinction" awards
- 7 "AP Scholar with Honor" awards
- 12 "AP Scholar" awards

## SECONDARY SCHOOLS: Studies will help to meet goals for the future



### ACT

Spring Lake Park students earned a composite ACT score of 22.4 - higher than the Minnesota average of 22.3. Because the ACT scale is narrow and the number of students taking the test is high, a score advantage of one-tenth of a point may be statistically significant.

### Learning Alternatives Community

■ Made AYP for 2005 in all 18 subgroups

Students in District 16 Learning Alternatives Community School—an area learning center—continue to make progress. While we expect higher levels of proficiency among these students in the future, we feel good about the progress among individual students.

### Reading

■ 2005: 35.7% levels 3, 4, 5 (37.5% in 2004)

### Math

■ 2005: 46.8% levels 3, 4, 5 (up from 13% in 2004)

### Continuous Improvement and Effectiveness Study

The School Board has given a task force at both Westwood Middle School and Spring Lake Park High School the charge of engaging in a study of evidence-based best practices, benchmark high schools locally and nationally, and current local practices.

The studies will help to identify future directions that will result in all students being "college-ready" upon graduation from Spring Lake Park Schools, prepared to successfully attend higher education if they so desire.

In order to accomplish this charge, task force members at each school have been working since February of the 2004-2005 school year to identify and recommend the future practices and structures that will guide day-to-day practices in their schools.

This is being accomplished through the investigation of the following questions:

### Best Practices Study

■ *What evidence-based best practices, identified through a study of professional literature, need to be considered to guide practice at Westwood Middle School and Spring Lake Park High School?*

■ *What practices and processes have been implemented in highly successful middle and/or high schools locally and nationally that should be considered?*

■ *What are the current identified strengths and areas of opportunity at Westwood Middle School and Spring Lake Park High School?*

■ *What are the hopes, desires, and needs of students, staff, parents and community members?*

■ *What core values and beliefs will guide the day-to-day work of Westwood Middle School and Spring Lake Park High School?*

■ *What defines student success at Westwood Middle School and Spring Lake Park High School?*

■ *What do Westwood Middle School and Spring Lake Park High School desire to become in the future?*

■ *What practices and/or structures need to change in order to reflect best practice and the desires and needs of students, staff, and parents*

*to accomplish the school purpose?*

The task forces will continue to work throughout the current school year, with preliminary recommendations anticipated for administration by December 1, 2005.

Final recommendations are anticipated by March 2006.

What does

Westwood Middle

School and Spring

Lake Park High

School desire to

become in the

future?

## Teacher training is all about success for each and every student



The purpose of professional learning and development is to enhance the learning of all students by engaging all staff in ongoing learning and support that continuously and collaboratively develops their knowledge and skills.

This professional learning must be results-based and begin with a clear focus on student learning needs.

Collaboration and time for staff to work together is essential if all students are to be successful. According to

research by leading experts in the field, improvements in student learning will not be realized in the absence of purposeful professional development. So, how do we engage in this professional learning, to improve student achievement, in the Spring Lake Park Schools?

We have identified two goals that we will be working on district-wide over the next two years, that are aligned with our overall district goal that graduates who leave the Spring Lake Park Schools are "college-ready." These goals are:

■ *By spring 2007 all teachers will design and effectively use accurate assessments, utilizing practices consistent with Assessment for Learning, to guide instructional decision-making resulting in continuous improvement of student learning.*

■ *By spring 2008, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will be functioning at a high level (as measured by the district-developed Innovation Configuration) throughout the*

*district, resulting in continuous improvement of student learning.*

### What do those goals really mean for the students of the Spring Lake Park Schools?

All teachers in the district participated in Assessment for Learning training during the 2004-2005 school year.

This involved teachers receiving training in how to: clearly identify and communicate student learning targets, develop assessments to measure student progress towards these learning targets, and use the assessment results to modify instruction to meet the varying needs of students.

However, teachers didn't just "sit and get" this learning, teachers worked in teams to implement their learning in classrooms across the district.

In addition, over 50 teachers spent three days in June participating in a workshop during which they received further training in developing effective common assessments, and then collaboratively developed common assessments that are being used with students in each of our schools this year.

In 2005-2006, the teachers will continue training in Assessment for Learning on workshop days, when they work in their collaborative professional teams, which we call Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), before

and after school, and during the summer.

Speaking of Professional Learning Communities – this is a process that teachers are now involved with for a second year.

PLC is a process in which teachers work together on a regular basis to reflect on and answer four fundamental questions to improve student learning:

- *what is it we want all students to learn;*
- *how will we know when each student has learned the essential knowledge and skills;*
- *how will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning, or how will we deepen the learning for students who are exceeding expectations; and*
- *what does staff need to know and be able to do so we are able to collectively clarify student expectations, assess progress, and respond to student needs effectively?*

Professional Learning Communities honor the expertise we have within our schools as teachers collectively identify areas for needed improvement and effectively respond to student needs to continuously improve the learning of each and every student.

All teachers receive support from administration and teacher leaders in effective protocols, or tools, such as

-- continued --

## Every staff professional development day focus on student learning

examining student work, curriculum mapping, and lesson study, that they can use to clearly identify learning targets and student progress towards these targets.

### Do you ever wonder what happens on those days your kids don't come to school?

On a typical school day teachers spend the vast majority of their day working with students. However, we also know that if teachers work in a system that promotes isolation, students will not experience the success we all hope for.

It is because of this that we work hard to embed professional learning into each day and week for our teachers, which is time that is set aside for teachers to collectively work to improve the learning of students. This comes in small doses at different times of the day, however, and it is important that teachers have larger blocks of time in which they can learn and work together.

There are eight days within the school year that teachers are working when students do not come to school, and there are basically three types of activities that teachers engage in on these days.

#### *The first of these activities revolves around parent-teacher conferences.*

The teachers spend two days working directly with students and parents through these conferences. In addition, in

order for the conferences to be effective and productive teachers spend parts of two days preparing for these conferences, doing such things as meeting with other teachers who work with their students, preparing progress reports, and identifying samples of student work.

In addition, teachers will spend parts of these days working with members of their Professional Learning Community to do such things as examine student work, identify collective learning targets, or study student achievement data. They may also participate in staff meetings with their entire staff in professional learning and/or other activities aligned with their school continuous improvement plans.

*The second activity revolves around grading and communicating student learning.* An important responsibility for all teachers is reporting the learning of students. Teachers spend two days during the school year, at the end of grading periods, preparing report cards.

This is not something teachers rush through as they prepare students and parents with an accurate picture of the learner's progress towards learning targets. Again, teachers will spend parts of these days involved in professional learning activities described above.

*The final two days, and parts of each of the four days above, involve teachers working together*

#### *to improve student learning through professional learning.*

During the 2005-2006 school year teachers will spend the majority of these days involved in activities aligned with our goal related to Assessment for Learning.

All teachers will participate in training with a national expert on Assessment for Learning for parts of these days.

They will spend the remainder of these days with their colleagues applying this learning. This will involve activities such as identifying

learning targets, writing these targets in language that students and parents can understand, and studying current assessments, and/or developing new assessments, to measure student learning.

As you can see, teachers work very hard on the days your kids do not come to school.

While we know these days are not always easy for families, it is valuable and essential time for teachers to focus on improving student learning.

### ***Assumptions and beliefs that guide District 16 professional development***

*In alignment with the National Staff Development Council Standards, professional learning and development in the Spring Lake Park Schools:*

- creates and sustains a Professional Learning Community focused on student and staff learning throughout the district, fostering a norm of continuous improvement in the daily work of each school and all staff;
- is results-based, using a backwards planning model beginning with a clear focus on student learning;
- provides ongoing, long-term focus and support to ensure improvement, is job-embedded in nature, and provides adequate time for staff to learn and work together;
- aligns with the schools' and district's strategic framework and continuous improvement goals;
- recognizes that change is dynamic and is an individual and organizational process that must be planned effectively to meet the varying needs of staff;
- is data-driven, evaluated for effectiveness beyond staff satisfaction, using multiple sources of information to identify evidence of success in student learning. This takes place on a regular basis so that plans can be adjusted to meet the learning needs of students and staff.

## FACILITIES FOR THE NEXT GENERATION: Facilities task force will recommend comprehensive improvement plan, referendum in 2006

### Meeting the needs of this and the next generation of students: safety and security, educational adequacy, major renovation and new construction

On November 8, 2005, a citizen-staff Facilities Utilization Task Force will complete its ten-month study and give a final report and recommendations on a facilities improvement plan to the School Board.

The Board is expected to approve a plan by mid-December and to set a date for a 2006 Bond Referendum election. It is expected to be no earlier than February 28, 2006.

Since March 2004, District 16 has conducted a detailed review of mechanical systems, academic programming, technology, buildings, driveways, parking lots, play fields, and grounds. In addition, it reviewed significant deferred maintenance items such as roofing and window needs.

In addition, a 28-member citizen-staff task force has toured and reviewed all district sites, prioritized current and future facilities needs, reviewed enrollment and demographic data, and reviewed state guidelines related to renovation and new construction.

In a preliminary report to the School Board and at fall community information meetings, that task force has

begun to share its key findings and preliminary conclusions. Among them are:

- Significant deferred maintenance needs, totaling over \$30 million, are necessary in the district's 35 to 50 year-old facilities.
- Nearly 2,000 new housing units are projected in the northern part (Blaine) of the school district. Projected enrollment increases of over 800 students (a nearly 18 percent increase) have already begun to occur, leading to the need for additional classrooms and upgraded facilities.
- From fall 2004 to fall 2005, the district has 200 new students.
- Land-locked school properties are too small for today's state guidelines and greatly limit district renovation options and choices.
- In 1995, \$60 million in facilities improvements were identified, but less than half were part of a Bond Referendum. These needs are still there as are ten years of additional needs.
- When the cost "of renovating or improving a school facility approaches or exceeds 60% of the cost of new construction, a school district needs to replace the facility" is one of the many state guidelines. (See MN Dept. of Education web site.)
- The Department of Education says there is too much activity at the high school complex site, that additions or significant

improvements could be made to Kenneth Hall Elementary or to the high school, and that both should not be on the same site. This has led to only one viable alternative: reconfiguring and expanding Spring Lake Park High School and closing Kenneth Hall.

- The district should purchase additional land and build a multi-purpose 750-student new elementary school in Blaine. Virtually all new and projected enrollment gains have been in Blaine. Current figures show 61.4% of district students reside in Blaine, 21.7% in Spring Lake Park, and 16.9% in Fridley.
- Major renovation and new construction is necessary in the 50 year-old sections of the high school.

### Task force guidelines

The task force agreed that its facilities improvement plan, when completed, must:

- *improve safety and security at all sites*
- *provide for the correction of all health and fire safety issues*
- *complete all deferred maintenance issues that are crucial in the next five years*
- *provide for the actual and anticipated enrollment growth at all grade levels*
- *provide for the population growth in the north portion of the school district*
- *comply with federal, state and local statutes, regulations, and guidelines in*

*order to receive a favorable Review and Comment from the Minnesota Department of Education*

- *be cost-effective and academically sound, to provide the district with facilities that can meet its present and future needs in a rapidly-changing environment*

### Cost of the investment

In its preliminary task force report, titled "An Investment for the Future of our Students, Families, and Communities," the total cost of deferred maintenance, significant renovation, and new construction that includes an elementary school would be \$88-95 million. To put this sum in perspective, if this amount of investment is approved in a 2006 Bond Referendum, it would mean additional taxes of \$16/month or \$192/year for a home with an assessed market value of \$200,000.

### How to find out more

Following the task force's recommendation in November, and a School Board decision on a facilities improvement plan in November or December, District 16 will fully inform all district residents of the final facilities plan and of School Board decisions regarding a 2006 Bond Referendum.

Continual updates, under "Facilities Study/2006 Bond Referendum," on the district web site home page: [www.springlakeparkschools.org](http://www.springlakeparkschools.org)

## Community-staff advisory councils advise the district's School Board

*Two community-staff councils, the Strategic Framework Advisory Council and Systems Improvement Advisory Council, meet throughout the year to facilitate the work of the Framework for the Future for the School Board.*

*A part of the School Board's planning process for the District is to engage the public and community for its valuable input.*

*Members of the public are able to share their views and provide collective and individual recommendations to the School Board and administration for their consideration in planning and decision-making.*

### Strategic Framework Advisory Council

The Strategic Framework Advisory Council meets several times a year to gauge the effectiveness of the district's Strategic Framework, and to make revisions, as needed, for future strategic directions.

This involves a study of the district's Success System and progress made towards Strategic Directions, and Vision for the Future. It also includes a continued dialogue about emerging directions that may impact the community and the school district.

The council is made up of parents, community members, and staff. The members of this Advisory Council include:

**Parents & community:** Joel LeVahn, John Stroebel, Jeanne Kalien, George Walter

**Teaching staff:** Scott Smith, Erik Hendrickson, Jeanne Bennett, Brenda Sandberg

**Other district staff:** Jerelyne Nemanich, Kristin Goessel-Seery

**Principals:** Tom Larson, Glenn Martin

**Administration:** Jim Westrum, Karen Schaub,

Dr. Jeff Ronneberg, Dr. Don Helmstetter

**School Board members:** Jim Amundson, Gary Brisbin

### Systems Improvement Advisory Council (SIAC)

The Systems Improvement Advisory Council (SIAC) communicates community views related to overall school system improvement, and specifically related to teaching, learning, and accountability. The council is composed of parents, students, teachers, administrators, and community members.

SIAC members serve as a sounding board for the community, gain knowledge and provide input regarding systems improvement efforts, curriculum and its development, professional development, and instructional programs. This presents an opportunity to positively influence change throughout the school system.

The SIAC meets three times per year. For more information regarding SIAC, or if you are interested in participating, please contact Martha Wickman or Jeff Ronneberg at 763-785-5524.

Membership for 2005-2006, including community members, staff, and students, is set but there is still room for at-large members. The members of our 2004-2005 SIAC included:

**Community Members and Parents:** Sue Pyatt, Nancy Yee Litt, Ann Bryz-Gornia, Mindy Fitzgerald, Jim Hasling, Kelly Peterson, Lisa Monson-Hokenson, Karen Bassett, Pat Quarberg, Pam Owens, Jodie Luedtke, Kim Lynch, Sue Acker, Jodi Ruch, Kim Stariha, Nancy White, Chris Auman-Brown, Joy Talso.

**School Board Representative:** Colleen Vranish

**Staff Members:** Veronica Bong, Glenn Martin, Martha Wickman, Jeff Ronneberg



### Spring Lake Park School District 16

8000 Highway 65 NE  
Spring Lake Park MN 55432

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