



FWCS  
Educational Services System

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# INSTRUCTION

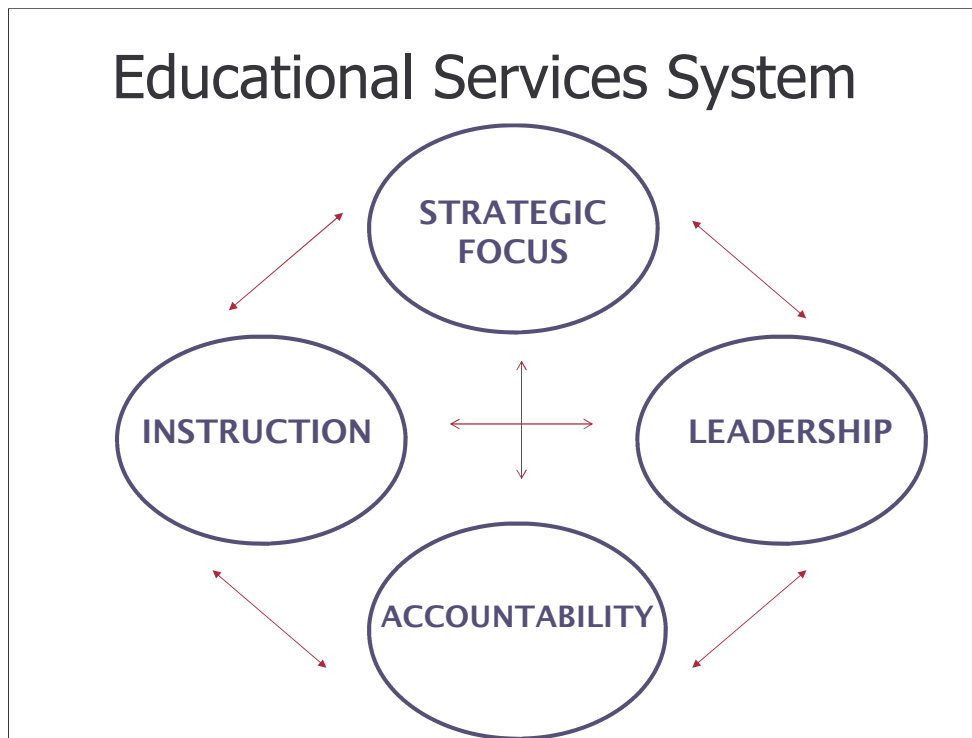
**April 23, 2007**

Presentation to the Board of School Trustees

April 23, 2007

By Dr. Carol Lindquist, Chief Academic Officer

At our last meeting on March 26, Dr. Robinson presented the FWCS Educational Services System, the district's method for setting its direction and completing its work.



The System rests upon four components – a strategic focus which sets the goals and priorities of the district, instruction, leadership, and accountability. Tonight we begin our discussion of the district instructional processes and will continue the conversation at our next meeting. Later this spring we will be presenting reports on leadership and accountability. In addition, work sessions for the Board have been scheduled for May and June so that we can have detailed conversations about each of these components. Several of you have asked questions about programs we offer or district practices such as homework or retention, topics of such size and complexity that they would keep us here for a long time this evening. Tonight’s presentation is intended to set the context for those conversations. If there are topics that are presented this evening that you want to be sure we include in a work session, please contact Dr. Robinson with that request.


So what is instruction? The dictionary defines it as “a direction calling for compliance” but then adds that it is “the action, practice or profession of teaching”. For tonight’s report, instruction is the daily activity in FWCS that ensures students gain the knowledge and skills to be successful throughout life. It includes the presentation of facts and concepts for students to learn. It includes creating a nurturing environment so that students feel comfortable when they are asked to do something new.



# Instruction is the #1 factor in raising student achievement.

Schmoker, 2005


Multiple factors influence teaching and learning, and have been the subject of research for years. Within the control of FWCS, we know that instruction is the number one factor in raising student achievement and we take that very seriously. We know that effective instruction – our core business - can go a long way in overcoming obstacles to learning and, therefore, we are committed to effectively instructing all students entrusted to us.



**INSTRUCTION**

- 1. What do we want students to know?**
- 2. How do we know when they know it?**
- 3. What do we do if they don't know it?**
- 4. What do we do if they do know it?**

Effective instruction is very complex but can best be understood through four questions. What do we want students to know? How do we know when they know it? What do we do if they don't know it? What do we do if they do know it? Let's take a familiar example as a way to see how this process works.



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Imagine that the student in question is a 15 ½ year old teenager that you are teaching to drive.

What do we want the teenager to know? We want the teen to know how to drive safely. Now there may be slightly different interpretations of the word “safely” but overall we know it means that the teenager follows the law and that no one or nothing gets hurt. So we teach our teen the rules of the road, the different parts to a car, how they work, and the thinking that is required to safely operate a vehicle. We have them watch us and talk to us about what they see us doing.



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How do we know when they know it? We put our teen behind the wheel, hand over the keys, and let him or her drive. And we observe what they do, pointing out along the way when they accelerate too quickly or don't seem to notice the car next to them. We take note of the knowledge or skills that they still need to acquire if they are going to safely navigate the roads.



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What do we do when they haven't learned what is needed? We have them practice, then try more complex tasks. They work on staying between lines or parallel parking on the street. They practice smooth braking and driving in reverse. And we give them ample opportunity to gain experience. If they are struggling with a particular driving skill, we give them additional guidance until there is confidence that the new driver is ready for the streets that the rest of us travel.



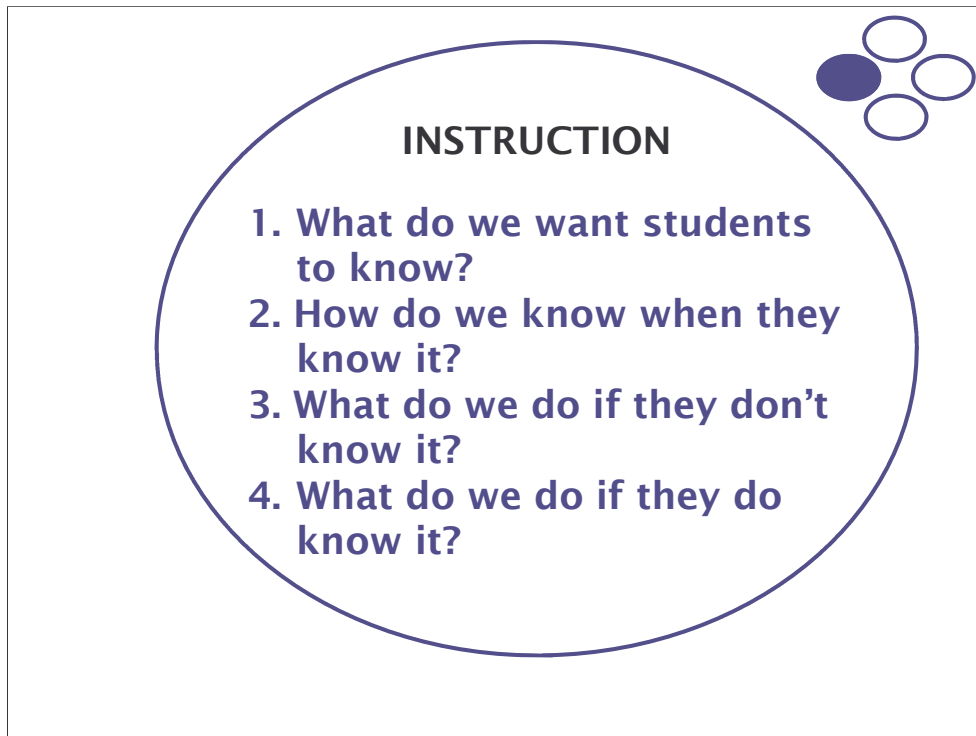
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And what do we do when they know it? We give them the keys and continue to expand their experience base. First we send them on errands to the grocery store, then have them chauffeur their siblings to ballgames. Finally, we have them help drive the family to Florida, even through Atlanta.

In other words, we have confidence that they have mastered the basics and encourage them to continue expanding their capability.

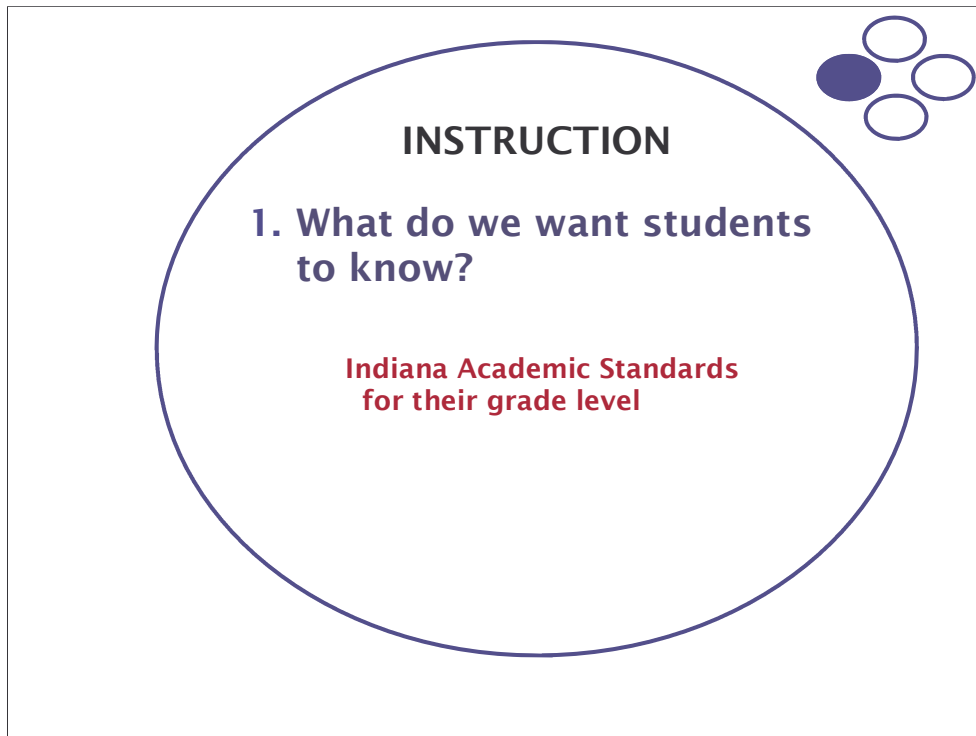




Let's look at the same questions through the academic lens.

All our instructional decisions are in response to these questions. The questions guide our practices, programs, and professional development as we work diligently to increase the achievement of each student in the district.

For this to work well, educators must be fully trained and work together to keep their skills effective. Fortunately, the district has strong professional development for teachers, administrators, and classified staff members as they support student learning. We are finding that the most effective professional development occurs when educators learn from other educators in their actual work setting and using the authentic materials they use in their daily work.



What do we want students to know? The answer comes from the district’s mission statement when it says that “every student masters a rigorous curriculum”. In Indiana, achievement is defined by the adopted academic standards for each grade and subject level. Indiana’s Academic Standards have been identified as the best in the country by the Fordham Foundation and Achieve, Inc. because of what they include and the way they build on the skills of the previous year.

The academic standards are the basis of what we teach, how we teach, and the assessments we use to determine if we are making progress with each student. It is important to understand that the standards are much more than facts to be memorized. While they do include specific content to be learned, the majority of the academic standards require students to use that content in higher order thinking such as comparing, solving authentic problems, evaluating with criteria or predicting what happens next. These are real skills required in the workplace and in higher education, another reason why the standards are so highly regarded.

The academic standards are available on the DOE website or on paper, but many of our teachers use an electronic system we have built called the Curriculum Management System.

# FWCS Curriculum Management System

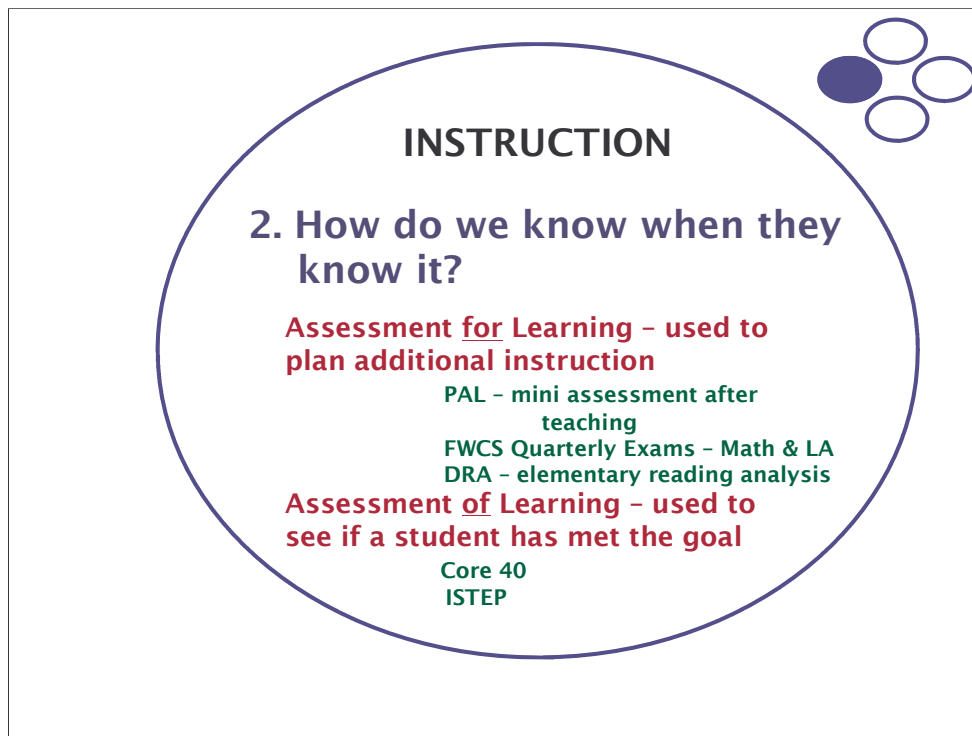


The Curriculum Management system is an in-house way for educators to see what standards are required for a grade or subject, to find instructional activities and resources for teaching each standard, and assessments that help a teacher know if a student has learned what was taught.

The Curriculum Management system was developed several years ago to provide a central resource for teachers and administrators. It was developed by the curriculum department and put into electronic format by the technology department. While the core curriculum doesn't really change – it is based on Indiana standards – materials and practices are refined based on data that we receive. The system grows as new materials are requested or as research provides updated information.

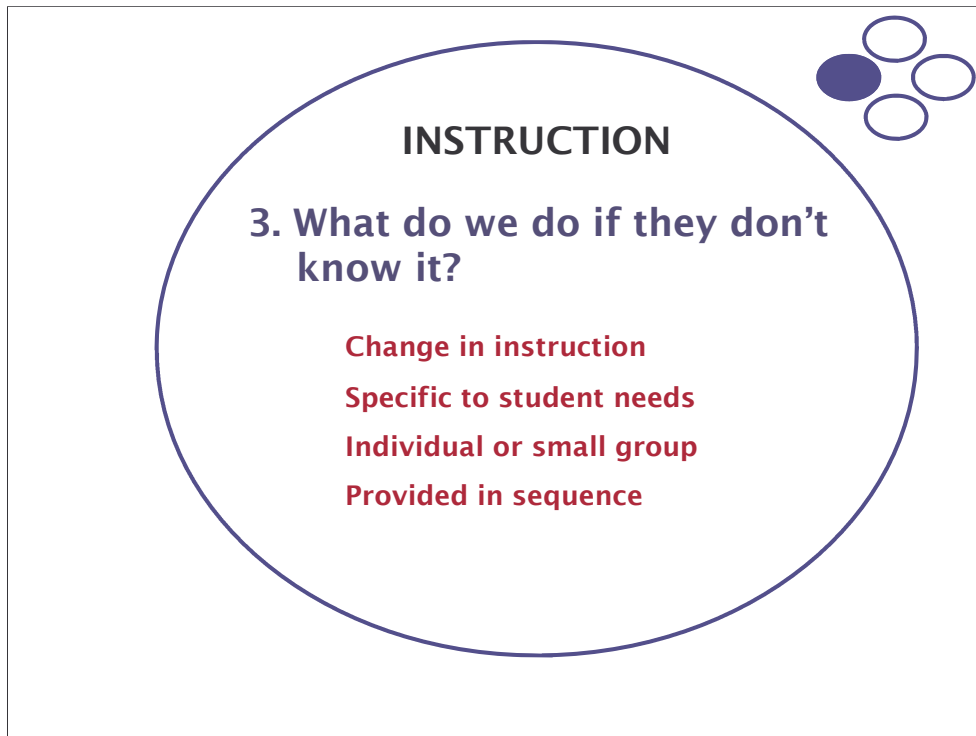
(HYPERLINK)

Since the adoption of No Child Left Behind, FWCS and every school district in the state, has been working to effectively implement the standards because we must ensure that every student learn the standards of their grade level regardless of where they started academically. Obviously some students have farther to go to get to standard than others.



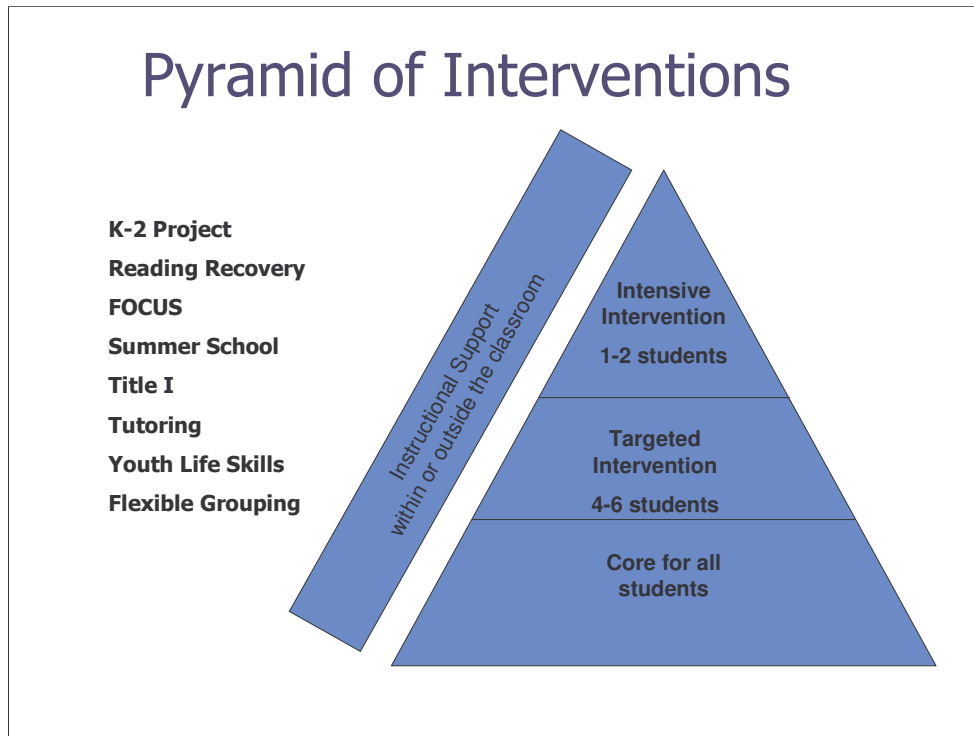
How do we know when students know the standards? We know they have learned, when they can demonstrate and apply skills and knowledge. As a normal part of instruction, teachers use a wide range of techniques for checking on student progress. Teachers listen to student’s instructional conversations and observe students performing tasks based on the standards. Generally teachers determine what students are learning through class activities, quizzes, and projects. These assessments for learning tell the teacher what additional instruction might be required for students to master the standard. Examples of district assessments for learning include assessments that follow teaching, the district’s Quarterly Exams, and the DRA, the assessment that shows reading skills for elementary students.

At the end of a teaching unit or a course and then we use assessments of learning. These are more formalized assessments created by the teacher, available through adopted materials, or even standardized across the state. The most familiar assessments are Core 40 examinations, ISTEP, and the Graduation Qualifying Examination. Data reported to you and the media are assessments of learning because they indicate whether or not students have met the academic goals.



When assessments indicate that a student is not on target, teachers adjust their instruction to help students get to where they need to be. A change in instruction can be a different way to engage students in the learning process but any modification of instruction is based upon what the student needs. Adjustments to instruction can be provided to individuals or to small groups and are provided in a sequence or structure that we call a Pyramid of Interventions.

# Pyramid of Interventions

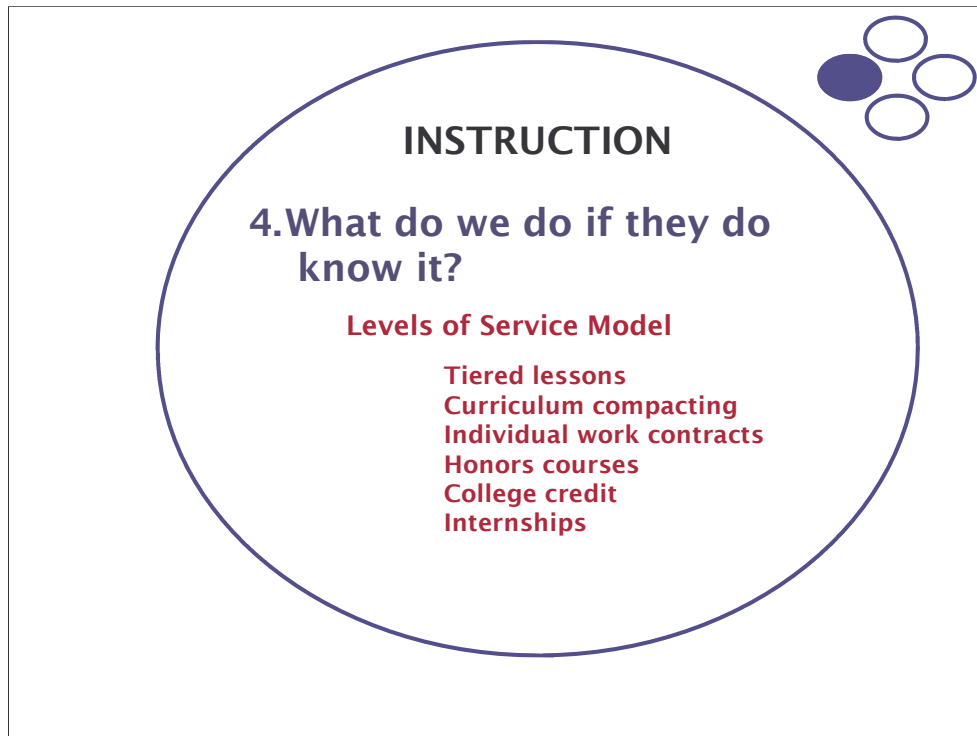


The term Pyramid of Interventions comes from the research of Rick DuFour, the researcher who has trained our district on collaboration. The concept of a Pyramid of Interventions means that there is an order of supports provided to students in a variety of settings. At the base of this pyramid is classroom instruction for all students. A normal part of classroom interaction is teaching and re-teaching concepts until the majority of students have learned them.


However, when a student is not learning at the pace of the rest of the class or does not truly understand a significant concept, extra help can be provided through a small group. If the student still struggles, assistance may need to be provided one on one. You will note that support is provided both within and outside the classroom.

The district already has a Pyramid of Interventions and is working toward increased alignment and effectiveness of the effort. For example, the district instruction models provide multiple opportunities for assessing student learning and then re-teaching concepts that students might be missing. As we adopt language arts materials next year, we will be looking for materials that offer teachers a maximum amount of flexibility to adjust their instructional practices within the classroom setting, the broadest part of the Pyramid because it affects the greatest number of students. Current interventions include such programs as the K-2 Project, Reading Recovery, FOCUS, Summer School, Title I, Tutoring, Youth Life Skills, Flexible Grouping and others. Each program is monitored for effectiveness so that we continually learn from our work.

Just recently we completed a two year pilot of the Read 180 intervention at three middle schools and found that it was very beneficial for students struggling with reading. A recommendation will be coming to you at the next meeting for implementation of this program in all middle schools. Similarly, in their annual improvement plans, a process built jointly with FWEA, schools are examining programs and practices that help students through the supports provided by the pyramid.



And what do we do if students have learned the academic standards? We stretch their learning by providing them opportunities to study a subject or concept in depth or to accelerate into more advanced classes. This is referred to by the state as a Levels of Service Model because it provides different levels of educational service based upon individual student needs. For younger students, stretch learning comes primarily in the form of more rigorous learning, such as tiered lessons, compacted curriculum, and individualized work contracts. In middle school this can include acceleration, differentiated lessons, and honors courses. In high school, students participate in honors and Advanced Placement courses, specialized courses in their areas of talent, internships, and dual credit and college courses.

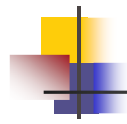


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In answer to these questions, we want our students to know the academic standards of their grade level. We know when they have accomplished this by having them demonstrate what they have learned. If they are below grade level, we continue to teach them using a variety of approaches. And if they are above grade level, we provide them a more rigorous educational program.





Is this effort producing results?

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*Yes. The district is demonstrating increased student achievement.*

You are likely asking yourself if this effort is producing results. The answer is yes. We are seeing increased student achievement, achievement that is sometimes overlooked when numbers are reported as averages.



## Compared to county schools

- n Croninger is the FWCS school most like our suburban neighbors
- n Croninger students routinely score above the state average and better than most county schools
- n Brentwood, Towles, Washington, Irwin, and Harris have scores from one or more grade levels that rank at the top in the county

Most comparisons of ISTEP scores are made among county schools. Despite significant differences in the diversity of students enrolled and the percentages of students who qualify for special education or free and reduced meals, FWCS schools are showing gains in student achievement. For example, Croninger Elementary is the school most similar to suburban schools in Allen County. Croninger's scores are well above the state average every year and routinely outpace most county elementary schools. Schools such as Brentwood, Towles, Washington, Irwin, and Harris have scores from one or more grade levels that rank at the top in the county.



## Compared to other graduates

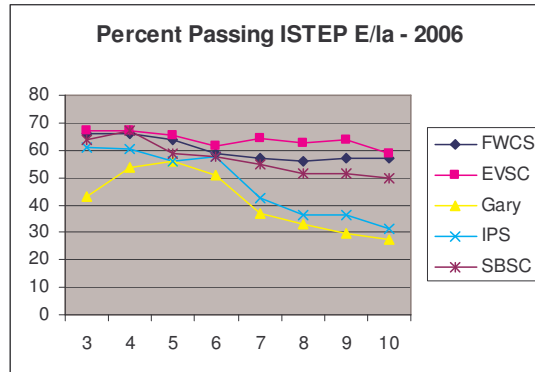
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- n FWCS Class of 2007 graduates will be attending higher education institutions such as West Point, Harvard, Columbia, Yale, Wellesley, University of Chicago, Brown, Notre Dame, and Rose-Hulman.
- n 1994 North Side graduate recently won the Pulitzer Prize

Similarly, when our high school graduates leave FWCS they attend the most high regarded colleges and universities in the country, and do so well that they are awarded honors such as the recently announced Pulitzer Prize.

## Compared to similar districts

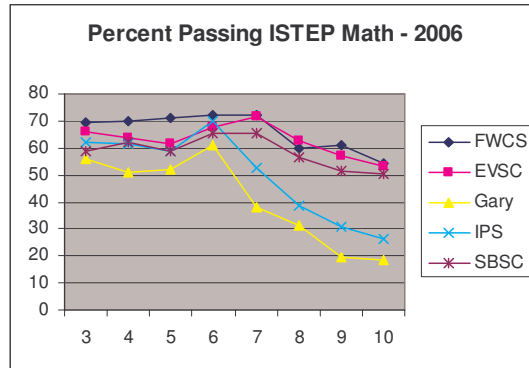
n FWCS scores compared to other urbans



FWCS is also compared to districts with similar demographics. Overall, FWCS joins Evansville in leading the state urban schools in student achievement. In English/Language Arts we are usually second in the state for urban schools.

# Compared to similar districts

n FWCS scores compared to other urbans



In mathematics we tend to lead the state for urban school districts.



## No Child Left Behind

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- n All students in the state are expected to be at grade level regardless of where they started or the obstacles they encounter.
- n Some schools and districts will take longer than others to reach the target but all should be making progress.

On a national level, No Child Left Behind expects that by the year 2014, all students in the country will be at grade level according to each state's academic standards and testing system, regardless of where the students started or any obstacles they experience. Because academic standards vary from one state to the next and because not all students began at the same starting point, some schools and districts will take longer to reach the target of all students performing at or above grade level. Urban areas tend to have a higher concentration of students who face obstacles such as poverty, student mobility, exposure to the English language, or special needs. Across the country these districts are slower to make progress than less complex districts and Fort Wayne is no exception.

We are working hard to accelerate our progress, remain focused on our goals and stay diligent in our work. The instruction outlined this evening is a recurring process every day of the school year and every year that a student is in our district.



Adequate Yearly Progress.....  
the measure of accountability  
for public schools

Despite wonderful success stories that we share here and those you will hear at our next meeting, the public measure of educational success is the designation of Adequate Yearly Progress, a part of No Child Left Behind.

AYP	Eng	Math	Other	95% Eng	95% Math
All Students					
Free Lunch					
LEP					
Special Ed.					
African American					
American Indian					
Asian					
Hispanic					
White					

Simply stated, every public school and district that has thirty or more students in each of these target cells, must have student achievement indicators that meet the target to make AYP. If a school or district has thirty or more students in a cell but does not meet the achievement level required, the school or district does not make AYP.





## FWCS Adequate Yearly Progress

- n 37 target cells represent content areas and student groups
- n FWCS is the only district in the state with students represented in each of the 37 cells

There are 37 cells on the chart you just saw. The more target cells you have, the greater the challenge. FWCS is the only district in the state with students represented in each of the 37 cells. So we have 37 ways to fail to make AYP. The only way we make AYP is to have students in every one of our 37 cells make the target. For your information, Evansville was successful in 27 of its 33 cells and Indianapolis was successful in 21 of its 29 cells.



## FWCS Adequate Yearly Progress

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- n On the district AYP chart for 2005,  
**FWCS met 31 of 37 target cells**
- n On the district AYP chart for 2006,  
**FWCS met 33 of 37 target cells**

We are showing improvement. Based on scores from ISTEP, in 2005 our district successfully met 31 of its 37 target cells.

Based on scores from 2006, we increased our success rate to 33 of our 37 target cells.



## FWCS Adequate Yearly Progress

	<b>2005 Target Cells</b>	<b>2006 Target Cells</b>	<b>Improvement</b>
Elementary	257 of 342 75%	310 of 362 86%	<b>11%</b>
Middle	75 of 128 59%	91 of 146 62%	<b>3%</b>
High	31 of 66 47%	44 of 68 67%	<b>20%</b>
All	363 of 536 68%	445 of 574 78%	<b>10%</b>

This chart shows the increase in the number of AYP target cells that were met this year. At each level, students are experiencing increased success even as we have more target to hit, a good indicator that we are making progress,



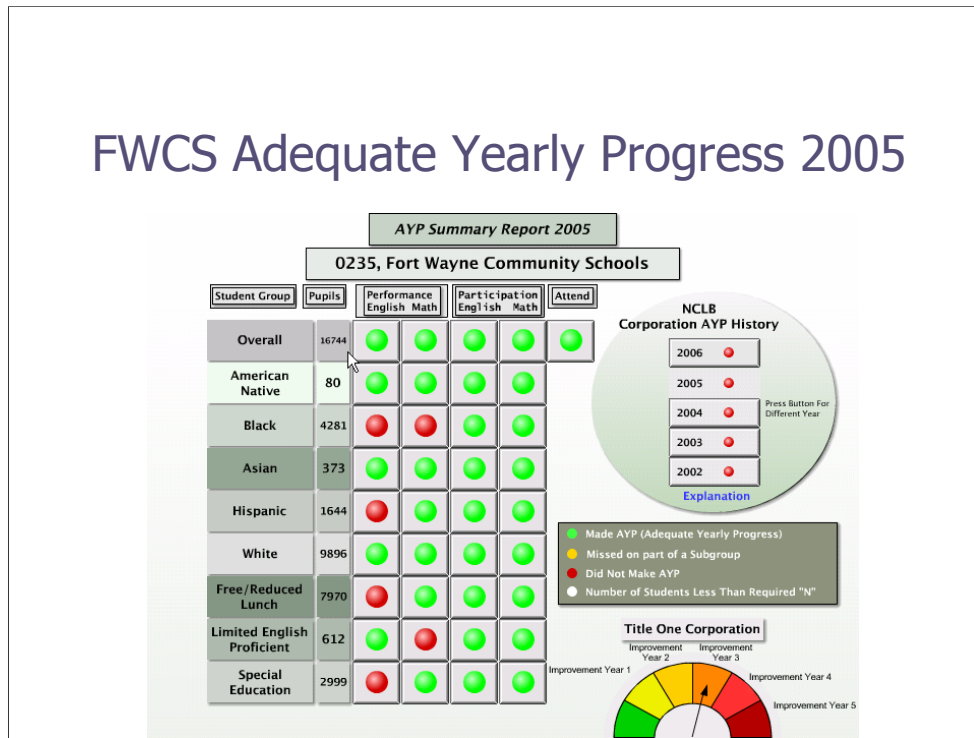
## FWCS Adequate Yearly Progress

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- n In 2005, 10 FWCS schools made AYP.
- n In 2006, 14 FWCS schools made AYP.

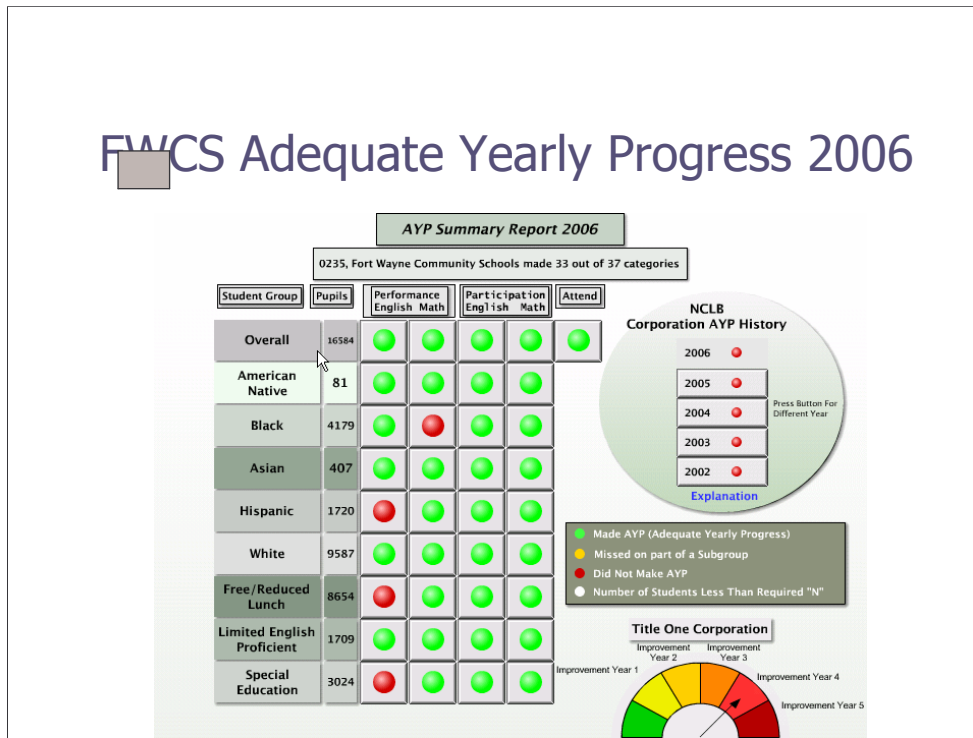
Because of this progress, four more schools in the district made AYP this year.

# FWCS Adequate Yearly Progress 2005



Here is another example of the progress that FWCS is making. In 2005, the state identified six areas for district improvement.

# FWCS Adequate Yearly Progress 2006



In 2006, the state identified just four, that is an improvement of 33%.

Our work is a journey. We know where we are going and have worked out the details to get to our destination. We are eager to arrive at our goal and struggle to be patient when progress is slow. Like all travels, we run into delays and obstacles that require us to make adjustments but we never lose site of the goal – student achievement for all. Because of the district’s focus on effective instruction and high quality teaching, we have every reason to believe that we will continue to see our success rate improve. At the next Board meeting we look forward to having educators from several of our schools sharing their stories about implementing our four instructional questions and the impact on student learning.



# Summary

## Educational Services System

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1. Strategic Focus • **March 26, 2007**
2. Instruction • **April 23, 2007**  
• **May 14, 2007**
3. Leadership • **June 11, 2007**
4. Accountability • **June 25, 2007**

**Work Sessions: May 29, June 13, June 26, June 28**

Additional reports will be provided according to the schedule distributed earlier.  
At this time we would be glad to answer any questions that you may have.